



Umezina's Denial of Globalisation as a Process and Modality of Being: A Critical Response

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Abstract

The present paper is a response to the work on "Globalization in Africa: A critical reflection on Kanu's concept of globalization as a Process" published in AMAMIHE: Journal of Applied Philosophy (20. 1. 206-224) by Dr. Umezina. This paper is supposed to be a response to a chapter the present researcher contributed to and a book edited by Umezina titled "African philosophy: A pragmatic approach to African problems". In this book, the present researcher wrote on "Globalization, Globalism and African Philosophy". Contrary to the present researcher's view of globalization as a process and a modality of being, Umezina argued that globalization is man-formulated policy and not an ontological reality. He argued that it is factitious and propagated through the shenanigans of its originators, the West. He, therefore, called on Africans particularly to be wary of its chameleon-nature, comparable to a Trojan horse. In this paper, the researcher argued that Umezina has not been able to prove that globalization is not a process or a modality of being; he has only succeeded in the denial of his being as a globalizing being or reality. In his paper, he has only succeeded in proving that he is a being that globalizes with no consciousness of globalizing. The present research, therefore, still holds that Africans have a responsibility to globalize. The method of research employed in this piece is the critical, Igwebuiké (an indigenous holistic approach) and systematic approaches.

Keywords: *Globalization, Umezina, Africa, Modality of Being, Philosophy, Process, Kanu*

Introduction

It is always interesting when a learned colleague disagrees with the perspective of a scholar expressed in a published

article. The 2nd of August 2021, therefore, came with so much beauty when Dr. Cletus Umezina called to inform me

that he had read my paper on “Globalization, Globalism and African philosophy”¹ and that he disagrees with my position on that paper. I was pleased that at this time of communicating with him, that he had already written a paper in which he expressed his disagreement with my position. Even though I wondered why a paper he edited and published in a book of chapters in 2014 should be a source of anxiety for him eight years later: could it be that he did not read it then with the present frame of mind, or he now better understands the position of the paper after eight years? Whatever, it is, the stage is set for further discourse.

As I wrote in my response to Dr Ajah’s critique of my paper on *Igwebuike as an Igbo-African Philosophy of Inclusive Leadership*, the same response still holds:

That so many competent and distinguished colleagues have taken time to respond to my papers in recent times, as I know only too well, are at best stimulating. While some come with stings of embarrassment, others have come with great pleasure. However, the present criticism on point comes with both sentiments of embarrassment and pleasure².

The beauty of such a reaction is that it provides the opportunity for the revision of a position held in a work by a scholar and thus is capable of conjuring the researcher’s spirit to thread on new academic grounds; at some other times, such responses rather than become an opportunity for growth, reminds a scholar of the nobility of a position that he once put into writing. As in the second instance, it awards me the aperture to awaken sleeping giants in the world of philosophy where and when necessary. More so, resonances of this kind, often enough sometimes brings me to the painful awareness that I have apparently been unable to present my theoretical approach in a comprehensible manner or, perhaps, to awaken the hermeneutic willingness requisite for its reception. But this is not the case with Dr. Umezina. More interesting to me, as it is in this context, is that the criticism of my work is only a co-operative effort to advance the arguments of my paper, and an engagement in *Igwebuike* pedagogy. I could not have wished for a fairer and more productive partner in dialogue than Dr. Cletus Umezina. I will, therefore, begin by reminding my highly esteemed critique of the major issues.

¹ Kanu, Ikechukwu Anthony “Globalisation, Globalism and African Philosophy” in *African Philosophy: A Pragmatic Approach to African Problems*, ed. by C. Umezina, Saarbrücken: Lambert Academic Publishing, 2014, pp.158-159.

² Kanu Ikechukwu Anthony, “Against erratic exaggeration of contexts in Africa: When a burglar sues for assault- saving philosophy from stereotypes”. *International Journal of Philosophy and Public affairs*. 4. 153-158, 2017, p. 153.

