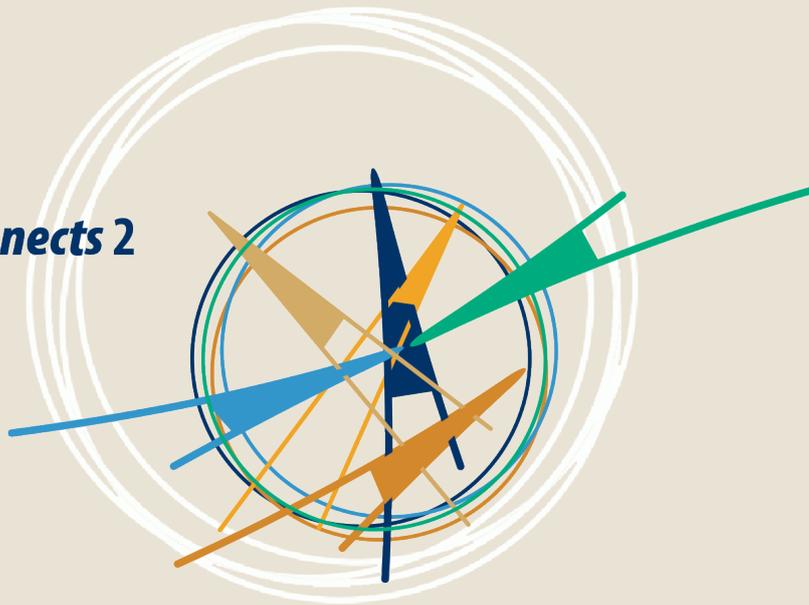


# 25

University of Bayreuth  
African Studies  
**WORKING PAPERS**

*Africa Multiple connects 2*



## **African Studies and the Question of Diasporas**

John Ayotunde (Tunde) Isola Bewaji

**25**

**University of Bayreuth  
African Studies  
WORKING PAPERS**

**African Studies and  
the Question of  
Diasporas**

**John Ayotunde (Tunde) Isola Bewaji, 2021**

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## Our Latest Africa Multiple connects Publications

Title	Author(s)	Year of Publication	Version
African Studies and the Question of Diasporas	John Ayotunde (Tunde) Isola Bewaji	2021	25 (2)
<a href="#">Figuring Out How to Reconfigure African Studies</a>	Rüdiger Seesemann	2020	24 (1)

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His books include *Beauty and Culture* (2003), *An Introduction to the Theory of Knowledge* (2007), *Narratives of Struggle* (2012), *Ontologized Ethics* (2013, co-edited with Elvis Imafidon), *Black Aesthetics* (2013), *Introduction to Philosophy and Logic* (2014, co-edited with others), *The Rule of Law and Governance in Indigenous Yoruba Society* (2016), *The Humanities and the Dynamics of African Culture in the 21st Century* (2017, co-edited with others), *Media Theory, Practice and Ethics* (2017, with P. B. Adedara) and *Identity Recreation in Global African Encounters* (2019, edited with Doyin Aguoru). He is Fellow of the Jamaica Institute of Management (FJIM) and Member Nigerian Academy of Letters (MNAL).

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# African Studies and the Question of Diasporas

**John Ayotunde (Tunde) Isola Bewaji**

## **1 Introduction**

The concept “Diaspora”, applied to Africa, is a misnomer of sorts, bearing in mind that Africa was the original home of the oldest known remains of human beings. Science has shown us how the earlier waves of emigrant Africans (humans originally domiciled in Africa) have adapted to their environment, becoming various shades as melanin presence dictated in response to the climatic requirements for survival (Sample 2017; Smith et al. 2007; Stringer 2016). Later groups are in India, Tonga, New Zealand, Australia, and the Americas: black skinned, flat nose, but with various forms of stretched out hair. These earlier groups are not called, technically, Diaspora. Only recent migrants to the West, Europe, Asia Minor, Asia and the Americas are called Diaspora: they migrated voluntarily for various reasons or they were forced out of Africa as captives.

Part of the challenges that African Studies instigate are fraught, because of (a) the participation of continental Africans in slavery wars in Western, Eastern, Northern and Central Africa; (b) the

Middle Passages of the Atlantic and the Sahara/Pacific; (c) the empty baggage syndrome and epistemicide and, (d) the Willie Lynch Syndrome of Divide and Conquer, exemplified in the tokenistic Obama phenomenon. African studies writ large must then encompass (a) Repairing the Breach; (b) Recovering the Heritage – Calypso, Blues and Jazz, Reggae, Rastafari, Sports; (c) Restoring Indigenous Knowledge Systems by erasing epistemicide and (d) Restoring the African humanity. These efforts must be multi/inter disciplinary and encompass all domains of human intellectual theory and practice. Recovering the human intellectual traditions and knowledge systems of continental Africans and the Diasporas would be a treasure trove of ideas to solve many of the challenges faced by humanity today; this will require transcending what Claude Ake (1979) has called *Social Science as Imperialism* and what Lewis R. Gordon (2006) called *Disciplinary Decadence*. This is an urgent task in the face of the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats posed by the “The Dragons” being here, there and everywhere. Beware, the Dragons! Beware, the Dragons!

