

# EKWURU'S AFRIZEALOTISM AND THE DIALECTICS OF AFRICAN PREDICAMENT

*Christian Nwadinihu*

*Department of Philosophy, Faculty of Humanities, Imo State University, Owerri, Nigeria.  
cnwadinihu@yahoo.com*

## **Abstract:**

Africa is faced with challenges which emanate from its scary history of slavery, colonialism, racialization, colour politics and internally generated predicaments. The search for a way out of these predicaments has necessitated a philosophical framework for African resurgence. It is on this basis that Emeka George Ekwuru's Afrizealotism emerges as a response to the enduring challenges facing Africa. Afrizealotism which means love and zeal for Africa comes with novelty that is economic, political, social, contextualization and cuts across several factors in order to restore Africa. This work therefore argues that Afrizealotism is a philosophical current aimed at eliciting passion for Africa, and a thorough deconstruction and reconstruction of the pyramid of racism and discrimination at the level of words and meanings, significations and symbolifications, arts and representations, history and historicizing, self-assertion, identity, and ideological currents. While this work employs the methods of textual analysis and exposition in its investigations. It expresses the view that Afrizealotism provides a veritable framework for African consciousness to self-crafting and development. Afrizealotism is a liberation philosophy that signals the holistic turning back of the African, with proper care and love and with its new vision of civilization for Africa.

**Keywords:** Afrizealotism, African Predicament, Colonialism, self-crafting, Liberation

## **Introduction**

Africa has not fared well among its peers with the reality of bad leadership, identity crisis, literary misrepresentation, subjugation, racial discrimination, internal caused crisis and West self-assigned leadership. The challenge therefore is to chart a new liberation ideology that will be from Africa and African in thinking, presentation and orientation while taking into account it's past, present and the future. It is in response to this concern that George Emeka Ekwuru proposed the idea of Afrizealotism as a restoration philosophy that will ignite the fire of consciousness in Africa and call for self-crafting. The Philosophy of Afrizealotism incorporates the "various processes through which Africans can awaken themselves to their deplorable conditions and struggle to liberate themselves from the historical burdens of backwardness" (Ekwuru 36).

Though much have been propagated by African and non-African scholars on the need to save Africa, pre and post-colonial experience, history, exploitation and what it means to be human as an African in the view of the West, there is need as Amaku noted "to focus on the existential experiences of the human person in Africa, to look into her joys and sorrows, her worth and worthlessness, her greatness and pettiness, her dignity and indignity. There is need to do a critical investigation into the ontological standing of the human person in the continent"(2) especially in the world of today that is fast caught in the circumference of continuous change. Africans therefore "need to find and establish a foundation for what and who they are, what they believe in, and the values they hold and live for. This is necessary if they are to orientate themselves in a world becoming ever more global" (Kiarie 11). This work therefore exposes the concept of Afrizealotism, outlines its possibility of mental reconfiguration and establishes its mode as an alternative philosophy of

consciousness for African emancipation in the face of African predicament. It pays attention to the lived experiences, degradation, inhuman treatment and subjugation of Africans. This work is a clarion call towards awakening the self-consciousness of Africans to chart a new course for African self-crafting and development.

### **The African Predicament**

In *Africa and the Myth of Sleeping Giant: Towards the Age of Afrizealotism*, Ekwuru noted that “one of the basic but sad truths that an African child of this millennium faces is that the modern history of the continent started in, infused with, and is characterized by negation. Africa is therefore, the continent of negation”(8). The African of today is faced with challenges which emanated from its scary history and story of slavery, colonialism, language domination, racialization and colour politics and internally generated predicaments which range from ethnic crisis, politics of the belly, political intimidation, etc. The birth of colonialism brought in the clash of forces and subjugation of the weaker ones. This subjugation led to diverse notions which in our contemporary epoch, has not yet been deleted. The dilemma of colonialism ushered in mental colonialism, subjugation, exploitation, deprivation, abuses, political dilemma, enslavement, educational cum historical manipulations, anti-thesis of humanism, economic, cultural, religious and mental disorder. According to Ezeanyika:

Colonization wiped out all pretence in the dangerous stratagem of the European settlers. The introduction of foreign rule ensured a comprehensive and systematic exploitation of Africa's numerous resources. It also reinforced the continent's loss of political independence that subsequently led to economic enslavement, thus introducing and later perpetuating economic dependence. The combined loss of political and economic independence vanquished the African territories, state, and empires during the colonial era, and ensured the continued economic dependency even after almost five decades of nominal political independence (90).