The Concerns of Cletus Umezina

The main issue as laid bare in the introduction of Umezina's paper is his disagreement with Kanu's position on globalization as a process and as a modality of being. Contrary to this perspective, Dr. Umezina argues that globalization is a planned policy and compares it to the Trojan Horse. He writes:

Anthony Kanu, in his paper, Globalisation, Globalism and African Philosophy, subscribes to the view that it is a process. As an erudite academic, he presents his argument in a clear, precise, distinct and scholarly manner. He urges African countries to embrace globalisation, "to globalise and be globalised." This paper will differ from Kanu's position in his paper, namely, that globalisation is a process, that Africa...³

Umezina understands globalization as a "man-formulated policy. It is not an ontological reality. It is not even something that happens fortuitously. Its existence is factitious. It is being propagated through the shenanigans of its originators. Africans particularly ought to be wary of its chameleon-nature"⁴. He further compares it to a Trojan horse: "It is a Trojan horse"⁵.

Dr. Umezina unfortunately traces globalization to two major events in African history: the slave trade and colonialism. This he does in a manner that suggests that he takes globalization personal and understands it in a way that shows little depth. He refers to it as a man-formulated policy principally for the destruction of Africa, and yet globalization is felt all over the globe: in China, in Turkey, in Russia, etc. This notwithstanding, he writes:

Europe and America began their decimation of Africa through the trans-Atlantic slave trade. This lucrative business burgeoned and snowballed into outright colonialism. Africa was oppressed and exploited. It was down but not completely destroyed. Europe and America only retreated at independence. They retreated only to re-strategize. They have now constructed a trojan horse under the guise

³ Umezina, C., "Globalization in Africa: A critical reflection on Kanu's concept of globalization as a process". *Amamihe: Journal of Applied Philosophy*. 20. 1. 206-224. 2022,p. 207.

⁴Umezina, C., "Globalization in Africa: A critical reflection on Kanu's concept of globalization as a process". *Amamihe: Journal of Applied Philosophy*. 20. 1. 206-224. 2022,p. 207.

⁵Umezina, C., "Globalization in Africa: A critical reflection on Kanu's concept of globalization as a process". *Amamihe: Journal of Applied Philosophy*. 20. 1. 206-224. 2022,p. 207.

of globalisation as a smokescreen to completely subjugate the Africans⁶.

His second concern was raised against Kanu's argument that globalization is a process that one cannot stop or resist:

The second assumption in the conception of globalisation as a process is that it is irresistible. This is not totally correct. Oguejiofor writes on the resilience of the Igbo people. He maintains that even though the Igbo were enfeebled as a people as a result of the trans-Atlantic slave trade and colonization, as well as their experience of the corroding influence of globalisation, they still retain certain features of their identity⁷.

The third concern raised by Umezina, which is more of an imposition of his reading on the thoughts of Kanu is anchored on what he refers to as a third assumption:

The third assumption that is beneath the idea of globalisation as a process is the belief that the more a thing evolves, the better it becomes. The more the world is globalised, the better it becomes. But this is a sham. It is highly untenable. What are the premises that lead to the conclusion that if globalisation continues in the future, the world be a better place?⁸

Based on these major positions among others, he argues that globalization must be resisted by the African people.

My critical response

First of all, Umezina describes globalization as a Trojan horse with the intention of bringing out what he refers to as its insidious character. He writes: "The description of globalisation as Trojan horse is meant to bring out, in no uncertain terms, its insidious

⁶Umezina, C., "Globalization in Africa: A critical reflection on Kanu's concept of globalization as a process". *Amamihe: Journal of Applied Philosophy*. 20. 1. 206-224. 2022,p. 208.

⁷Umezina, C., "Globalization in Africa: A critical reflection on Kanu's concept of globalization as a process". *Amamihe: Journal of Applied Philosophy*. 20. 1. 206-224. 2022,p. 211.