In this essay, I attempt to sketch what would constitute a more appropriate, historiographically accurate and globally judicious understanding of African Studies that is holistic. My goal is to sketch an African Studies that is not segmented on the basis of the agendas of exogenous forces bent on decimating global African peoples, by playing diverse groups against each other, but one which recognizes the continuity of human heritage as primarily African heritage writ large, and one which recognizes that the African Diasporas, recent and classical, are all continuous with Africa feeding and renewing the world with humanity by virtue of being the original home of humanity. This calls for so many different approaches, but primary being the complete overhaul of the current curricula used to programme the minds of humanity, especially those emanating from European climes, to persist in negro-gaze: the objectification and exoticization of Africa and peoples of Africa globally, thereby derogating their humanities and agencies.

## 2 Background

The name, word, concept, and/or idea that is “Africa” is fraught with liminal and subliminal anxieties (Masolo 1994; Mudimbe 1988, 1994). This is because of the politics of race, civilization, language, culture, religion, science, reason, technology, economics, development, arts and, indeed, humanity. This politics determines who, what, where, when and how of the humanity of some/the “other”; this is especially the case when this is related to allocation and appropriation/expropriation of resources on the local (as in colonial Africa, the Bantustan homelands of South Africa and the plantations of the Americas) and on the global scale (as in the skewed, warped and dissonant situation enforced by Bretton Woods, International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank and World Trade Organization (WTO)) on “developing” countries, sans China. For this reason, many scholars adopt the simplified but obscure concepts such as “black”, “Egypt”, “Nubia”, “Ethiopia”, “Moors” or “Negroid” or even the ahistorical and racially inflected “Africa South of the Sahara”, to anticipate the various strictures that attend the discourses surrounding how to annotate the existence and essence of the humanity and contributions of the present day indigenous peoples of the continent of Africa

to global human heritage in all aspects of our collective existence. Those who refused to play the game as designed by Eurocentric scholarship and have deigned it fit to integrate Africa within our collective human history have been marginalized to the fringes of scholarship, and their efforts are neither taught nor engaged, vide: Diop (1974, 1978, 1991), Davidson (1966, 1992), Obenga (1992, 2004), Karenga (1990, 2003, 2010), Asante (2004, 2006, 2009), Bernal (1987), Clarke (1991) and Van Sertima (1976, 1991, 1992a, 1992b, 1993).

For the sake of avoiding the debilitating baggage the above issue could raise, as a plenary like this has limited space to facilitate detailed explicative argumentation, I will simply speak of Africa in continental terms – inclusive of all the historical hues and physiognomic features of the peoples indigenous to the continent from Cape to Cairo. This enables me, without apologies, to capture the fact that, essentially, wherever we find ourselves, as humans, domiciled in any and all parts of the world in current times, either through voluntary or forced prehistoric, classical or contemporary regional and intraregional migrations – immigrations, emigrations and transplantations – all humanity are descended from this core continent, Africa. For this reason, one could safely say that Africa and the Diaspora means all who reside in Africa now and all humans living in other parts of the world. This will help us to unavoidably cement our common ancestry from the same pool of humanity, thereby maintaining a common bond of humanity between all humans, even if some are spiteful of and hate to acknowledge this inexorable historical fact and its implications. But helpful and desirable as this would be, it would lose its theoretical and practical, intellectual and material significance, because of the obfuscation that would attend such imprecision that arise in saying Africa and Diaspora studies means continental Africa and global humanity studies.

There has been another popular tendency to think of Africa and its Diaspora as being only concerned with continental (mainland) Africa and blacks in the Americas. This particular politically skewed narrative is a function of a construction of African ontogenesis in the limited, narrow and imaginatively hollow historiogenesis; it relates Africa's nativity in the sense of a modernity purloined through only the despicable holocaust of Atlantic slavery. The challenge of decoupling Africa from this inhuman intellectual disfiguration is gargantuan and daunting. Not being a student of history, archaeology, anthropology, paleoecology or linguistics means that I am probably the least qualified to dabble into matters as recondite as these. However, my understanding of the history of the intellectual heritage of humanity, the twists and the turns in the trajectories of civilizations, the patterns and shifts in the centres of global power structures, the rise and fall of traditions of dominance, all seem to show that narrowly crafted narratives for the purpose of reification of particulars as universals and derogation of commonalities as inessentials impel my reading of human ancestry in global terms. This is an African (specifically, the Yoruba) way: seeing human beings as human beings, regardless of hue or shape or other limiting differences; thereby ensuring the extension to these "strangers" in their midst the fellowship which allows them to feel welcome and to retain their human dignity (Bewaji 2013, 2016).

