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DILEMMAS OF AFRICAN MODERNITY AND THEIR THEORETICAL CHALLENGES.

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Epistemicide, Epistemic Deficit, Sterile Leadership and the Vicious Cycle of Africana Underdevelopment

By all the measuring standards of development, it seems clear that Africana societies have been victims of declines in social, economic, political and other forms of developmental capital over the last five decades. Asia, the Far East, Latin America (Brazil) and China have witnessed remarkable economic gains, appreciation in the quality of life and even political advancement. But on average, Africa and black dominated societies have witnessed declines in standard of living, quality of life and positive life realization expectations. What is responsible for this? I look at the works of Rodney, Fanon, Mazrui, CLR James and others, to provide tropes for accounting for the debilitating topologies of Africana socio-economic underdevelopment. I posit that the consequences of the epistemicide that was foisted on Africana intellect during plantation slavery and colonization cannot be absolved, but even more pernicious has been the leadership epistemic deficit that pervades various strata of Africana intellectual landscape, manifesting in sterile, retarded and debilitating leadership cadre. I argue that deliberate efforts must be made to recapture Africana epistemic confidence, develop intellectual capital and engender cohesive Africana commitment to corporate existence, which will translate into social, economic, infrastructural, political, cultural enrichment and development of Africana societies. I close by painting intellectual pragmatist scenarios of consequences of not doing this, and consequences of undertaking the efforts prescribed here.

Epistemicide, Deficit, Leadership, Sterility, Underdevelopment.

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INTRODUCTION

In this essay, I canvass the following propositions: a) that the current content-centred educational systems and processes prevalent in Africana societies is ineffective, ineffectual and dysfunctional, because it does not address the needs of these societies in relating the education to the needs of the society; b) that given the service orientation of the content of education provided to colonial societies, through the development of messengers, clerks, interpreters, lower technicians, rather than responsible leaders for industry, society, technology, etc., the post-colonial societies have not graduated from this approach to training and education, hence there is a leadership vacuum both in intellectual and practical aspects of education in these societies; c) that the consequent superficial content based education, which prides itself on volume rather than quality, socio-cultural relevance of certification issued, has not served the societies of the south, because the critical issues of social existence, community cohesion, national harmony, etc., are not valued by the educational system and political leadership and, d) that there is need to revisit, rethink and re-appraise the modalities and paradigms which undergird the educational systems of developing Africana societies universally, and the knowledge the formal educational systems purvey at the expense of indigenous cultural values. This last point is against the background of a need to wean Africana societies from the apron strings of metropolitan Europe, America and now Asia, which leads to their dependence on aids, production of primary commodities and importation of manufactured goods, energy and, in many instances, useless personnel, if these societies are not to be eternally condemned to peonage, mendicancy and dependency.

Our discussion will be prefaced with a consideration of the nature of knowledge, the need for knowledge, the ways of knowing, the application of knowledge and the value of knowledge to human beings in society. We will explore the relation between the generation of knowledge, the apprehension of knowledge and the application of knowledge to the solution of problems in society, whereby knowledge which has no inherent value may lack locus and utility, thereby defeating the human need for such knowledge. In this instance, we would attempt to show that given the failure of Africana peoples to own the knowledge that is imparted as intrinsically human knowledge, and not as Western knowledge, Western science, Western technology and foreign development ideas, there is a dysfunctionality in the relationship between the attainment of formal education and ability to reel out tracts of information and the utility and applicability of such information to the real life issues of society.

The central piece of our argument will be to show that knowledge, as a stand alone cognitive attainment, is insufficient for the proper ordering and development of society. It has

to be combined with a consciousness of the sense of humanity indigenous to the society, and an appreciation of the interdependence of all human beings in society; this is a factor derivable from the fact that it is only within community of other human beings that knowledge is meaningful and life is fulfilled. This is a critical point that will have to be elicited given the background of many developments in many Africana societies over the last many decades. It is urged that the heritage of using educational attainments as a means of holding society hostage for remuneration, albeit disproportionate reward for no other reason than that one has certain qualifications, is at the base of the social and economic disasters that constitute Africana societies in the contemporary world.