Colonialism which glorified dependency and diverse crisis was seconded by the fact of slavery, which expatiated the evil of inhumanity to man. In the period of slavery, the blacks were humiliated, physically tortured, killed at random, dehumanized, etc. According to Oyebola, “the second intriguing fact about the black race is that it was the only race in history which had between 14.6million and 20 million of its members physically transported as slaves from Africa to a completely new area (the Americas) and with the period of transportation lasting about 300 years”(11). W.E.B. Du Bois, the famous Afro-American historian, calculated that from about 1510 when the first slaves were transported to the New World till the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, a total of 14,650,000 blacks were taken to America from Africa as slaves. Later estimates put the number of black slaves removed from Africa from the sixteenth century onwards at 20 million (Oyebola 11). Thus, there was an institutionalization and racialization of slavery in Africa. In *The Origins of Totalitarianism* Hannah Arendt noted that “slavery's crimes against humanity did not begin when one people defeated and enslaved its enemies (though of course this was bad enough), but when slavery became an institution in which some men were 'born' free and others slaves, when it was forgotten that it was man who had deprived his fellow-men freedom, and when the sanction for the crime was attributed to nature” (297). Thus, the overall consequence of this as Ekwuru noted “the vast continent and its inhabitants were systematically conferred and stigmatised with the insignia of slave status” (*The Dynamics of Afri-Raciogenesis*, 214).

Africa in the period of slavery and colonialism was seen as an enslavable personality and there was need to invent new ideology to categorize the African person as a sub-human

and this was built into certain biogenetic factors like race and colour. Africa became not just a victim of slavery but a constructed and constituted victim. Though this atrocity was committed by the white man, the African cannot claim not to be involved in aiding the white to accomplish their aim. To this Oyebola concurs as he writes that “equally strange was the active support which the African chiefs and middle class gave to the capturing and transportation of their fellow blacks to America. All along the East and West African coasts trading stations sprang up. These were manned by African chiefs and entrepreneurs who sold black slaves to the whites on trade by barter basis”(11). However, as Ekwuru pointed out:

The exodus of slavery marked the loss of the African right to respect and better treatment as a human being down the history of human civilization. Those captives who left Africa in chains were given a collective name as *Negroes*. It was quite unfortunate that the event of the voyage of captives, gave rise to all sorts of negative castigations, constructions and definitions of racial image of the people of Africa decent (*The Dynamics of Afri-Raciogenesis*, 250).

While the course of slavery brought the infusion of the entire social essence of Africa with the semantic hold of *Negroes*, Africa became synonymous with blackness which turned out to be a point of identity and disqualification in the course of human history. On another hand, there was literary construction which was designed to degrade Africa in the pages of books. In *The African Origin of Greek philosophy: An Exercise in Afrocentrism*, Innocent Onyewuenyi “chronicles the misrepresentation of western scholars especially eighteenth and nineteenth century classicists, philosophers and historians, bent rationalizing slavery and colonialism and reconciling European inhumanity with the supposed barbarianism of the Africans whom they victimized” (vi). In the arena of intellectual discourse, the African man is considered to be inferior and incapable of abstract reflection or thinking. As Onyewuenyi puts it: “in the field of scholarship, western anthropologists, philosophers, historians and missionaries claim that most Africans are intellectually inferior to white races and cannot engage in logical and abstract thinking, and thus the west denies Africa's contribution...”(21) An exemplification of this intellectual degradation is seen in David Hume when he noted:

I am apt to suspect the Negroes to be naturally inferior to the whites. There scarcely ever was a civilized nation of that complexion, nor even any individual, eminent either in action or speculation. No ingenious manufacturers amongst them, no arts, no science. On the other hand, the most rude and barbarous of the whites, such as the ancient Germans, the present Tartars, have still something eminent about them, in their valour, form of government, or some other particular. Such a uniform and constant difference could not happen, in so many counties and ages, if nature had not made an original distinction between these breeds of men....In Jamaica, indeed, they talk of one Negro as a man of parts and learning; but it is likely he is admired for slender accomplishments, like a parrot who speaks a few words plainly (152-153).

Africa has continued to experience depravity as a result of “bad historiography, deliberately planned, executed and perpetuated by European and European American authorities in the different disciplines of learning” (Onyewuenyi 22). The African of today is faced with the burden to prove his identity. As shown in Hume assertions, “the contestation of African humanity culminated in the denial of his possession of culture and history. The thesis that African had no culture and history became the imperial intrigue for the invasion and subjugation of the entire continent” (*The African Predicament*, 37).

With the subjugation of Africa, it became a racialized continent designated as black and considered as the opposite of the white race. Colour for the African is seen as a determinant of the humanity of the African person and as such, African experience and reality were reconstructed and constructed by the West. In *African and the Myth of a Sleeping Giant*, Ekwuru argues that what is called a historical Africa is nothing but a Westernized and racialized Africa, Africa from the perspective of the West. As Ekwuru noted:

One of the strong points, which the West has posited in various attempts to determine the humanity of the African, is the glaring fact of colour variation. The main issue at stake here is not that the so-called white man is called 'white' and the so-called black man is called 'black'...but with the meaning attached to the human colours as 'white' and as blacks" (*The Dynamics of Afri-Raciogenesis*, 175).