Hence, when I say that the concept "Diaspora" applied to Africa is a misnomer of sorts, bearing in mind that Africa was the original home of the oldest human beings, what this implies is the fact that wherever humans live, we/they are all Africans. The confusion will be multiplied when African

“Diaspora” is understood in the narrow sense identified above. What it does will be to diminish, eradicate or destroy the contributions of Africa to global humanity. It would prevent the appreciation of what Van Sertima has traced in volumes detailing early Africans in Asia, Eurasia, the Pacific, Europe and the Americas. It challenges the orthodoxy of seeing rationality, science, technology, civilization, development and enlightenment flowing unidirectionally from North to South, and acknowledges that the kernel of every achievement humanity has made has its genesis in Africa. It asks humanity for humility, the kind lacking in how the descendants of Joseph, who were saved from imminent perdition in the Arabian peninsula during the period of famine by Egypt, turned around to accuse their benefactors of enslavement and fictionalizing the great Exodus in their return to displace their brothers and sisters from their ancestral lands; doing this is long overdue and the right thing: this is the task of African Studies and the Question of the Diasporas which I urge all who toil in the vineyard of knowledge to take on.

In any case, the politics of race is a strange animal and it is deployed in ever stranger ways for purposes that fit only the bestial ways of the powerful (arrogance and impunity of the power drunk). In many instances it totally denies science and reason, while in some instances it embraces science with one hand and negates science with the other hand. It accepts the place of Africa as the initial home of humanity, but denies the place of Africa in global human heritage; this may be because of self-shame brought about by the realization of the humbleness of one’s origins, and the sacrifices our common ancestors have made to ensure our survival as viable individuals, groups and nations. For strange political and economic reasons, it is like humble parents disowned by its/their own children because they, the children, have suddenly fallen into strange, unearned or stolen wealth, and the humble beginnings of their ancestry seems to be suddenly a shameful reminder of our common ancestry and this is now somehow beneath/below their humility to showcase to the whole world. Among the most revered of European thought is Hegel (1956), who denied the capacity of Africans to reason or to be any part of history. Even the advocates of “Social Contract” were not any better, as while pontificating on this theme, had interests in the enslavement of blacks in the Americas as in the case of Locke’s Janus faced theory and practice, political writings and investment choices which compromise the freedoms he so celebrated (Ashcraft 1986, 1987).

Since the sciences and technology have shown us how the earlier waves of emigrant Africans (humans originally domiciled in Africa) have adapted to their environments, becoming/developing/evolving various shades as melanin and solar irradiation presence have dictated, developing various physiognomic identities, protecting their nakedness through foliage of hair and animal/plant materials, and encoding these into various protective cultural norms of filial mechanisms and educational preservatives of racialized prejudices, we will not delay ourselves with such earlier emigrants out of mother Africa (Sample 2017; Smith et al. 2007; Stringer 2016). But we cannot but be concerned about the excision of the later, recent, and/but not so recent emigrant groups who are in Southern Europe, India, Asia, Tonga, New Zealand, Australia, the Pacific and the Americas from the direct rubric of African Diaspora: these are clearly dark/black/brown skinned, flat/progressively narrowed nose Africans, of various complexion hues, but who are now adapted with various forms/degrees of stretched out hair. The earlier emigrant groups are not called Diaspora because of distance in time of leaving/emigrating Africa; while the latter groups do not

consider themselves Africans because of the odium of being associated with victims of ignorance, greed, avarice and the negative politics of race that would attend such self-identification – success has numerous relatives, but poverty/destitution is usually orphaned loners.

Only recent emigrants/immigrants/forced/enslaved Africans in/to the West, Europe, Asia Minor, Asia and the Americas are now called the African Diaspora: the idea is to say these are the only African Diaspora, because they emigrated voluntarily for various reasons, or they were forced out of Africa as captives (victims of Atlantic genocide) or as victims of enforced conflicts, natural disasters or human trafficking.

For the purpose of this discussion, therefore, when we speak of African Studies and the Question of Diasporas, we will be limiting our attention to African Studies and how these research/scholarship areas have integrated or neglected global African Diaspora, dilating on the intersections between the various disciplines in the global academy and the paucity of proper curriculum that faithfully reflect human history. For the rest of this discussion, having demonstrated our complicity as historians, philosophers and intellectuals in the derogation of Africa as a continent and her inhabitants and in the process maligning global African Diaspora, I will attend to the following issues which have been understudied, under-apprehended and poorly analysed for purposes of knowledge distillation curriculum development, knowledge dissemination and global international relations policy determination:

- The participation of continental Africans in slavery wars in Western, Eastern, Central, Southern and Northern Africa;
- The Middle Passages of the Atlantic, Sahara Desert, the Mediterranean, the Red Sea and the Pacific;
- The Empty Baggage Syndrome and Epistemicide and,
- The Willie Lynch Syndrome of Divide and Conquer, exemplified in Obama tokenism phenomenon.

In this regard, I will argue that going forward, Global African Studies, writ large, must proceed by taking in hand the challenges and the opportunities attendant to a better understanding and utilization of the wealth of ideas, experiences, knowledges and traditions which the dispersals of Africa's children across the globe have made our collective heritage, impressing on us that we must proactively, through the deliberate investment in decolonized and deracialized Global African Studies:

- Undertake the huge and inevitable task of repairing the Breaches and mending the Cords; Recovering the Heritages and Cultures – Religions, Metaphysics, Aesthetics, Calypso, Blues and Jazz, Reggae, Rastafari, Sports;
- Restoring Indigenous Knowledge Systems by erasing Epistemicide and Epistemic Deficit; and
- Restoring the dignity of Global African humanity, and
- In the process, our global humanity.