KNOWLEDGE

There is always so much that is taken for granted, presumed, as self-evident, and/or overlooked, in the living of everyday life, and in the formulation of the foundations and in the process of formalizing discourse, ideas and knowledge in the academy. This is a situation that cannot be otherwise, as there would be too much to account for if we were to take into account every minor aspect of our practical and theoretical life either in the name of honesty giving attention to detail. This is especially so in philosophy writ large, not just in the area of the metaphysical presuppositions of the sciences alone, but in all other aspects of reflective existence, such as ethics, aesthetics, logic, epistemology, social and political philosophy, etc., with the consequence that we are then compelled to be victims of inattention to what R. G. Collingwood (1940) has aptly described as the presuppositions of the sciences generally (taking "science" now as the generic name for the pursuit of knowledge in critical, reflective and experimentally sound manner). We would suppose that this may be mainly because humans in society cannot elicit every aspect of the epistemic, and cognitive underpinnings of doxa, endoxa, episteme and praxis which sustain all the facets of daily existence. But most members of society, to varying degrees, are conversant with the foundations which make things work or not work in society – whether they be dos, don't, taboos or whatever they may be called. That some are more versed in the general ideas which constitute these basic foundations of existence is not anything beyond comprehension, because these are the cultural values, ideas and ideals which underpin human existence in society anyway. To that extent, those who make it their business to master more of these, including specialization in various esoteric and technical aspects of such knowledge, are valued and rewarded for the knowledge that they attain.

Lorraine Code (1987) has ably discussed what she called "epistemic responsibility" of human as knowing agents. These involve the fact that humans cannot be absolved from responsibility because of various possible caveats arising from certain individual limitations

or peculiarities, as well as the fact that humans owe each other certain duties as humans, participating in the transactions of epistemic co-existence, and depending on each other's epistemic capacities for maintaining some degree of cooperative and collaborative problem-solving, in order to minimize the incidence of danger, hardship and perdition on the one hand, while on the other, making possible the types of leisure, pleasure and happiness which improves the quality of life of humans in the universe. Her discussion, in *What can she know?*, very ably showed that human responsibility, as knowers, transcend gender barriers, regardless of the fact that traditional epistemology has privileged male agency over the female capacities, thereby denying humanity a fulsome understanding of human knowledge. In that regard she has consistently showed the limitations of traditional epistemology, albeit from an epistemological perspective of sceptical feminism (Code 1991).

But there is a sense in which her discussion left out, to my understanding, some of the minor but salient elements of human epistemic theory and practice, application and determination which what I have mentioned above is predicated upon. These elements, from the perspective that I examine here, are critical to the development of aspects of the ways of knowing, the sources of knowledge, the uses and abuses of knowledge, and the limitations of knowledge that are necessary for the development of societies from the margins of human development. This is the fact that, because humans are cognitive agents, understanding the fundamental issues relating to knowledge does not translate into proper use of knowledge, unless certain presuppositions of such knowledge attainment and utilization, are elicited.

NATURE OF "KNOWLEDGE"

Most discussions of "knowledge" presume the familiarity of all humans with the concept, the cognitive state, or the attribute which it describes. This derives from the idea mooted above, regarding what is taken for granted in intellectual arena when, for the possibility of discourse, certain ideas must be presumed. But it is when we begin to ask questions about what is meant that we understand the vagueness and ambiguities involved in the understanding of "knowledge". For our discussion here, we would understand "knowledge" as the kind of information that humans have about things, issues, states of affairs, situations, beings, selves, etc., which enable them to make/give informed opinion, decisions, contributions and approximations about them. From this perspective, it would follow that there must be conditions and consequences to knowledge. The conditions of attaining knowledge has mainly been the pre-occupation of philosophers – epistemologists. Examining the consequences of knowledge has not been much attended to, probably because it was presumed that those who have knowledge would not only know what to do with it, but that they will do what they have to do with it in a responsible way.

Attaining "knowledge" has always been a serious desire of humans, and because of this, understanding "knowledge", has consumed so much of the effort of epistemologists in traditional Western philosophy. This is because, in most traditional and among contemporary societies, it can be said that "knowledge" has been the major factor that has separated the haves from the have-nots. It is the main basis for the control that exists between peoples and individuals. It is that main item on the menu that enables groups to gain control over other groups. "Knowledge" is at the centre of success or failure. "Knowledge" is the crucial element in all domains of life – be it practical or theoretical. And in an increasingly pernicious and destructively competitive world, there can be no separation of "knowledge" from the wellspring of human realities – namely life, death, pain, hunger, wealth, failure, heaven, hell, planetary mappings and trips, exegesis, love and hate, death, happiness, and whatever we want to become – plus and inclusive of the process of becoming or extinction; everything depends on the presence or absence of "knowledge"! Having knowledge is critical to human survival, but not having knowledge is also critical to human survival. The debate about global warming, for example, and the various ecological occurrences around the world, whereby various phenomena such as drought, melting of the northern icecaps, the flooding of countries in Asia, the melting of the ice on the Andes mountains, the resurgence of various diseases related to warmer climate, the hungers attendant of poor harvests, etc, all indicate the importance of having knowledge; but more importantly it also indicates to us that there is obligation attached to possession of knowledge, and responsibility deriving from having knowledge. On the other hand, if we select to be ignorant, there are obligations and responsibilities attendant on such choice.