Racial and aesthetic reductionism of the black man is a point of discrimination and oppression. The African seems to be better defined based on the colour of his skin rather than on his ontological nature. Colour therefore is a mark of difference wherever he finds himself and based on this colour reductionism, the superiority of the white man over African was/is trumpeted. However, the colour distinction of black and white until the present times have not been established scientifically by either sociologists, Anthropologists or scientists, as being valid, which served as the basis of evaluation of the worthiness of Africans. Through their colour augments, they indulged in politics of erroneous classification of the human person and race. Taking cognizance of the result of colour bias Frantz Fanon in his *Black Skin, White Mask* dedicated the chapter five to what he called the 'Fact of Blackness.' In his discussion Fanon unravelled the effects and experience of the blackness of Africans. According to Fanon, the designation, Black, is both for the African, a distinguishing factor and a fact that taunt him wherever he finds himself. His colour projects him wherever he goes. He is only identified by his colour, not as a man who wants to be identified as a being, but he is reduced by his colour. His colour for him represents irrationality, fetishism, racial defects, fear, cannibalism, and above all, a demi-human.

With experience of colonialism, slavery, colour reductionism and education of dominance, the African person became a divided entity. He is neither fully here nor there. The African person is divided within oneself. The African of today is caught between belonging to the West or being an African, copying the white or developing his own model, being globalized or stock to his culture, speaking his language or learning the white man's language. There is a divided self, crisis of identity, and search for external endorsement. Onyeocha holds that the African hardly fits into any model and as such there is crisis of the 'self' which makes the self to be insecure and therefore looks outside for endorsement. He noted that:

This crisis haunts him or her on the associations he or she keeps, the political framework in which he or she operates, the ideological position he or she is to espouse, the psychological element in his or her disposition and operations. It haunts him or her in the beliefs he or she eats, the language he or she speaks, the way he or she worships, and the way he or she rules or is ruled. It haunts him or her even in his or her judgements and preferences....As a result of this identity crisis the African is insecure in all of the aspects of his or her life, and often has to look for external endorsement about how he or she looks, what he or she does and how he or she thinks. In other words, he or she still remains a kind of slave even in his or her own home (94-95).

The divided nature of the self is a trauma to the African. Ideologically, culturally, politically, etc., the African has not fitted into a single mode. Fanon writes thus:

The black man has two dimensions. One with his fellows, the other with the white man. A Negro behaves differently with a white man and with another Negro. That this self-division is a direct result of colonialist subjugation is beyond question ... No one would dream of doubting that its major artery is fed from the heart of those various theories that have tried to prove that the Negro is a stage in the slow evolution of monkey into man. Here is objective evidence that expresses reality (8).

In line with the thought of Fanon, Abraham expresses this dividedness of the self within the African:

The African man has been exposed in no consistent or radical fashion to a milieu which is different from that to surround him. He is a truly displaced man. His mastery of the new culture is never complete, but is rather self-conscious, and is generally in conflict with the mores into which he was born, and which he has never truly expunged from his system no matter how much he had tried (89).

Amidst the predicaments of slavery, colonialism, neo-colonialism and external subjugation, we cannot shy away from internal predicaments which have held Africa backward. The continent is experiencing politics of the belly where politics is of patronage instead of patriotism. Corruption on its own has become endemic that development seems awkward. Military interventions in 21<sup>st</sup> century, ethnic crisis, religious wars, balkanization (politics of disintegration) and economic dependency are all contributing factors to Africa development crisis. With the reality of these challenges, there is need for a Philosophical ideology that will serve as an anchor for African liberation.

### **The Search for a Framework of African Resurgence**

Anti-colonial struggles and the dawn of independence of African countries has brought about the search for a home grown political philosophy that will be for, from and close to the African people and help address their predicament which colonialism and imperialism introduced and help chart a new course for African development. Africa as a matter of fact is facing serious challenges in the aspect of political organization, management and leadership which in turn affect its development. Thus, there is need for a critical theory and philosophy that would necessitate and guide a new way of redeeming Africa from the shackles of political dilemma. This philosophy must equally recognize the needs of the people and must be that which is home-grown. According to Makumba, "a sound philosophical grounding for the African political landscape today is urgent as it is necessary. Some of the serious political problems affecting the African continent are crying for home-grown African solutions"(125). Thus, the African man is the one rightly in position to chart a new course that is African. This search for a road map and liberation ideology brought forth Kwame Nkrumah's Consciencism which seeks to establish African political and social practice that is devoid of dependence. "It aims at the eradication of class-stratification, exploitation and class-subjection. It is meant to promote individual development according to egalitarian principles" (Nwoko 231). Nkrumah's Consciencism aims at eradicating colonialism which created divided personality within the African person. Consciencism seeks to liberate Africa from the shackles of imperialism, neo-colonialism and lack of development, tending to establish a socialist state with a mass party. To be an effective ideology, it focuses its attention on African predicament. Leopold Sedar Senghor on the hand introduced Negritude. Negritude according to Senghor is "the whole complex of civilized values, cultural, economic, social and political which