I will briefly explain the road map that I envisage for undertaking these efforts and meeting the challenges they pose very briefly, going forward.

### 3 African Participation in Slave Trade

Various forms of slavery have always been a blight on human conscience and history from time immemorial. This phenomenon was not alien to any geographical zone of the world from antiquity. Slavery in various cultures has also carried various degrees of brutality, depersonalization, deidentification, deprivation of the liberties and, in extreme cases, the dehumanization of the enslaved. But most societies that enslaved peoples of different ethnicities had serious challenges where recognizing the humanity of the enslaved was concerned, and various myths were evinced to back up the savagery that made the enslaved and the enslaver less than human. In the case of Africa, there were internal and external forces at play. These forces meant the dislocation of the possibility of a singularity of understanding of slavery from the consciousness of the peoples among whom such phenomena were present.

It is not strange to note that there was no region/continent that had any name before modern times associated with specific groups or people as ethnicities or languages before modern times. The continent of what is now Africa was the land of the blacks: descriptively, Moors, Nubia, Ethiopia, Aigiptus, etc.; all of these were descriptive of the dark complexion of the people living on the continent (Bewaji 2013). Europeans, domiciled in the contemporary continent of Europe starting from the British isle and ending in China constituted one contiguous continent (landmass), that is broken into two (Europe and Asia) for political reasons: Asia is part of Europe and Europe is part of Asia. In reality, there are only three continents in the world, plus the big islands – Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Madagascar, Hispaniola, Cuba, Falklands, etc. People lived without need for politics of naming; people who came across each other may have descriptive adjectives for those they met. Over time, these adjectives stuck and became their names. The West Indies, where we live, as a name for the Caribbean, is a product of ignorance - Columbus thought when he reached here, he was in India. And as such when he found out that India was on the other side of the world, instead of calling the people here the true name they called themselves, they named them West Indians, because the white man is never wrong!

In any case, it was through the agency of African indigenous knowledge systems that Columbus found his way to the Americas and back to Europe. Before Atlantic genocide perpetrated by Europe on Africa through the slave trade, the population of West Africa was sizeable. West Africans had visited, traded with and integrated their cultures with those of the Americans (Sertima 1976). They also traded with Europe, had embassies in the courts of European kings and were recognized as peers in all respects. Various African civilizations evolved various forms of political governance and responded to various needs. And where differences existed, these were settled through various conflict resolution mechanisms, the last resort being war. Most of the recorded large-scale battles in Africa were linked to slave trade, before the partitioning of Africa and colonization. It was the end of slave trade that brought about another form of slavery – colonialism; if you cannot trade in humans across borders, then enslave them locally, calling them protected persons: British Protectorate, from what, against what - the partition of Africa, definitely.

There is now a huge movement afoot justifiably for reparations. Examples of reparations abound in human history: Amerindians, Maoris and the indigenous peoples of Australia and New Zealand, Germany continued to pay reparations to the people and state of Israel for the Holocaust, etc. But the resonance and necessity of/for reparations to Africa (especially West Africa) is often attenuated

by the existence of various forms of indigenous African 'slavery', before external (European) enslavers exploited the human capital of Africa for the development of Europe in all ways. This is then compounded by the argument that since Africans actively engaged in slavery at the indigenous level and in the exportation of Africans to other climes, the complicity of Africa mitigated the just demand for reparations.

There is something to be said for and against these arguments. But these are issues which future research in African studies, especially with regards to the African Diasporas, must concentrate on. We must study and understand the Metaphysics of Reparations; this is necessary in order for the Epistemologies, Politics and Economics of Reparations to make sense to the targets and subjects of Reparations. It is when such a studious recognition is made that we can truly begin the process of asking the children of Africa, other ethnicities, hues and races of peoples, who have exploited Africa mindlessly in the Arabia, Europe and the Americas, to make amends/ atonement/ restitution/ restoration for their greed, their inhuman cruelty to their ancestry and pay spiritual and material reparations that will ultimately enable Africa and its Diasporas to feel a level of filial belonging to the community of humanity.

Elsewhere I have argued that Africa must come clean (Bewaji 2012). Coming clean means recognizing its role in the enslavement of Africans in various parts of the world: Atlantic, Sahara Desert, Mediterranean, Middle Eastern, Asian and the Americas. Continental Africa must tender unreserved apologies to Africa Diasporas globally for the various egregious activities which made (and continue even now, to make) the enslavement, emasculation, degradation, impoverishment and dehumanization of Africans possible on a global scale. African Studies in the new millennium must proactively investigate the magnitude of African enslavement in all parts of the world, and the culpability of individuals (including John Locke and David Cameron), groups and regional participants in this reprehensible historical legacy of human infamy. There must be no stone left unturned in the process of using all the intellectual, scientific, technological and spiritual resources available to ensure that proper accounting and accountability are ensured to prosecute this important project. The investment in this, especially by Africa, is investment in a fully empowered and liberated Africa; this is a task that must be done, so that Africa and the Diaspora can say – NEVER AGAIN.