While in epistemology, theories of "knowledge" have been developed to meet the various needs for understanding, thematizing and accrediting "knowledge" claims, and these theories, deriving from various origins and motives, hence aimed at meeting diverse needs, have evolved in often paradoxical ways, leading, at times, to seemingly self-evidently contradictory conclusions and, consequently befuddling discourses, rather than illuminating human understanding of "knowledge". In this regard, our study of "knowledge" is with a view to transcending the abstract philosophizing that have pervaded classical philosophy in the Western tradition, by relating to the diversity of knowers, knowing conditions, aims of knowing, cultural factors in knowing, gender relations of knowing, epochal circumstances of knowing, etc. This is critical to discourses on "knowledge", as we must locate epistemology in the courtyard of reason, experience, practice, intuition, speculation and even the interest that drives it, while at the same time bearing in mind the transcendental needs of the sentient human feeling inadequate in the face of the vastness of the unknown labyrinths of the multiverse.

When we look at the issues of leadership in Africana societies and the relationship this has to issues of knowledge, we will not be concerned with abstract epistemology, rather, our interest is to see the extent to which what takes place in the process of articulating, organizing, transmitting and utilization of knowledge is relevant to the societies these leaders are leading or not. It is my summation that, over the last many decades, it can be concluded that, in a very fundamental sense, Africana societies have only taken on board what can be regarded as superficial "knowledge"; they have only embraced a kind of "knowledge" that is not only irrelevant to the wellbeing of Africana peoples, they have embraced a version of "knowledge" that has been pernicious to Africana development and survival. This has been a challenge that has not been fully articulated, nor has it been given full examination, especially to the extent that we still continue to live life and practice various versions of our existence in full contravention of the knowledge that we embrace to what can be regarded as enlightened or informed commonsense.

This challenge must be taken seriously in the light of the seminal position of G. E. Moore, that one should be suspicious of any philosophy that patently contradicts informed commonsense (Fogelin, 1996: 39). There is a serious problem with the way in which we have articulated "knowledge" and ascribed "knowledge" to those who can speak with the most foreign eloquence, or who can reel out the most mystifying abstract jargons, which fail in the most significant way to translating to welfare for the people of one's society. The greatest danger inherent in this arises from pretending that there is a univocal use of not only of "knowledge" in all instances of communication, but also in assuming that the only consequence following from having attained to what it portend is demanding that we lord it over others who have not attained such "knowledge". One other consequence is the errant nature of the leadership that is foisted on these societies, such that issues are thematized along rigid, impenetrable abstractive technical jargons, which become the pet game-cube of evasive thinkers insulated from realities of daily human situations. Can we then say that language is like a pair of dark, fashion or sun-glasses which may serve as cultural, racial, gender, class and other prisms through which we see the world? Except in cases of those of us whose glasses are not derived from visual challenges that need correction, it may be further asked: can we ever imagine truly taking off the pair of dark, fashion, class, race, religious, political, professional, gender and other glasses that we have become so used to, so that we can see things without the encumbrances of the glasses?

THE CONSEQUENCES OF KNOWLEDGE

In previous discussion, I had articulated the distinction between the conditions necessary for any claim to knowledge to be regarded as valid, *ex hypothesi* and the

consequences that follow from attainment of knowledge.   Following the traditional discussion in epistemology, these conditions that are individually necessary and jointly sufficient are, with regard to a proposition *p*:

   i) *p is true,*
   ii) *S is confident that p,*
   iii) *S is justified in being confident that p, and*
   iv) *S's justification for p is externally (not locally) conclusive (Bewaji 2007: 56).*

Some of the consequences of having knowledge, as enunciated in traditional Western epistemology, are: certainty, infallibility or incorrigibility, indubitability, justification or verifiability and entitlement to claim (Bewaji 2007, Chapter 4).   But following this abstract discussion of knowledge does not provide proper illumination to the problem being discussed here, as it pertains to only theoretical construction of epistemological discourse.

Probably I have been equally guilty of allowing myself to be hoodwinked into the false complacency that having attained some level of competence in an intellectual engagement would translate into use of the engagement to engage real life, translating knowledge into the domain of practice and action.   That this has not been the case with most of us, that is the so-called educated, has compelled me to look below the surface to see what exactly may be responsible for the apparent bi-polar psychological states of most Africana leaders: where you have persons who are perhaps the very best in the disciplines of their training, but who are perhaps the most horrible human beings in the way they conduct their leadership roles in society, in their moral capacity as leaders, in their inability to understand that what makes human society prosper is not just the wealth one individual has acquired but general welfare members of society at large have!