characterize the black peoples, or more precisely, the Negro-African world” (Nwoko 217). For Senghor, “Negritude was not just tied to the exigencies of a historical process as Jean-Paul Sartre conceived it but was rather an enduring quality of being constitutive of the black race. For him Negritude is the sum total of African cultural values and denotes the African's distinctive way of relating to the world” (Makumba117). Negritude...is not the defence of a skin or a colour...not even attachment to a particular race...Negritude is the awareness, defence, and development of African cultural values...” (Nwoko 218). It is that part of human civilization characterized more with human warmth, sense of communion and brotherhood, rhythm etc., meant to complement the other aspects developed by other cultures and civilizations (Nwoko 218). On his part, Julius Kambarage Nyerere offered the idea of Ujamaa. Ujamaa is that attitude of the mind whereby Africans care for each other's welfare. This distinguishes the African from the non-socialist, who has the capitalist attitude whereby others are dominated and exploited through wealth (Nwoko 249). Ujamaa Socialism is not a product of wars or class conflicts but originates from the peoples way of life. It is born from the African nature. Nyerere “made Ujamaa the bedrock of his socialism, a socialism that was rooted in African communalism. Thus, his version of socialism is opposed both to capitalism, which seeks happiness through the exploitation of one person by another, and Marxist socialism, which seeks happiness through conflict between persons” (Makumba 140).

While there are several ideologies towards African resurgence, Ekwuru's Afrizealotism emerged with novelty that is economic, political, social, contextualization and cuts across several factors in order to restore Africa back to a developed continent that will no longer look outside for endorsement. Unlike Nkrumah's Consciencism which saw crisis in African conscience, and as such is reactionary and extolling materialism on which he bases his egalitarianism, or Senghor's Negritude which could pass as an alibi as it ignores pressing political issues while locking the African within colour and emotions or Nyerere' Ujamaa which could pass as utopia, idealistic without reckoning life in its daily vicissitudes and without modes of actualizing African liberation, Afrizealotism is a new philosophical vision which argues that Africa is in an era where Africans with zeal “will rise to challenge every form of debilitating and oppressive structures and ideologies in order to restore to Africa its pristine pride (*The Dynamics of Afri-Raciogenesis*,14).” It is the quest for African development that Ekwuru holds that the age is ripe for Africans to take up their destiny in their hands and not to depend on the goodwill of other parts of the world. With Afrizealotism, Ekwuru calls for a philosophical awakening and reengineering of African potentials.

### **Ekwuru's Philosophy of Afrizealotism**

Despite achieving formal independence from colonial rule in the mid-20th century, many African nations have struggled to overcome the lingering effects of imperialism and assert their sovereignty on the global stage. In this context, Ekwuru's Afrizealotism emerges as a response to the enduring challenges facing Africa. Afrizealotism represents a synthesis of indigenous African thought, pan-Africanism, and liberation ideology. Afrizealotism is a philosophy that aims at African Emancipation and development. It is an African liberation philosophy which is a conceptual product of Emeka George Ekwuru, a Nigerian professor of Philosophy at Imo State University and Claretian Institute of Philosophy Owerri (Now Claretian University, Nigeria), from Amike Orlu in Imo State, which he exposed fully in his: *The Dynamics of Afri-Raciogenesis and the Dialectics of Afrizealotism* published in 2011. Ekwuru's point of departure for proposing Afrizealotism as African emancipation philosophy is premised on the shattered world of the African by slavery, colonialism, neo-colonialism and the need to chart a new course of redemption. At its core, Afrizealotism calls upon Africans to reclaim agency over their destinies and assert their identity and

sovereignty in the face of external pressures and internal divisions. The notion of Afrizealotism is deeply rooted in the African experience, drawing inspiration from the continent's rich history, cultural heritage, and struggles for liberation. Ekwuru, himself a Nigerian scholar, articulates Afrizealotism as a means of transcending the limitations imposed by colonialism and neo-colonialism, and charting a new course towards self-determination and development. Afrizealotism represents a departure from Eurocentric paradigms of development and governance, offering an alternative vision that is grounded in the realities and aspirations of African people.