⁸Umezina, C., "Globalization in Africa: A critical reflection on Kanu's concept of globalization as a process". *Amamihe: Journal of Applied Philosophy*. 20. 1. 206-224. 2022,p. 211.

nature”⁹. The use of the image of a Trojan horse to describe globalization expresses a desperate and crude effort to criminalize that which is not criminal. In his zeal to make a statement, he forgets the full implications of the analogy made. The analogy of the Trojan horse is too poor and limited to capture the global image of globalization. The Trojan horse event described by Umezina is a one sided event in history rather than the poly-sided nature of a global reality: it was Troy that entered Greece to secure victory. But in the case of globalization, it is not only about the West, it is also about Africa. Both worlds globalize each other or else it is no longer globalization: the West comes to Africa; Africans are perpetually on their way to the West in search of a better life. The image of the Trojan horse in relation to globalization would have made sense if the Greeks also came to Troy with a Greek horse and Troy with a Trojan horse into Greece, and in this case, there would have been no victor, no vanquished, as it happens in globalization. The use of this analogy by Umezina confirms a poor understanding of what globalization is, and thus raises questions about the validity of the rest of his arguments against this process and manner of being.

An understanding of globalization as merely a policy for the subjugation of the African people as Umezina does, further points to a complete misunderstanding of what globalization stands for. Migration of peoples from one part of the world to another is an aspect of globalization, which has improved the lives of many. The researcher is really surprised that Dr Umezina who belongs to the Igbo tribe who are all over the world and reaping the dividends of globalization would turn around to understand globalization as simply a planned policy of the subjugation of the African people. The researcher is even more surprised that Umezina who studied in the Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium and visits there every other year for his holidays, and who has been able to integrate himself among the German people by speaking their language would now turn to the rest of the African people and ask them to beware of globalization. This reflects one of such experiences where by our ideas fail to correspond to our lived experiences.

Umezina understands globalization as an imposition on Africa by the West. He writes that it was propagated “through the shenanigans of its originators”¹⁰. The major issue with his criticism of globalization begins with his false understanding of what globalization is. One thing that thinkers who stand on the way of globalization have in common is a negative concept of globalization. While he relates the globalization story

⁹Umezina, C., “Globalization in Africa: A critical reflection on Kanu’s concept of globalization as a process”. *Amamihe: Journal of Applied Philosophy*. 20. 1. 206-224. 2022,p. 207.

¹⁰Umezina, C., “Globalization in Africa: A critical reflection on Kanu’s concept of globalization as a process”. *Amamihe: Journal of Applied Philosophy*. 20. 1. 206-224. 2022,p. 207.

from a negative perspective, he forgets that his education, his speaking of English and German as additional languages, which gives him an advantage, the cloth he wears, the holidays he goes for abroad, the international platforms where he publishes his papers, etc., are all the fruits of globalization. This is the case of a man who enjoys the dividends of globalization and yet condemns the process that feeds him. The researcher is tempted to think that Umezina's case is more of not being conscious of the gains of globalisation. No one who is conscious of these dividends will write so negatively of globalization.

Many facts seem to have eluded Umezina in relation to the development of thought on globalization; however, a major fact which seems to have eluded him even the more is that globalization did not start with the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, and neither is it reducible to particular historical events like the slave trade or colonialism. This trade was only a manifestation of a process that has been in existence right from the very beginning of human existence. Even before the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade there was a Trans-Sahara Slave Trade which was not perpetuated by Europe and America, but by the Arabs. However, the researcher understand Umezina's literary tactic that thinks that it would be more lucrative, not only on paper, but also in practice, to blame the West rather than the East for African woes. There is also an element of disconnect with history in Dr Umezina's position. He seemed to have forgotten that the events of the time of Alexander the Great, bordering on Hellenization cannot be placed outside the circumference of globalization. Reducing globalization to the event of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade is another way of making the African indigenous slave traders and raiders, without whom the business of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade would not have been possible, not to take responsibility for their failures in the past. This is part of the reasons why Africa has remained where she is.