This means, for me, that I have to see what is responsible for the parlous situation of Africana communities, in spite of the numerous "educated" clones of the white man that we have been able to parade in the halls of fame of the ivy league institutions contrived by the West to befuddle out consciousness into forgetting what matters most to our collective survival!   Take the cases of Nigeria and Jamaica as examples. There is no doubt that Nigerians and Jamaicans are among the very best intellectually and physiologically when we look at "black people" generally. Nigerians and Jamaicans have conquered all domains of human intellectual pursuit and excelled, remarkable beyond the imagination of many, and thus can be acclaimed achievers. However, in spite of the intellectual and physiological prowess, there is very little to show in terms of social, communal and political development: Nigeria is one of the most backward countries in the world, with a life span of about 40 years for men and 45 for women.   Jamaica is one of the countries in the world with the highest inequality in income distribution and about the highest per capita murder rate in the world.

I hear various sighs in the background, but I am not mollified by these, nor would I be sanguine in the failed efforts to look for conspiracy theories and scapegoats. For me, I think that we need to look beyond the superficial levels, and ask what is responsible. And this is where I suggest that we do a meta-epistemological analysis of knowledge, asking what is it that makes those societies in the West function, even with most inclement circumstances, while blessed Africana societies are desperately lacking in human welfare?

In another discourse I had argued that we have reached a stage when we need to sing the requiem to Western Education, especially tertiary education, in Africana societies (Bewaji 2008). My argument then hinged on the fact that Africana societies received what was more or less the shell of education from the West, took this as all that was necessary to function as humans beings, and hence failed miserably in the task of human development, social cohesion and ultimately in nation-building. But this analysis needs another leg to become robust enough to bear the weight of critical analysis that it carries. And, this is where our need now to appreciate the other elements of leadership that is absent in intellectual discourses so far becomes more critical that ever before. These elements cannot be found in Western scholarship, as the problem is alien to their intellectual, cultural and social terrains, and Africana scholars have not been able to appreciate the issue because it has been a benign one for too long, lying below the surface of academic discourse and consequently being ignored by sundry experts from divers disciplines. It is becoming destructively stark now as the human family moves ever closer together, in a global setting which pits the mighty and the weak together in a macabre dance of life and death, where survival is increasingly tenuous for those who ignore the innocuous elements of intellectual engagement to their peril, hence I have been able to perceive it rather indistinctly over a cluttered radar screen obscured by survival issues, needs and desiderata of African humanity.

In *Epistemic Responsibility* Code (1987) highlighted the fact that all humans have epistemic responsibility toward each other which cannot be denied without engaging in intellectual, practical and legal bad faith, which must incur sanctions of one form or another if the situation is to be redressed and injury caused expiated. But, the taxonomy of epistemic responsibility that she employed in that most seminal work, being context dependent as it were to the Western situation that it addresses most poignantly, is different from what I identify here, as this kind of engagement that I attempt here is hardly ever undertaken. I am suggesting that Africana leadership has failed to appreciate that some of the consequences of attaining knowledge are a) appreciating the nature of the universe of action, intellectual engagement, and obligations to self and to others, of one's society, b) understanding that one's knowledge is not isolable or separable from the generosity of the society that made it possible for one to be so endowed in the first instance, and in whose service it must be

deployed, if the knowledge is to be meaningful, c) appreciating the responsibility which human division of labour imposes on all members of society, to the extent that each member contributes to the welfare of each other member to make life meaningful for all, d) appreciating the obligations that flow from this responsibility, to not become insular, renegade and parasitic on the kindness of others, and e) building on the collaboration, cooperation and sharing of resources – natural, human, psychological, epistemic, ethical and social – to ensure that there is no false pretence that one individual is better than the collective either in the development or apportioning of the resources that flow from creativity exercised by each individual.

Given the above, to attain cognitive state that one could describe as knowledge or knowing, without exhibiting the consequences that we have remarked above has implications for the quality of life of humans in society. It is arguable that such failure could be so pernicious as to consign one and one's society to mendicancy, servitude and perpetual retrogression. In a very critical way, this situation is most destructive of social, cultural, political and every other welfare of members of society if not redressed in a concerted manner to ensure that those entrusted with knowledge by society appreciated the grave responsibilities that they have to bear.

IGNORANCE

It is my belief and the view canvassed in this discussion that, in all societies, leadership is crucial to progress and success. It determines everything and manifests the character of cultures. Because of this fact societies develop formal and informal, but clear-cut methods of selecting, educating and culturing leaders to undertake the arduous task of steering the ship of state. So, the view maintained is that Africana leadership has failed because they have lacked the most critical component of intellectual accomplishment, in the form of appreciating that there can be no leadership peace when there is no peace and harmony in the larger society. To expect that the leadership can be insulated from the general malaise that afflict the society at large is to exhibit a most deplorable form of ignorance, a lack of knowledge, and an incompetence that is most inexcusable.