#### **4 Middle Passages: Atlantic, Sahara Desert, Mediterranean, Red Sea and the Pacific**

One of the inherently unrecognized tragedies of the slavery of Africa and Africans is the factor of simply overlooking the disastrous experiences of being transported across those spaces of unimaginable alienation. Consider yourself, for one minute, being an individual who has spent all your life not seeing a body of water bigger than five feet across, now being transported in chains across a body of water that is thousands of miles across and a depth that is unfathomable. Now add to that the fact that the space within which you make the journey is so constricted that ordinary air (oxygen) becomes a luxury and nature calls become clear events that make your existence hazardous and demeaning in the extreme. If you survive such dehumanizing and perilous

experience, and land at the immediate or end location of your lifelong incarceration, you have lost faith in humanity and all the attendant ideas of providence and divine/metaphysical guidance. You would have lost faith in the humanity of your abductors, those who took away your humanity during the journey and those who purportedly now “own” YOU and their surrogates who superintend your dehumanization.

We have not researched enough the effects of the spiritual, physical, psychological, moral and material destruction these passages have wrought on abducted and enslaved Africans. That we see Africans of the Diaspora and consider their physical beauty and elegance as evidence of wholesome existence masks the trauma that lurks behind the apparent tranquillity. This, in itself, may explain why there is, in many instances, absolute or muted disdain between Continental Africa(ns) and Diaspora(ns). While remittances constitute the second largest portion of Jamaican GDP, for example, mainly because of the African retention of filial bond – *okun omo iya* – the same cannot be said between Continental Africa and the Diasporas. Indians, Chinese, Japanese, Jews and other ethnicities never let go of their filial connections that bond themselves to homeland in the way in which Africans and the Diasporas have been separated. Where there appear blips of connectedness, it often manifests in fortune seeking relationships of further exploitative expropriation; there are only rare genuine efforts at ensuring wholesome and genuine mutual understanding and cooperation.

Africa needs its Diasporas, and the Diasporas need Africa. More importantly, humanity needs both – there is too much at stake not to realize that the current system of social engineering founded on greed, destruction and hatred (read Capitalism) is not working. The fountain of knowledges, cultures, humanities and ideas, which emerged on the advent of human civilization, require that this old but new vista which African indigenous knowledge systems constitute must be properly harnessed for the future of humanity. We now have enough knowledge and technologies to make virtually all parts of the world relatively habitable, such that the various middle passages are not passages of horror and peril which desperate persons or criminals lure people to take any longer – vide the caravans from Latin America to USA and attendant avoidable tragedies, the deaths in the Sahara and the Mediterranean of migrants.

## 5 The Empty Baggage Syndrome and Epistemicide

Ivan Van Sertima (1976) wrote about the “empty baggage syndrome” as a foil for the denial of the humanity of the Africans in the new world. All available evidence supports his thesis that the Africans who were forced out of the continent to work as chattel in the Americas may indeed not have been allowed to pack bags and baggage for the unplanned, unintended and unwanted journeys; but, given their contributions to the development of the Americas through their works and success of the plantation system in generating wealth for Europe’s development (industrial revolution and modernity) it was obvious they were professionals, specialists and seasoned administrators from their different home countries (Bewaji 2010). That this was the case was evident in how they brought their knowledges of medicine, agriculture, science, technology, music, religions, the arts, etc., to the new horrifying situations in which they found themselves. The erasure of the intellectual heritage of African captives was only matched by the destruction of the intellectual traditions of continental Africans (Bewaji 2012). These were affected in all ways

detrimental to continental Africa and the African Diasporas and beneficial only to Europe and Arabia. In religion, Africans and their descendants were made to pray to alien morally bankrupt, intellectually deficient, emotionally unstable, attention seeking, blood sucking, war mongering, schizophrenic gods. In social engineering, Africans were forced to embrace pernicious individualism, abandoning communal mutually supporting social networking traditions in a manner that has been most disorienting and destructive. In trade, the best of Africa was taken from Africa and the Diasporas (the enslaved Africans in the various parts of the world were never given just recompense for their efforts anyway) and the wastes of Europe and Arabia (decadence and impoverished ethical orientations) were returned.

What “empty baggage syndrome” did to the Africans of the Diaspora, “epistemicide” did on a larger scale to continental Africa (Bewaji 2010, 2012). The infestation of the intellectual space of Africans globally with epistemic deficit parades in all aspects of Africana being today to evince diffidence, inferiority complex, moral dependence, unimaginable mendicancy, rank profligacy with resources and the worst forms of identity crises ever faced by any ethnic group in the world. These are under researched areas which new African/a Studies must address.