Afrizealotism is a coinage from two words: *Africa* and *zeal*. As Ekwuru noted, "Afrizealotism is, therefore, defined as zealous love for Africa. In this term, it should be noted that both zeal and love are synonymous: there is not a bit of its zeal without love and vice versa. An Afrizealotist, then, as a zealous lover of Africa, stands for a renewed and reinvigorated African"(The African Predicament, 46). According to Ekwuru, "Afrizealotism is a philosophy rooted in the historical and existential collective and individual experiences of Africans (or people of African descent) in, and outside Africa" (The Dynamics of Afri-Raciogenesis, 361). For Ekwuru, Afrizealotism arose out of praxis and not as a result of abstract thinking. It is a philosophy of turning back to Africa with love. Thus Ekwuru noted:

...Afrizealotism is a word that arose out of praxis and not just a product of an abstract reflection. It is a word that arose in the dawning of the African self-understanding within a situation of abandonment and need. When the African, knocked down by series of tragic events of his particular history, suddenly recognises himself in such a situation, and decides to rise up and claim an upright posture and status as a human being in the landscape of humanity... Thus, the term Afrizealotism was forced out of a decision to turn back to Africa with love. This decision of 'turning back' as a self-resolution to see to Africa's total emancipation from a home base, gave birth to an almost tyrannising zeal for full engagement and dedication to the cause of Africa (The Dynamics of Afri-Raciogenesis, 354-355).

Afrizealotism is necessitated by the need to turn to Africa with love with the aim of emancipation which can be achieved with zeal for Africa. Thus, Ekwuru defines zeal as "a creative inner desire and untiring act of the will in man that can recreate and refashion human understanding and attitudinal tendencies. Zeal is the inner energy that keeps steady the force of love toward the course of the lover (The Dynamics of Afri-Raciogenesis, 356)." Following Ekwuru's definition, there is highlight of creativity and inner energy to refashion. Afrizealotism therefore has inner energy to recreate and refashion. Thus, the necessity of zeal is paramount in the implementation of goal. To be zealous is to be geared towards a goal and only the zealous can systematically accomplish a task purposefully. For a zealot Ekwuru holds, existence is nothing but a process of *zealotization*. "To live is to zealotise. The zealot is the creator and sustainer, the motivator and the motivating instinct of self-actualization (The Dynamics of Afri-Raciogenesis, 358)." In the view of Ekwuru, Afrizealotism is a philosophy of progress for authentic African emancipation. It is a philosophy of self-discovery, a philosophy of from *nobody* to *somebody*. It is an emancipation ideology that brings in the era of creativity rooted in crafting. Afrizealotist age Ekwuru holds will mark the age of growth in science, poetry, philosophy, and other areas of human endeavours. "As a collective philosophy of holistic emancipation and empowerment, Afrizealotism responds adequately to the urgent need of African development. In the conscious pursuit of restoration and regeneration, the entire reality within the continental shores radiates with a new lease of life. This form of new life signals a type of development that is generated from within" (The Dynamics of Afri-Raciogenesis, 396) and "the method to be used for the achievement of this self-reconstitution, as

restorative empowerment, is what we have designated here as self-crafting” (*The Dynamics of Afri-Raciogenesis*, 396). Self-crafting involves picking up, joining together, and coming up with something new. What is Afrizealotism? He further noted that:

Afrizealotism is a holistic vision and attitude of life radicalized in action. It is not just a mere mental or metaphysical outlook on life; not a mere ideological formula, and not even only an existential construct; but something that involves all of the above – a holistic vision and attitude to life. It is borne out of praxis in a highly dehumanizing situation of oppression. And it is deeply – rooted in a historical experience of a people, of a race, and of a continent, that have been negroised as the black peoples of Africa. Thus, in its process of origin, it embodies an existentialistic historical framework. But as an attitude, motivated and influenced by a vision of inhuman form of life, it is greatly informed by a certain awareness of self-abnegation. Therefore, tending toward a total reawakening of consciousness of the past, for a resolute framing of the future, it becomes formalized within certain epistemological and metaphysical frameworks. It is the philosophy of the African of the new century; an “existential hermeneutics” of self-rediscovery of the past, for an adequate reintegration and possible synthesis for a new way of being, doing and saying (*The Dynamics of Afri-Raciogenesis*, 427).

Afrizealotism is a philosophy of progress for authentic African emancipation and self-discovery which pays attention to the past and the present as to make a synthesis. It brings in the era of creativity and being zealous for Africa. For Ekwuru, those that will liberate Africa and chart its new course of development are only those full of zeal for Africa. These set of people are the Afrizealotists and their emergence would signal a new age towards African liberation and development. According to Ekwuru, “Afrizealotists are not men motivated by one form of selfish ideology or the other; they are moved by a lived experience of an urgent practical need for their people's total liberation” (*The Dynamics of Afri-Raciogenesis*, 434). He further noted that “the most radical mission of Afrizealots is to see to the end of any form of oppression in the continent and to defend the cause of the downtrodden throughout the world” (*The Dynamics of Afri-Raciogenesis*, 445).