By definition, "**ignorance**" means lacking in knowledge, being poorly educated, to be lacking in awareness or understanding, or being poorly bred and uncultured. One may wonder how one could describe persons with PhD degrees in various arcane disciplines, lawyers, engineers, architects, educationists, etc., as ignorant. It may even be cynically indicated, in caveat, that we are all knowledgeable in some things and ignorant in others. Or even that since we cannot know everything, therefore nobody is ever actually ignorant, which

will paradoxically mean we are also all ignorant! Now the appeal of these obfuscations arise from the ambiguities they engender or encapsulate.

It is not my intention in this discussion to generalize and say that the intellect of the leaders of Africa and its Diaspora are *tabular rasa* – clean, blank, empty slates, as postulated by Locke in examining the mind of infants at birth. That would be a category mistake that cannot be justified. On the contrary the point at issue is whether at independence, the equivalent of child birth in the context of nationhood, and even now, the leaders of Africa and its Diaspora were actually persons prepared for leadership, equipped with useful, relevant and meaningful cognitive capacities necessary for the upliftment of their societies above where they met them, or whether they were people who inherited leadership by deliberate or accidental default. Whichever option one may decide to embrace, there is no way of being absolved of complicity in the epistemological farce that pervade the Africana intellectual terrain.

I am willing to assert that most leaders of the African and its Diaspora polities were persons with dubious intellectual, social, psychological, technical and cultural qualifications. Most of them were trained to be recipients of crumbs from metropolitan benefactors through the unindigenized Western educational systems (European and American) that were used to supplant the indigenous educational systems in African societies upon the modern advent of Europe in Africa. To compound matters, after attending the elementary and secondary schools in their home countries the leaders either went to the metropoles to acquire qualifications of "alienation" in various parasitic profession, or they attended emasculated surrogates of foreign institutions started to train clerks and lackeys in the colonies, graduating to lord it over their hapless compatriots who were not fortunate enough to have gained scholarships or grants for similar "accomplishments".

By acquiring the certificates, diplomas and degrees, the returnees and indigenous "roast breadfruits" immediately set about the task of separating themselves from their kindred; in some instances ensuring that there were erected impermeable barriers between themselves and their former colleagues in the primary and secondary schools, not to talk of those who never attended the white man's institutions who were now called heathens, barbarians, uncivilized masses or backward fools, just like their mentors regarded the peoples of the colonies before them. Not having properly mastered what made for humanity and civilization in their own cultures, and not understanding what made for the success of the Euro-American metropoles, they did not know what to make of their new statuses and the accoutrements that accompanied it.

One basic first lesson every political science (POL 101) student is taught is that office has its trappings – rights, duties, privileges and obligations. I had written elsewhere that the

predicament of the "been-to" and the newly created white man in black skin is curious on many fronts. She/he is like a fish out of water – an incognito, neither here nor there. She/he is lost and found at the same time, but loosing the self extraneously (Bewaji 2007: 410). Having acquired the new "book" knowledge, without ever being familiar with the epistemological and metaphysical foundations that give meaning to such knowledge, these "knowledgeable" characters are most willing to use these now-found capacity to speak in tongue as an instrument of oppression. It is even worse for those who are no trained in the use of the instruments of maximum destruction – weapons of war. They were most incredible animals in human guise, as they become the worst predators on the resources and human coefficient of their societies.

While they were trained to supplant the old age-grade system of defence of their societies from external attack, they turned the now powers placed in their care to fend off enemies from their societies on their own societies, by becoming the worst enemies of their societies. While in the West, an Alexander Hague would lose ranking position in a Ronald Reagan administration for displaying such effrontery as saying that someone – not necessarily himself – was in charge when the President was shot, being a retired army officer, with all the innuendoes of banana republic that carries with it to the world, in Africana circumstances, that would have been regarded not just as bravery, but as a god sent indication that the army should take over power. The knowledge of ballistics was sure means of domestic "terrorism"!

What is apparent from this is that in the case of the Africana leader, this lesson learnt about power and office never sank through the impervious cognitive barricades of the minds of these leaders (they were never exposed to his element of cultural knowledge of Western formal education in the first instance), as effort is made on every front by them not only to access the rights and privileges that come with office, but to ensure that the duties, responsibilities and obligations that come with it is negated and abrogated with uncanny impunity. Intellectually miscegenated, they are a group of new overlords and neo-plantation masters demanding respect, never understanding that respect is a reciprocal, a privilege that is first earned through hard work, consistent and persistent demonstration over and over again by proving desert to such high accolade. They consistently take the perquisites of office for granted, while the protection they owe to their society is privated. They gallivant all over the world on diplomatic passports, while their people are hostages or even held in utter disdain by them – mere instruments in the furtherance of their ambitions of self-perpetuation and self-aggrandizement.