Umezina argues that one of the reasons why globalization must be rejected by the African people is because it was propagated "through the shenanigans of its originators"¹¹. He forgets that the fact that it is propagated does not make it wrong. Even Christianity and Islam as religions were propagated. In fact, they were propagated because they have something good to offer humanity, and thus worthy of propagation. Moreover, the use of phrases such as "a man-formulated policy"¹², "not

¹¹Umezina, C., "Globalization in Africa: A critical reflection on Kanu's concept of globalization as a process". *Amamihe: Journal of Applied Philosophy*. 20. 1. 206-224. 2022, 207.

¹²Umezina, C., "Globalization in Africa: A critical reflection on Kanu's concept of globalization as a process". *Amamihe: Journal of Applied Philosophy*. 20. 1. 206-224. 2022,p. 207.

an ontological reality”¹³, “not even something that happens fortuitously”¹⁴, “Its existence is factitious”, “It is being propagated through the shenanigans of its originators”¹⁵, etc., seem to have failed Umezina as they have not in any way detracted from the value of globalization. In this, he has succeeded in showing how words lose their powers when misused.

While Umezina was right in saying that globalization “is not an ontological reality”¹⁶, he failed to have indicated how globalization flows from an ontological reality. That which is not ontological does not in any way deny connection with that which is ontological, and the fact that it flows from that which is ontological does not necessarily mean that it is ontological. In the same way, the fact that something flows from the ontological and it is not ontological does not in any way imply that it is unontological.

Within the parameters of Christian theology, that is, If the researcher may appeal to Umezina’s Christian background, it might be necessary to remind him that globalization can be traced to the time God said to Abraham: “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I would show you” (Gen 12: 1). This is not in any way to reduce globalization to movement, and yet it is not possible without movements. God goes further to attach a blessing to that movement of Abraham when He said: “I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great and you will be a blessing” (Gen 12:2). The great event at the Tower of Babel (Gen 11:1-9), when God’s children were scattered all over the face of the earth, was God globalizing- that is, He preferring the uncertainties of dispersion to the narrow mindedness of settlement; He preferring diversity to uniformity; He preferring speaking several languages to speaking one language; He preferring living in multiple locations across the world to living in one location in the world. God’s denial of their preferences is symbolic of nothing less than His preference for globalization.

¹³Umezina, C., “Globalization in Africa: A critical reflection on Kanu’s concept of globalization as a process”. *Amamihe: Journal of Applied Philosophy*. 20. 1. 206-224. 2022,p. 207.

¹⁴Umezina, C., “Globalization in Africa: A critical reflection on Kanu’s concept of globalization as a process”. *Amamihe: Journal of Applied Philosophy*. 20. 1. 206-224. 2022,p. 207.

¹⁵Umezina, C., “Globalization in Africa: A critical reflection on Kanu’s concept of globalization as a process”. *Amamihe: Journal of Applied Philosophy*. 20. 1. 206-224. 2022,p. 207.

¹⁶Umezina, C., “Globalization in Africa: A critical reflection on Kanu’s concept of globalization as a process”. *Amamihe: Journal of Applied Philosophy*. 20. 1. 206-224. 2022,p. 207.

Umezina makes reference to Aristotle's work on causality as a way of giving authority to his opinion about globalization as he argued that the human person is the agent of historical change¹⁷. Unfortunately, his readers are aware that he makes a wrong reading of Aristotle. Aristotle makes use of these causes in his epistemology, within the context of knowing the ultimate causes or underlying principles of things. The material cause is the stuff with which a thing is made; the formal cause is the form of the essence or the pattern which makes a thing the particular thing that it is; the efficient cause is the agent responsible for bringing it into being; the final cause is the end in view, the purpose of a thing¹⁸. How this understanding for Umezina translates into the human person being the only agent of change in a world of several causes remains a matter of intrigue speculation and wonderment. If the focus of Umezina is the efficient cause, then he misreads Aristotle as the efficient cause goes beyond a simplistic understanding of it as the human agency. In another paragraph, he uses the perspective of Sartre to argue for the place of human agency in historical change: "Jean Paul Sartre's distinction between *l'être-en-soi* (being-in-itself) and *l'être-pour-soi* (being-for-itself) highlights the indisputable role of human agents in historical change. *L'être-en-soi* refers to external objects, whether animate or inanimate"¹⁹. Even here, he forgets that the position of Sartre is not enough for an adequate assertion of the place of the human person as an instrument of historical change within the context of globalization.