What is “epistemicide”? Epistemicide is the deliberate act, behaviour, exercise or crime, violent or non-violent, overt or benign, of omission or commission, committed against a group or groups with the sole or ultimate intent to destroy the existence of the group or groups; it is a coordinated plan of different actions and inactions aiming at the destruction of essential foundations of the life of national or racial groups, with the aim of annihilating the groups themselves or making a nullity of the identity, self-esteem, self-awareness or corporate existence as autonomous or separate being of a group or groups. It is the deliberate, calculated, concerted and systematic destruction, in whole or in part, of an ethnic, racial, religious, or national group identity or belief in such separate identity and existence, through the negations of their knowledge systems, denial, expropriation of their intellectual property and foisting on the intellect of the target society a mendicant and supplicant genuflecting approach to existence (Bewaji 2012).

The destruction of the African agency was perfected by Europe and Arabia, through the extinction of African capacity for knowledge generation, moral agency and leadership accountability. Africans, who were the first set of humans to build civilizations, with both functional and purely symbolic aspects, were not even allowed again to have a capacity to peruse the supernatural and come away with an idea of divine existence of their own accord. They have to, now, embrace the two most blood sucking deities of the Arabian Desert, whose competition for scarce resources know no moral bounds.

The forces of destruction also managed to impose a fake form of governance which panders to greed and division, called democracy on humanity, wiping out the need for consensus in the determination of common interests, rather than assignment of spoils to winners and poverty to losers; thereby creating members of the same families, communities, nations who are constantly at war with each other in competition over who shall have access to the spoils of political warfare called democratic governance. This is evident in how much capitalism invests in propagation of deception of democracy as ordained governance system that benefits humanity. There is need to study indigenous African governance systems which Europeans marvelled at when they foraged into Yoruba land, for example, in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century.

## 6 The Willie Lynch Syndrome

Willie Lynch has often been described as a hoax, and the methodology of keeping in check and controlling plantation the enslaved Africans, which he was reported to have advocated, was denied to have ever happened. The idea is to suggest that it was all made up, and no slave owner ever suggested this as a means of destabilizing the societies where the enslaved Africans could have come together, even after plantation slavery was abolished, to pull themselves together for progress. But no one denied that the uses of indigenous African languages were prohibited on plantations, and separations of known kinsfolk took place. And no one denies that the use of African drums was prohibited, so that there would be no surreptitious communication of information between plantations – but Pan Music still evolved, using discarded drums of cargo left behind by Europeans. And even more specifically, no one denied that moles were planted in African organizations, like that of Marcus Mosiah Garvey and the destruction of his Black Star Company, to spread dis/misinformation and to undermine his organization which was becoming a thorn in the flesh of racist hegemons. In the case of Marcus Mosiah Garvey, his own impetuosity, financial incompetence, probable arrogance and personal character flaws may have played a major role in his final demise. Also, the case of Tulsa in Oklahoma, USA, where the Black Wall Street was razed to the ground and American African Entrepreneurs and their families were systematically targeted, their properties destroyed and wiped out in a case of contemporary racial genocide must not be forgotten. And in Africa's contemporary times, we must remember the fates of Patrice Lumumba (Congo), Kwame Nkrumah (Ghana), Amílcar Cabral (Guinea Bissau and Cape Verde), Julius Nyerere (Tanzania), Moshood Abiola (Nigeria) and others, who, comprehending the ways of the perfidious West, wanted better for their people. From the highways to the byways, deliberate efforts were made to undermine the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the African Union (AU), using various tools in the boxes of colonialism and neo-colonialism; of which French control of the financial systems of its ex-colonies and levies on Haiti which has emasculated these countries remain poignant. We could ask, even if the syndrome was never real, what about what has transpired in continental Africa and the ways in which a Mobutu, a Tsvangirai, a Babangida, a Savimbi or a Dudus is fabricated to derail progress at critical moments in the history of Africana societies? How else can one explain the failure of Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Southern African Development Community (SADC), Organization of African Unity (OAU)/African Union (AU) or Caribbean Community (CARICOM) to understand the necessity for cooperation in the interest of progress?

Consider what happens in the African American society as a signal example of Willie Lynch Syndrome. How tokens of blackness are utilized to ensure that there is no unity among Africans seem a proof of the Willie Lynch syndrome, real or imagined. The situation of Haiti, mentioned above, the first country in the Western Hemisphere to defeat the armies of the West at the hay day of slavery, only to be destroyed by a pernicious French taxation, is not lost on humanity (our humanity, that is), nor is the effect of French policy of continued neo/colonization of colonies purportedly nominally independent, which even a European country (Germany) found anomalous, and a French President said if there were no French Africa, there would be no France; they are crying shame on human conscience. These are all related matters which continue to enforce the policy of emigration of Africana youths to service the Western societies' needs for cheap labour and intellectual renewal. But our educators and scholars hardly connect the dots to see where these

brain and brawn drains, and how it is a function of the hegemonic disorientation of global Africa resulting in inability to appreciate the collective survival imperatives of mutual collaboration.