So, while they are "knowledgeable" in the white-man's book information, they are without the culture necessary for leadership. They are schooled in applauding the

achievements of the metropoles, while they are ignorant of the achievement of their forebears. Where they are, they do not think they owe themselves any obligation to leave a legacy which, at least, equals these past achievements, if not surpass them, for generations unborn. While they are experts in formulating draconian laws for detaining their compatriots, banning free speech, protecting "**official secrets**", determining treasonable felony, etc., they are ignorant of the basic matters of what constitutes the good self and family image. They are ignorant of what constitutes scandal having been inured to all matters of decency and having become corporate soles – even mismanagement of state funds and gratification of friends and family with public largesse through all kinds of dubious contracts and property sales is sport (Bewaji 2007: 411).

Of course, it is possible to accuse me of being too hard on African and its Diaspora political leaders. But it is not only the political class that is afflicted with this epistemological malaise. Other strata of leadership is equally infected, as the actions, behaviour and pronouncements of leadership in the academia and business, including even in the arts and leisure services are equally derogatory!

One could argue in their defense that when they were schooling the world situation were not as complex – no September 11, 2001, for example, and that now there are protections for nations and states in the world against tyrannies in the form of allied actions (meaning, of course, American action in American interest!). They could even challenge me to present an example of a state in which there is no corruption in the whole world and where there are no other leadership problems. In the first instance, I will be pressed to confess in response that the world socio-economic climate has always been complicated. Our forebears were "deceived" and "blackmailed" to sell their brethren and sistren into slavery, but we have conspired in contemporary times to excommunicate our compatriots into foreign lands to seek sustenance. They could even suggest that there is an innate Africana generosity that is often exploited by peoples of other climes; by which the suggestion is that Africans are better human beings, who fail to activate the vicious element of their human nature to external enemies.

Now, this kind of exculpatory gymnastics would easily be seen by any reflective person as a ruse that cannot even persuade the most gullible! For one, the inverted commas, in the last paragraph is to show the ambivalence of the intended meaning. We could not absolve our forebears totally of culpability in the historical phenomena of slavery, because a lot of epistemological irresponsibility, ignorance and greed (and in some instances these were married to religious bigotry) played tremendous roles in the sordid affair, hence the part reluctance of the West to pay reparations to Africans and their descendants for the sordid affair of enslavement! This reluctance has no basis either in historical antecedence or

in logical facticity, but living in a world in which "The rich get richer and the poor gets jail", it is understandable that the beneficiaries of injustice never relinquish any part of their undeserved advantages without a fight!

Now the type of predicament that we are attempting to understand here under the typology of ignorance is necessary for the introspective effort that can determine future leadership awareness. For one, leadership myopia is a disease that cannot be cured by culturally alienating and exogenous content-based educational orientation. The ignorance adverted here has to be self-recognized as a defect through self-awareness. Africana leaders must undertake self-reflection, and use every opportunity afforded them to examine their societies historically and contemporaneously and futuristically. In some instances facilities, in the form of Institutes of Strategic Studies or War Colleges, have to be provided for such reflection, and honesty must be the watchword. For another, the leadership that can take African and its Diaspora polities into the future must understand what the world is about – that there are no permanent friends but only permanent interests, and that there cannot be free lunches, as every benefit must have a cost, just as the cost of poor leadership is the pauperization of the population and human and ecological disasters that we are witnessing in most African and Diaspora polities.

How do we assuage the ignorance? This question has been partly answered in the foregoing paragraph, but it may bear restatement to suggest clearer ways of doing this. When we understand that there is a serious intellectual cleavage making our good intentions for progress unrealizable, then we would note, first, that all hands must be on deck in the sense of pooling all intellectual resources and consulting all our peoples in decision making mechanisms; second we would then realize that we need to invest more capital and human resources in the general education of the citizenry at large, because that is the first insurance against deception, enslavement internally or externally and bad government; and third we would realize that there is always a limit to which gluttony and greed can succeed in any society and hence desist from ignorant depravity and debauchery. On the first score, we would insist that where there is diversity of views in contention, reasons for accepting any one will be the deciding factor rather than ethnic origin of the protagonist of any view. For the second, a highly sensitized and knowledgeable citizenry will not gullibly follow definitions of national interest. And in the case of the third factor, even the narrow-minded leader will realize the stupidity of greed in a society of extreme poverty as there would be difficulty in enjoying the ill-gotten wealth in a pool of deprivation which will breed terror and crime. These points are not exhaustive but mere pointers to the various dangers that lurk around the corner in societies that glorify bad and visionless leadership.

MEMORY – FORGETTING NOTHING, FORGIVING MUCH

A lot has been made of the example of the post-apartheid Truth and Reconciliation effort in South Africa, and many societies are clamouring for this to serve as the apex of human creative way of transcending recriminations that may arise when victims of injustice finally get the opportunity to vent their disaffection. While this is useful, the dangers are very real, for injustice when swept under the carpet of convenience and never seriously redressed have a way of festering and becoming even more explosive. To that end Africa needs to learn the lesson not to forget why they are where they are today, so that history does not repeat itself. And it must be made clear that human beings cannot successfully play God when only one set are being asked to so do, while beneficiaries of injustice parade the appendages of injustice with impunity. To this end, Africana memory must be sharpened and deepened to enhance preparedness to safeguard the future. This is where knowledge becomes a tool for empowerment, and memory becomes its security. And we cannot condone selective memory in these matters, because to deliberately disown some elements of our past is to play a dangerous hide and seek game with human existence.