Afrizealotist age Ekwuru opines will mark the age of growth in science, poetry, philosophy, and other areas of human endeavours. The project of Afrizealotism is that of restoration, rehabilitation and development. He added that the this mission is a collective project which requires creative thinking, collaboration and it is not to be achieved in a day but can be achieved through systematic and consistent application of one's energy and talents. As he noted:

As a collective philosophy of holistic emancipation and empowerment, Afrizealotism responds adequately to the urgent need of African development. In the conscious pursuit of restoration and regeneration, the entire reality within the continental shores radiates with a new lease of life. This form of new life signals a type of development that is generated from within...This means that the project of Afrizealotism is a collective project of self-restoration. It is a task that requires collective effort and collaboration. Therefore, the Afrizealotist must know that the work of building up a shattered world is not to be achieved in a day. It is a work that is usually achieved through systematic and consistent application of one's energy and planning (*The Dynamics of Afri-Raciogenesis*, 396).

The method to be used for the achievement of this self-reconstitution, as restorative empowerment, is what Ekwuru calls *self-crafting*, (*The Dynamics of Afri-Raciogenesis*, 396)



which involves picking up, joining together, and coming up with something new. From this perspective, it implies that we have to look to our past, evaluate the present and make something new and valuable out of them. The idea of self-crafting begins with the awakening of the self to curiosity of creative impulse and also to a restorative scope. *Self-crafting* of reconstitution borrows from the word craft which involves the act of picking up, joining, knitting or weaving together and the art of building up. To craft therefore will be to build or to construct. Recognizing the shattered world of the African, *self-crafting* will therefore be a means to call for creative consciousness just like an artist to focus on indwell and enbirth. Self-crafting therefore calls for self-recognition, awakening, to crafting a new path from the past and present, to synthesize, to empower, and also as a means of empowerment. The age of Afrizealotism Ekwuru noted:

Will be an era of progressive awakening of the oppressed peoples of the world to chart a new course of civilization – a new mode of constructing a lasting empire, where justice and fair play will reign...it is only through Afrizealotist awakening which replaces the old concept of nationalism, that African nations will attain the level of civilization that liberates human beings from every form of slavery (*The Dynamics of Afri-Raciogenesis*, 451).

Ekwuru is of the view that the age is ripe for Africans to chart their course and put to stop over dependence and looking for outside approval from the West. He holds that “Africa is of age and should no longer depend on the goodwill of other continents of the world” (*The African Predicament*, 48). The focus of Afrizealotism is to unshackle the African man from the bondages of colonialism, slavery, poverty, backwardness and that of always looking outside for inducement. To achieve its aim, the philosophy of Afrizealotism as a movement pays attention to three vital areas according to Ekwuru:

**i. Conscientisation for the change of mental attitude:** Onyeocha in *Africa: the Country, the Concept and the Horizon* noted that “the African needs reorientation in his thought and perception as well as in his speech and action” (347). It is inline of this thought that Ekwuru noted that there is need for Conscientisation and re-orientation which will result in change of attitude. He recognized the fact that the long period of slavery, colonialism and neo-colonialism has affected the African mentality. For the likes of Blyden, Du Bois, Senghor, Nkrumah, Mazrui, Oyebola, Chinweizu and Onyeocha, colonialism was not just a political and economic conquest and domination of Africa it was a cultural and mental conquest. Thus Ekwuru noted:

Colonialism conquered, destroyed, and made nonsense of every bit of African cultural world of established universe of meaning. It has been discovered in retrospect that we have been colonized so much to the point of not only losing ourselves, but of losing our concrete touch with reality. We were colonized and brain washed to the extent of not only hating ourselves, but also anything that is associated with our own nature (*The Dynamics of Afri-Raciogenesis*, 436-437).

For Ekwuru, mental liberation or change of mental attitude towards life is the core beginning of African renaissance. Afrizealotism therefore calls for re-orientation aimed at the eradication of mental slavery. This re-orientation aims at making Africans to appreciate their values, their heritage, their identity and culture as not being inferior to that of the West as colonialism infused us to believe. It aims at making Africans to stop feeling insecure and appreciate their culture. For Ekwuru, “the programme of Afrizealotist conscientisation for a total change of mental attitude is to achieve the true spirit of African identity. Through mental liberation, every African will regain the sense of personhood and

the boldness of asserting it before the international community” (*The Dynamics of Afri-Raciogenesis*, 444).

ii. **Conscientisation for peace and social justice:** Ekwuru holds that there is need for Africans to be re-oriented/conscientised on the value and need for peace and social justice. The high level of hatred and seed of disunity that colonialism planted has made it obvious that there is need for re-orientation. Thus, the forceful invasion of Africa affected African mentality and its mode of relating with his fellow. Thus Ekwuru noted:

Through various forms of political intrigues, Africans have been made to hate one another for the benefit of colonial nations. During the colonial invasion and conquest, Africans were used to fight and conquer their fellow Africans out of ignorance. Later on, during the full swing of colonial occupation, Africans were employed to suppress their fellow Africans. This did not end with colonialism, but continued with the various forms of neo-colonialist intrigues (*The Dynamics of Afri-Raciogenesis*, 442).