Taking from history, Umezina tried to prove that globalization is false. He writes: "From historical experience, however, this claim is a farce. Many groups and countries have rather worked in the opposite direction"²⁰. He expatiates thus:

Instead of greater integration, many countries composed of ethnic nationalities have disintegrated. This happened on the premises that disintegration is more beneficial than integration. In 1947, Pakistan separated from India; in 1945, Korea gained independence from

¹⁷Umezina, C., "Globalization in Africa: A critical reflection on Kanu's concept of globalization as a process". *Amamihe: Journal of Applied Philosophy*. 20. 1. 206-224. 2022,p. 208.

¹⁸Omogbe, Joseph, *A simplified history of western philosophy: Ancient and Medieval philosophy*. Ikeja, Lagos: Joja Educational Research and Publishers Ltd., 1991. pp. 53-54.

¹⁹Umezina, C., "Globalization in Africa: A critical reflection on Kanu's concept of globalization as a process". *Amamihe: Journal of Applied Philosophy*. 20. 1. 206-224. 2022,p. 208.

²⁰Umezina, C., "Globalization in Africa: A critical reflection on Kanu's concept of globalization as a process". *Amamihe: Journal of Applied Philosophy*. 20. 1. 206-224. 2022,p. 209.

Japan; in 1991, the Soviet Union broke up into the following states: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Estonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Latvia. Out of these countries, the 2020 World Economic and Prospects report shows Estonia and Latvia as developed countries, while Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan are economies in transition. The six republics that made up Yugoslavia (Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Macedonia) went their separate ways and became different countries²¹.

Here again Umezina takes advantage of particular historical experiences without giving details to achieve personal objectives. None of the said countries that have broken away exists as an Island. Countries all over the world trade with each other and enter bilateral agreements with each other. These same countries are members of the United Nations; and so to point to the cases of their breaking away as an argument against globalization is actually the farce on the table. In the case of Alexander, Umezina is not aware that Alexander was a symbol of unity and not just an agent of globalization. His death will obviously affect the unity of the said provinces whose unity he symbolized. In relation to the samples of NATO, EU, etc., provided by Umezina, arguing that they are not for the unification of the world, he focuses on unity and forgets about the most important part, the purpose of unity.

Umezina also uses the perspectives of selected Western scholars like Kant and Hegel to form a generalized opinion about the way the West looks at Africa. This he uses as a basis for Africa to resist globalization. Deeper research shows that the perspectives of Hegel and Kant are not enough to capture the perspective of the West about Africa. There were many other western scholar who argued that the African people were worthy of dignity. Scholars like Hegel and Kant were only arm chair scholar who wrote about Africa without knowing what the shores of Africa looks like. And no serious scholar uses their opinion as a collective perspective in a serious academic engagement. The scholars who later discovered that the African people had dignity contrary to the perspectives of Hegel, Kant, etc., were those who came to Africa in the spirit of globalization. Hegel and Kant failed in their understanding of the African people because of their inability to globalize- to reach out to the reality of other cultures and peoples, a better perspective has arisen because scholars globalized.

²¹Umezina, C., "Globalization in Africa: A critical reflection on Kanu's concept of globalization as a process". *Amamihe: Journal of Applied Philosophy*. 20. 1. 206-224. 2022,p. 209.