Two points needs be emphasized while still on the point of selective memory by contrast with history making. In the first instance, this selective memory is not the same as trying to carefully unravel aspects of history that has been suppressed or destroyed by conquerors and oppressors. In many instances the denied or destroyed histories manage to engage attention through their survival of denial, as archaeological, cultural and linguistic evidences make clear. What we argue against is the effort to selectively attend to aspects of one's history or that of one's society with the objective of making mischief or not learning appropriate lessons that the whole history has for the self and for one's society.

The second point here is even more salient. Leadership often attempt to re-engineer society according to "visions" they may have. Because of this, there is the tendency to re-create histories of their societies in line with the visions they entertain. In many instances what results are the development of all kinds of ideologies and myths regarding pioneers, heroes and heroines, founders and past greatness. In many instances such fictional declamations are associated with inspirations and destinies hallowed in all forms of linguistic formats. What this amounts to is not simply selective memory, because it does not simply focus on those aspects of history edifying to the self or group but actively rewrites history in revisionist and often pernicious manners.

BAD FAITH

In a short dialogue such as this, it cannot be expected that exhaustive discourse of the textured and multi-layered concept such as "bad faith" or the other concepts we have examined here will be presented. Neither will I stick to the original existentialist nuances of the concept nor the creatively appropriated version of it by my friend Lewis R. Gordon (1995). But those familiar with the literature in these interesting discourses will see the affinity between my deployment of the concept of "bad faith" within the philosophy of leadership as it relates to African and African Diaspora polities and the existentialist, phenomenological and the racial discourse variations.

What is leadership "bad faith"? It constitutes lying to oneself about one's condition (and one's national, racial, cultural, economic, social predicament), about one's and one's fellow compatriot's reality, about one's and compatriot's being-ness. It is indicating that we are making progress when in deed we are quite clear that the benchmarks of progress have been statistically lowered to accommodate disingenuous interpretations of data. It is not facing up to one's and compatriot's ontology, as a *thing* from the Western consciousness, rather than as a self, as an identity, or even as a self to the self, and as one of selves. It is not recognizing that in spite of celebrated individualism embraced by members of Western societies, there is no expropriating individuation to the point of mutual extinction, for in all critical instances, the reverberating dictum remains: *I am, because we are* (title of an anthology edited by Fred Hord and Jonathan Scott Lee, 1995). It is the unholy acceptance of the dictum, "Rome was not built in a day", a call to complacency, an abdication of responsibility to build, rather than the current situation of continually pulling apart and destroying what others have laboured to build. (Those familiar with Nigeria in the 60s, 70s, 80s and the 90s will attest to the destructive craftiness of African leaders).

Bad faith is also attempting to escape from freedom, choice and responsibility. Existentialists have shown that the condition of being human imposes choices on us, even in instances where we suppose we may have none. One may find reason to question the methodological foundations of existentialism, but the validity of necessity for choice and decision-making is not in contest. We have, as leaders and followers, the freedom to choose, we have determinate capacity to affect our collective destiny. Recognition of this capacity is good faith, denial of it is bad faith. Even in an interdependent world, that so-called global economy, there are acts of freedom that are inalienable, and denying responsibility or anchoring one's fortunes on the whims of external agencies is bad faith. What is being suggested here is that there are simple acts of self-sufficiency that attracts respect and approbation – such acts are in the form of honesty, only accepting justly earned

reward, and refraining from benefiting others on the grounds of vested interests. These are not too much as expectations of the people who have reposed trust in the leadership. Not doing this is a denial of self-agency and freedom, and it is bad faith.

It may be argued that in many third world societies there are very few options. That the limitation of the options, in themselves, constitute a reason for the fated failure of our political economies. Now, this is a disingenuous escapism. It begs the issue, as no society has limitless options, what others have is accountability and self respect – recognition of self worth, value and image, as transcending immediate gratification of self and cohorts. This is where the bad faith arises, as failure to recognize that coming either from slavery or colonialism disadvantages self and compatriots, and dealing with all and sundry foreign or international interests primarily on the basis of skepticism. Those who were masters and lords cannot be happy about your freedom, and will continue to surreptitiously do whatever they can to retain the umbilical cord of control. Consequently, the African and Diaspora leader must use the knowledge of this **socio-genesis** (Gordon 1997 p. 14) to under-gird all relations with others (that is, with the *other*).