For Ekwuru therefore, the Afrizealotist movement has a task of to conscientise Africans to see the need for peace and justice. As Ekwuru rightly pointed out, the various imperial intrigues of divide and rule brought displacement, mistrust, and crisis in Africa. African nations have been engulfed in wars. There is no part of Africa that is not at war and the major cause is the awareness of miscarriage of justice. Though Ekwuru recognized the reality of war is other parts of the world, he pointed out that African case has become exceptional as it does not give way for proper development. With this circumference, Ekwuru expresses humanism in the Afrizealotist movement when he noted that “the most radical mission of Afrizealotist is to see to the end of any form of oppression in the continent and to defend the cause of the downtrodden throughout the world” (*The Dynamics of Afri-Raciogenesis*, 445).

iii. **Conscientisation for a new framework of civilization:** In the view of Ekwuru, the new civilization framework for the development and Emancipation of Africa is anchored on returning to our Africanness and to ensure that there is cooperation among states. Thus, Ekwuru agrees with Senghor that we must excavate the traditional civilization as the root of African socialism, must study the impact of colonialism on Africa and make a synthesis. Ekwuru holds that Afrizealotism framework is epitomized in black nobility, Black beauty, black dignity and black power. In the new framework of civilization, Ekwuru noted that the new language for its accomplishment will be self-determination, self-reliability and trust. Thus, Africa must not look at the West as the standard or build based on their “expert” advice or aid packages. Ekwuru holds that “rather than copying from the West and thence fall into their forms of mistakes, Africans must learn from those mistakes. They must study the patterns of the present cultural civilizations of the world, not to copy entirely their various forms and structures, but to look for a way of surpassing their obvious limiting frameworks” (*The Dynamics of Afri-Raciogenesis*, 448-449). Thus, for Ekwuru, accumulated historical experiences and realities must help Africa to build a new civilization framework that will be truly African. Hence “Africans in the present political and economic world order must seek for the power that is associated with scientific discoveries and technological inventions. It is only in this type of power that Africans will make their own contributions to the modern trend of world civilization” (*The Dynamics of Afri-Raciogenesis*, 446-447).

### **The Philosophy of Afrizealotism as a Paradigm**

Afrizealotism, as a liberation ideology, presents a compelling framework for addressing the multifaceted challenges facing Africa. This philosophical concept, emphasizes African

self-reliance, cultural pride, unity, and empowerment. In a region with a complex history of colonization, exploitation, and internal conflicts, Afrizealotism offers a pathway towards liberation and sustainable development. At its core, Afrizealotism advocates for Africans to reclaim agency over their destinies, rejecting external influences that undermine their identity and sovereignty. This entails a resurgence of indigenous knowledge systems, languages, and traditions, as well as a commitment to economic self-sufficiency and political autonomy. By prioritizing African values and perspectives, Afrizealotism seeks to dismantle colonial legacies and build a future shaped by the aspirations of its people. One of the central tenets of Afrizealotism is cultural pride and identity affirmation. Historically, colonization sought to erase or marginalize African cultures, imposing Western values and norms. Afrizealotism challenges this narrative by celebrating the richness and diversity of African heritage. By promoting cultural revitalization and preservation, it fosters a sense of belonging and solidarity among Africans, countering the effects of cultural imperialism and fostering social cohesion.

Afrizealotism underscores the importance of economic empowerment and development through self-crafting for individual conscious creativity and collective refashioning of civilization. Empathically, Africa is rich in natural resources, yet its economies have often been exploited for the benefit of external powers. Afrizealotism advocates for harnessing these resources for the collective prosperity of African nations, rather than allowing them to be plundered for foreign gain. Afrizealotism calls for promoting local talents, entrepreneurship, and equitable distribution of wealth to uplift marginalized communities and reduce dependency on external aid which places Africa on the mercy of external forces. Through its liberation lens, Afrizealotism advocates for political liberation and self-determination as many African countries continue to grapple with authoritarian regimes, corruption, and governance deficits. On the other hand, it calls for accountable and inclusive governance structures that reflect the will of the people and safeguard their rights and freedoms. By promoting democratic principles and civic engagement, it seeks to empower citizens to actively participate in shaping their societies and holding their leaders accountable. In its effort towards the emancipation of Africa, Afrizealotism embraces pan-Africanism as a means of fostering unity and solidarity across the continent. On the second level of conscientisation of peace and social justice, Afrizealotism recognizes the essence of unity and justice in fostering solidified liberation. It takes account of Africa's shared historical experiences and cultural ties, as the continent has remained fragmented along linguistic, ethnic, and national lines. Afrizealotism promotes cross-border cooperation and integration to address common challenges such as poverty, disease, upholding of human rights, and environmental degradation. By transcending narrow identities and embracing a collective African identity, it seeks to harness collective strength and resilience.