Surprisingly, Umezina attributes the problem of poverty in Africa to the lopsidedness of globalization. As a result of the presence of abject poverty in most African countries, many Africans migrate to Western countries for the purpose of survival and in search of dignifying human conditions. Thus, Africans move to high income countries. The United Nations International Migration Report of 2017 observed that high-income countries host almost two thirds of all international migrants. As of 2017, 64 per cent of all international migrants worldwide -equal to 165 million international migrants -lived in high-income countries. Thirty-six per cent -or 92 million -of the world's migrants lived in middle-or low-income countries. Of these, 81 million resided in middle-income countries and 11 million in low-income countries. With the movement of Africans out of Africa with poverty as a push factor, the inflow of income from their destination countries continue to contribute to national development²². To relate poverty with globalization is to show that one is not abreast with recent developments. If I were Umezina, I would have blamed poverty in African on corruption and irresponsible leadership. However, Umezina has decided to choose the easiest part. He ridiculous writes: "The reason for this is that the west has set up structures to make Africa perpetually poor"²³. Umezina forgets that Africa includes South Africa, Egypt, Tunisia and Algeria. He failed to ask himself a fundamental question: why these structures affect different African countries differently. Blaming the West or colonial masters who left African 60 years ago is an unprogressive manner of dealing with the African problem of underdevelopment.

Umezina takes advantage of Descartes' thoughts on thinking to strengthen his weak position on globalization. He argues that Descartes affirms the importance of thinking in his famous "Cogito ergo sum", I think therefore I am. He thus avers that thinking is a continuous human activity. Thinking may be logical or illogical, but it is thinking all the same. If an individual ceases to think, he/she dies. Human beings think about so many things. They may think to belong or not to belong, to associate with people or not to do so. If human can think in either way according to Umezina, it means that belongingness is not so fundamental as to be the *raison d'être* in the affirmation of globalisation as a mode of being. I am happy that Umezina observes that thinking could be logical or illogical and it still remains an act of thinking. It is possible that

²²Kanu, I. A. , "Igbo Migration and the Future of Traditional Paradigms". *Journal of African Studies and Sustainable Development*. Vol. 2.No. 5.2019, pp. 34-42.; Kanu, I. A. , "Migration, Remittances and National Development". *AUMEN Journal of Moral Education in Nigeria*. 4. 1. 2018, pp. 61-69.

²³Umezina, C., "Globalization in Africa: A critical reflection on Kanu's concept of globalization as a process". *Amamihe: Journal of Applied Philosophy*. 20. 1. 206-224. 2022,p. 215.

thinking outside of the parameters of interrelationships is illogical and yet remains thinking in any case, but a thinking that is low ordered. Thus, the fact that a person thinks outside of the parameters of interrelationships doesn't oppose the fundamental place of interrelationships. Everyone can only think from their capacities for thinking—a mad person thinks, a sane person thinks, and yet we know that the mad person's thinking does not become generally accepted simply because they think, and in a different direction.

Conclusion

The image that came to my mind while reading the work of Cletus Umezina is that of Plato's allegory of the cave. Plato imagined that some prisoners had their necks and legs chained in a cave so that they can only look in one direction, and not backwards. Before them is a wall that looks like a cinema screen. Behind them is a fire and between them and the fire is a platform stretching across the cave. Assuming that people passed across the raised platform carrying animals, statues and other things in such a way that it was cast on the cinema screen in front of the prisoners through the light of the fire, seeing the shadows, the prisoners assume that the shadows cast on the screen are the real things, given that they cannot look backwards. One of the prisoners succeeding in freeing himself from the cave and seeing things for the first time under the light of the sun now sees others for what they truly are: prisoners. Coming back to the cave, he tried to free the prisoners from the cave, but they refused and even wanted to kill him because they thought that he wanted to deceive them believing that the shadows were the reality.

Holding on to the concept of globalization that is completely negative is like holding on to a world of shadows and believing that there in reality dwell. This allegory from Plato also helps me to understand the resistance of Dr. Cletus Umezina. These notwithstanding, it must be said that the future globalization does not imply a loss of identity on the part of the Africa people; globalization is not racism, neither is it a product produced in the West and forced down the throat of Africa. While Umezina condemns globalization in every way possible to him, he failed to give a definition of globalization. This leaves his reader more confused than he was before reading his paper. If more disturbing is that having condemned globalization, he was not able to provide an alternative concept or approach.

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