The need for African Studies to focus on these matters cannot be diluted. It is the common interest of humanity that is at stake. The situation of our collective survival, which Kofi Anan (1998) indicated we need a political will to accomplish needs to be studied. For, *Adiye ba l'okun, ara o ro okun, ara o ro Adiye* – the fowl has perched on the rope, the rope is uneasy, the fowl is restless. The situation faced by Europe, USA and other countries of the developing world, in light of terrorism, emigrations/migrations, crime and violence cannot be solved unless we collectively, as humans, take a leaf from African ideas of society and sociation (Akiwowo 1983). We share a consanguinity that cannot be denied, except at our collective peril.

First, Africa and the Diaspora must invest in re-apprehending and appreciating the social and scientific engineering that made it possible for the Nile to be dammed, for the pyramids to be built all over Africa and the Americas, for the mummification of the dead, and for the Tasili region to retain the arts of the desert, while Zimbabwe retained evidence of chemistry over 100,000 years ago (Bewaji 2003, 2013). The fake idea of race, ethnicity, religious division, pernicious patriarchy, and greedy graft that takes from the poor to give to the rich, must be checkmated with scholarship that is robust enough to persuade the renegades among human beings that it is through our collective wealth and sharing that our collective humanity is enriched. We must collectively show to the world that the Capitalism that impels the “Parable of Talents” (Matthew 25:14-30) is totally destructive of our collective humanity, and does no one any good, as both the rich and the poor will live in a symbiotic relationship of fear and hatred. After all, there can be no disputing the veracity of the Yoruba proverb that, *Olowo kan l'aarin Otosi mefa, Otosi di meje* – a rich person among six impoverished persons makes seven impoverished persons. This is demonstrated by the caravan of migrants from Latin America to the USA, as regardless of the peril, people will move from poverty, danger and insecurity to locales of plenitude. Incidentally, most of the problems in Latin America and in Africa, the Middle East and elsewhere are fomented by America principally and by Europe collaboratively. Hence, stopping the migrants from source is impossible, even at the pain of death or incarceration on arrival at the “greener pastures” they think their destinations are. Whether Europe or USA likes it or not, the demographic shift which their official policies of greed and dispossession of the vulnerable peoples of the earth of their natural and human resources will lead to demographic minorities of Caucasians in these societies with time. The 2020 USA Presidential Elections is a telling demonstration of these, but the angst generated in the minds of racists is yet to be fully appreciated: when the Willie Lynch Syndrome stops working, it is our hope that the ways of the beasts – Trumpism – will be mellowed by voices of reason, to prevent a conflagration that will destroy prosperous societies because of self-hatred.

The many failures of capitalism are obvious. The meaninglessness and bogusness of democracy are manifest – both from its vaunted Greek origins, where it was the minority citizens of the polis that ruled, to the concocted ruse of contemporary wastage in the forms of electioneering and sloganeering that gulps billions that could have gone into lifting the masses of the left behind peoples out of poverty; there seems no end to the travesty that it has always been. African Studies, in concentrating on global Africa, must pay attention to its ancestry. African Studies writ large cannot afford to be left out of the equation of where to take our collective humanity in the critical century which may determine the survival of humanity or its perdition. Why is it that even as

notoriously violent as Jamaica is stereotyped to be, remittances constitute the second largest income earner, after tourism? There must be something valuable in African civilization which the Diaspora can teach humanity about the intrinsic worth of human life, and which our collective humanity can research and use to raise humanity globally, beyond destructive complexes that are fabricated with lives of their own in the form of the Pentagon industrial complex and the need to wage wars, first in order to deplete the stock of existing destructive inventory of arsenals and second in order to continue the false sense of power that tyrants impose on global humanity. Global African Studies must ensure that the voices of wisdom enshrined in indigenous knowledge systems are mined for the benefit of our collective humanity. This cannot be the case if direct responsibility is not taken by African intellectuals in all the areas of the academy.

## **7 Recommendations for Global African Studies and the Diaspora**

From the above reflections, there flows a number of recommendations for Global African Studies. Recently an African Studies Association of Africa (ASAA) was formed. Similarly, an African Philosophy Society (APS) was formed and its third biannual conference took place in October 28-30, 2019. The International Society for African Philosophy and Studies (ISAPS) was formed in 1994 and in 2007, SAPINA (Society for African Philosophy in North America led by Dismas Masolo and Barry Hallen) coalesced into it, to become a stronger international body. Similar organizations are mushrooming globally. It is still a surprise that Society for Decolonial Educational Curriculum have not yet been formed (probably I am poorly informed and it is my ignorance here), but this is a necessary body, with robust philosophical underpinnings which will assist in the push to liberate African educational systems and practices from the clutches of external interlopers dressed as benefactors.

In essence, what our discussion has evinced is a demonstration of the salience of the need to have robust African/a studies that is inclusive, inter- and multidisciplinary in conception and gestation, intersectionalist in formulation, intergenerational in orientation and introspective in resources generation and application, breaking those disciplinary decadences of artificial demarcations along silos of insularities of the disciplines of the sciences, technologies, humanities, social sciences, etc., not networking and communicating with each other, as if the goal is not about our collective human survival and flourishing. The effort which Africa Multiple Clusters implicate is an inclusive, integrative and all-encompassing interrogation of the epistemes of indigenous knowledges, beyond the tyrannies of imperialisms and hegemonies which currently ensure that the silos are impermeable and impenetrable. Future knowledge generators must see the connections between the various disciplines. Future knowledge users and disseminators must embrace what Code (1987) described as epistemic responsibility, taking humanity back from Trumpism and alternative facts.