We often wonder why, for example, our athletes and academics do so well internationally and our political and economic leaders are destined for mediocrity! Athletes and academics do not limit themselves within exogenously determined parameters, they often grasp at the impossible, seeking greatness where they have been told they cannot venture. They do not accept the concept of inebriating impossibility, substituting dreaming of and working for greatness for indolence and intellectual incapacity as our political and economic leaders often do. They do not allow metaphysical and mythical stereotypes to confine and obfuscate their vision of what the competition is, as they seek to transcend the invisible corporate glass of the sporting and intellectual world. On the contrary, our political and economic leaders embrace bad faith and seek external solutions to each and every little problem encountered. Believing in the intrinsic 'poverty' of "blackness", as if it is a cerebral melanin incapacity, they derogate the creativity of their own type only to accept the rejects of other societies as greatness (hiring second rate Euro-American technicians and mediocre academics as experts while indigenous African and Diaspora intellectuals waste on the heap of prophets without honour in their own country and in their own continent).

We all know that beggars have no choice. You could see the self-effacement of our leaders when they interact with leaders of the Western and Pacific societies (whether on Genetically Modified Grains for Zambia, accepting storage of highly toxic waste for pittances in the backyard of ignorant locals or in the importation of such an outdated Steel technology for a multi-billion Naira project as in the case of Ajaokuta Steel Rolling Mill in Nigeria). They clamour for attention, rather than doing the hard work to earn it, visiting Euro-American

metropoles on every whim only to have under-secretaries of foreign governments receiving our heads of states at the international airports to show how unwelcome our leaders have become to these foreign governments. This is absolute bad faith: not to recognize the pride their followers have in themselves and that they can have in their leaders. How can we accept invisibility and non-humanity of oneself and of one's kind in the presence of the other? Why do we pretend disappearance where we need presence – is this clearly because we cannot survive without handouts from the rogues who have stolen so much from our lands and blood? Could it be fear of our brothers and sisters showing us the errors that lie in waiting which can be avoided through the pooling of our intellectual resources?

Also leadership bad faith is evident in the acceptance of the essentialist typologies of human categories. This is supposing that there are intrinsic intellectual and psychological attributes, rather than appreciating the deterministic aspects of human existence and experiences as consequences of human agency. The unwillingness to take deliberate and deliberative choices to improve one's lot and the lot of ones society is bad faith. When leadership appoints foreign companies for indigenous jobs, rather than competent indigenous companies, because of jaundiced stereotype of indigenous incompetence, it is bad faith, just as it is bad faith to appoint to leadership positions in our organizations incompetent foreigners because African experts will not allow ineptitude or because African experts could be threats to show our incompetence.

Let me close this section with one final example of bad faith. When the media leadership in Jamaica, for example, chose to highlight only stories of rape, mass killing and gross homicide from selective other, especially Western societies, to show that crime and violence take place in other societies; when politicians seek to show that politics is like "that" all over the world, to excuse their ineptitude, nepotism and favouritism; when the clergy jostle for prominent seats at the National Prayer Breakfast and at meeting with the President of the new Africa Union, President of Republic of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki, for camera and photo opportunities even as they canvass their relevance to the new African Union; when lecturers tell their students that they did not receive As in their days, hence no one in their class can get As; whenever we abuse our offices in our little spaces or fail to discharge our duties to the best of our abilities, we exhibit bad faith. What is most curious about bad faith is that "what goes round comes around". When we turn round and wonder why things are the way they are, why our societies never advance, why our lives are weighed down by terrible debt burdens, then we should understand the reality, existential and practical nature, of bad faith in all its ramifications.

IN LIEU OF A CONCLUSION

This is an on-going discourse on leadership in African and African Diaspora polities. In this regard, it is a call to all Africana peoples, be they students, intellectuals, leaders and other stake-holders in society to join in the debate. I can only suggest that current educational structures have failed Africans and African Diaspora in developing responsible leadership – looking toward Oxbridge or Harvard is looking in the wrong direction. It is clear that what China and India have achieved in the world today is not a product of Western education and influence per se, but a consequence of leadership with vision and determination for greatness. Thus the respect that India and China command in the world is not gratuitous, merely on the basis of mutual recognition of humanity of Euro-Americans and Indians and Chinese, but a recognition of the power base of these peoples on a par with Euro-American peoples.

What makes nations great cannot be learnt from exogenous sources, as no nation wants other nations to be independent of its control, nor would be generous enough to cede such control once attained. Greatness of African and African Diaspora societies have to come endogenously. So also, history must be understood for what it is, not lamented, but harnessed to understand where interests lie. A situation where leadership is graft-intoxicated, debauched, full of politrickery, disdain and contemptuousness of the people of their societies, cannot make for contemporaneous greatness nor can it foster any future for the peoples of African descent, what I prefer to called the "roots and fruits" of Africa, mainland or off-shore.

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