However, notwithstanding the beauty of Afrizealotism in African liberation, the realization of the principles of Afrizealotism is faced with several challenges. One major obstacle is the persistence of neo-colonial structures and external interference in African affairs. It is obvious that Western powers and multinational agencies have continued to wield significant influence over African economies and politics, undermining efforts towards self-reliance and sovereignty. Additionally, internal divisions, corruption, and vested interests pose barriers to the implementation of Afrizealotist principles. Those who benefit from corrupt system, ethnic wars, politics of the belly, divide and rule and other vices would aim at hindering the achievement of Afrizealotism. Moreover, the legacy of colonialism has left deep-seated socio-economic inequalities and institutional weaknesses that cannot be overcome overnight. Nevertheless, addressing these structural challenges requires sustained commitment, investment, and political will from

African leaders and African individuals themselves as they will be the ones to chart their course.

Afrizealotism offers a compelling vision for African liberation and empowerment, grounded in individual-collective zeal. It is an ideology that requires inner energy from individuals who are willing to chart the course of Africa and it requires self-crafting at the level of individual reformation, as empowerment and refashioning of new civilization. Afrizealotism does not aim to dwell in the past or to condemn values and ideas. Rather it calls for contextualization and refashioning that will be of African. Afrizealotism therefore offers a leap for a holistic redemption of Africa by Africans through self-crafting with the principles of self-reliance, cultural pride, unity, and solidarity.

### **Conclusion**

That change is a constant phenomenon in human existence is a factual reality that every entity can testify. No doubt that the African has often been misunderstood, misquoted and misrepresented. However, beyond every totalization, Africa can borrow from Ekwuru's idea of Afrizealotism to dismantle blockages against development. Africa does not belong to the primitive, to the world of jungles, to no man's land nor observers in the world field. Africans with the philosophy of Afrizealotism embedded with self-crafting can overcome and cross the ocean of underdevelopment in which he is caught in. Africa must not continue to cry over spilt milk that cannot be gathered. The era of colonialism and slavery is over. Historically, Africa was not the only continent colonized. Hence, other countries should serve as a lesson towards development by choosing and to live up to the responsibility of the choice it has made, which authenticity implies.

Emeka George Ekwuru's notion of Afrizealotism offers a transformative vision for addressing the African predicament. Through its emphasis on self-determination, cultural revival, economic empowerment, and pan-African solidarity, Afrizealotism provides a roadmap for liberation and progress in the continent. While challenges undoubtedly lie ahead, the principles of Afrizealotism serve as a source of inspiration and motivation for Africans as they continue their journey towards freedom, dignity, and self-determination, for it is only Africans with zeal and love for Africa that will develop Africa.

### **Works Cited**

- Abraham, William E. *The Mind of Africa*. London, Weidenfield and Nicolson, 1962.
- Amaku, Ejiogu. *The Predicament of Human Dignity in Africa*. Enugu: Victojo Production, 2014.
- Ekwuru, George Emeka. *The Dynamics of Afri-Raciogenesis and the Dialectics of Afrizealotism*. Owerri: Totan Publishers, 2011.
- ..... "The African Predicament and the Dialectics of Afrizealotism" in *Philosophy, Science and Human Development: International Conference papers, 2011*, Department of Philosophy, University of Nigeria Nsukka, edited by Chrysanthus Ogbozo and Christopher Asogwa. Enugu: Snaap Press, 2014.

- .....*Africa and the Myth of Sleeping Giant: Towards the Age of Afrizealotism*. Owerri, Totan Publishers. 2001.
- Ezeanyika, Prince. *Introduction to African Politics*. 3rd Ed, Owerri: Gabtony Printing and Pub., 2007.
- Frantz Fanon. *Black Skin, White Masks*. Trans, Charles Lam Markmann, London: Pluto Press, 1986
- Hilde, Hein. Forward, in Innocent Onyewuenyi. *The African Origin of Greek Philosophy: An Exercise in Afrocentrism*. Nsukka: University of Nigeria Press, 1994.
- Hume, David. *Essay of National Characters*. Hume's Essays (Routledge Edit.N.D), Essay Nr. XXI.
- Kiarie, Augustine. Preface, in Maurice Makumba. *Introduction to African Philosophy*. Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2007.
- Makumba, M. *Introduction to African Philosophy*. Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2007.
- Nwoko, M. I. *World Basic Political Theories*. 2nd edition. Edited by Francis O.C. Njoku. Enugu: Snaap Press, 2006.
- Onyechocha, Izu M. *Africa: the Country, the Concept and the Horizon*. Owerri: Imo State University Press, 2019.
- .....*Africa: The Question of Identity*. Washington DC: Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 1997.
- Onyewuenyi, Innocent. *The African Origin of Greek Philosophy: An Exercise in Afrocentrism*. Nsukka: University of Nigeria Press, 1994.
- Oyebola, Areoye. *Black Man's Dilemma*. Ibadan: Board Publications, 1982.