For this reason, the task which the Africa Multiple Clusters of the University of Bayreuth and its four affiliate research and knowledge production partner centres and institutes in Africa must undertake is to find creative ways of ensuring that young intellectuals and researchers across global Africa take seriously the task of finding intellectually robust ways of, among others:

- Repairing the Breaches and Connecting the Cords of filial relations among global Africa which enslavement in the Americas and the Arabia, colonization and neo-colonization has wrought asunder;
- Recovering the Heritages and Cultures: Religions, Governance Systems, Calypso, Blues and Jazz, Reggae, Rastafari, Sports;
- Recovering, restoring Indigenous Knowledge Systems by erasing Epistemicide and ameliorating Epistemic Deficit, and
- Restoring African Humanity and our collective Humanity

If the above can be the only take-aways that we generate from this initiative, then we would have begun the process of providing humanity with new vistas for future integration of our collective survival in an inclusive way, rather than the current destructive winner takes all that is preached by capitalism and “democracy” as practiced in the West.

By way of a concluding footnote, any scholarship, research or policy engineering effort conducted about/on/in/with Africa must now actualize the vision of the Six Regions enshrined in the African Union Charter: North, East, South, Central, West and Diaspora. The Africa Multiple Clusters must include a Fifth Centre of Excellence – located in the Caribbean or Latin America (Brazil) – for the effort to truly be about/on/in/with Africa. Ute Fendler is right on the money when she averred that the future of African Studies must be cognizant of the shifts and intersections generated by changes and changing patterns of relationality and reflexivity. She said:

Against this background, the three core terms "multiplicity", "relationality", and "reflexivity" enable a more precise and deeper understanding of African and African-diasporic life-worlds. You can therefore also expect new insights into the subject areas that you mentioned in your question. What we envision is less a matter of directly application-oriented research, but primarily of basic research that elaborates on the interdependencies of cultural, linguistic, social, religious, political, economic, and ecological processes. This is precisely how these processes can be better analysed and rendered understandable. In individual cases, this can indeed lead to concrete solutions for practical problems (Fendler n.d.).

This is what African Studies and the Question of Diasporas, as a component of the University of Bayreuth Knowledge Lab means to me; it is the inclusive multiplicity, relationality and reflexivity of the future trajectories for apprehending, curating, understanding, applying and validating Global African Studies holistically and universally, for the benefit of humanity, through the restoration of African humanity as an intrinsic centre for dignity, respect and agency.

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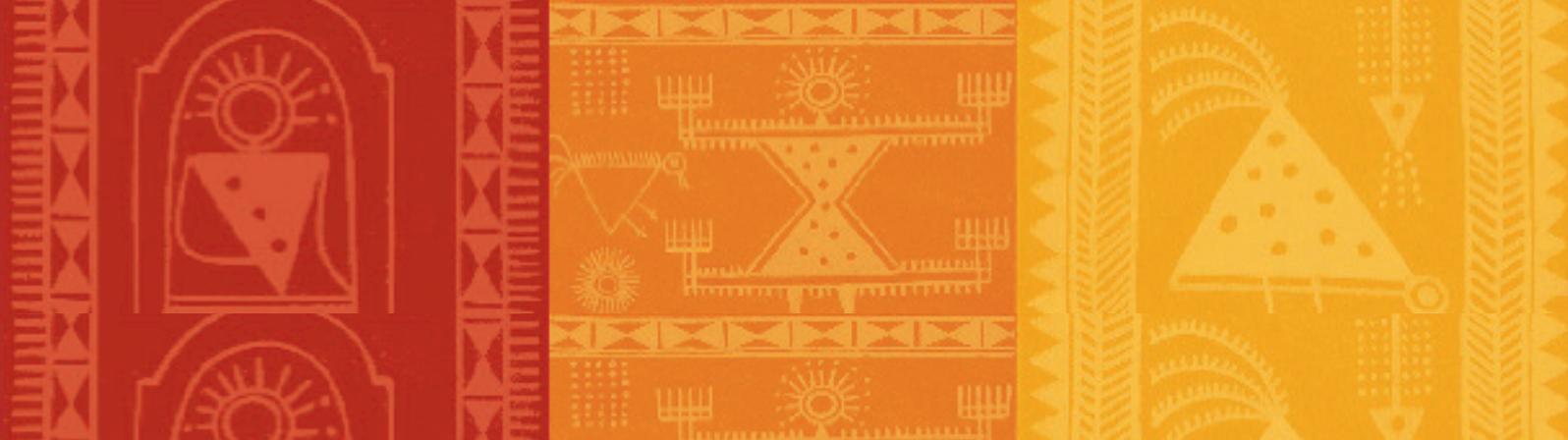
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