Identity in Leopold Sedar Senghor as a Tool for African Development

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Abstract

Identity from the point of view of ontology, means the actual presence of 'that which is' which is recognized through its manifest nature. No two things are the same, thus the uniqueness in things. The logic here is that no human race escapes the ontological role of identity and difference. This is why each is recognized and respected in its perspective, diverse, natural and cultural terms. However, the successive historical trends of slavery, racism, colonialism and neo-colonialism have been seen as factors eroding the primordial and authentic African identity. In recent time, the existential reality of globalization has added a greater challenge to the question of identity in Africa. Within this emerging background, Leopold Sedar Senghor decried Africa's loss of identity and championed a course to reclaiming it through his philosophy of Negritude. Senghor's conception of Negritude is for the revival of the African cultural identity distorted by the historical trends of Western invasion. This then became the core of philosophical vision of Negritude as a philosophy of socio-cultural identity and affirmation of being. The pertinent question is, why is there this search for African identity? Does it imply that Africans have no identity or was this identity distorted by some historical trends of Western imperialism? Thus, the main objective of this paper therefore is to expose and explore Senghor's idea of identity which is rooted in his concept of Negritude as a tool for African development.

Key Words: Identity, negritude, development, globalization.

Introduction

The problem of development in Africa and in Nigeria in particular, motivated my quest to carry out this research on Leopold Sedar Senghor's conception of African identity since the lack of an authentic identity for Africa (Nigeria) has really affected development in this part of the World. However, the search for identity has always been a key issue facing mankind in its striving after significance and meaning, hence there has been a veritable discursive explosion in recent years around the concept of identity. Scholars in social sciences and humanities have taken an intense interest in questions concerning identity. Within philosophy, for example, we find the concept of identity at the centre of lively debates in every major subfield because the notion of identity gives

rise to many philosophical problems, including the identity of indiscernible which states that if *A* and *B* have exactly the same properties, then they are identical (Simon, 2005, p. 178). However, if we must agree with Butler according to Simon that everything is what it is and not another thing (Simon, 2005), we will then infer that identity is substantially that which constitutes a being to permanently remain itself in its singularity, specificity, autonomy and distinctiveness. The fundamental paradox of identity is inherent in the term itself. From the Latin root *idem*, meaning "the same," the term nevertheless implies both similarity and difference (Buckingham, 2008, p. 1). The African experiences of slavery, racism, colonialism and neo-colonialism resulted in the radical emergence of multiple and contradictory identities in Africa. These identities are outcome of the historical trends of Western colonialization in Africa. The consequence of these historical experiences is the identity problem that African has been thrown into. Thus, the question of African identity becomes very prominent in this modern era, which is why a principal driving force in postcolonial African thought has been a quest for self-definition and self-assertion in that identity has remained a focal point in discussions about the African experiences with the Western World. It was therefore quite appropriate when Masolo according to Richard Bell, entitled his History of Contemporary African Philosophy, the first full-length history of the discipline in English, *African Philosophy in Search of Identity*. This search of identity was part of a general postcolonial soul-searching in Africa. Because the colonialists perceived African culture as inferior in at least some important respects, slavery, colonialism and neo-colonialism included systematic programs of de-Africanization (Wiredu, 2004 p. 1). These Western programs in Africa have been seen as factors eroding the primordial and authentic African identity. In recent time, the existential reality of globalization has added a greater challenge to the question of African identity. These experiences have profoundly affected African history in so many ways, and have made almost every relationship between Africans and their colonial masters reactionary. This reactionary attitude is mostly evident in the literatures produced by Africans, since the relationship left Africans exploited, even at the verge of losing her identity. The task to restore and to affirm the African identity and to give it a place within the global community became the major pre-occupation of African nationalists which led to nationalism as a movement in Africa.

Sequel to this movement, many African countries gained independence during the 1960s; some of these newly formed governments rejected the ideas of capitalism in favour of a more Afrocentric economic model on the ground that sustaining Western capitalism was seriously undermining, if not destroying, the African social infrastructure based on traditional humanistic values. However, the agitations for self-realization, emancipation and decolonization of the Africans and the entire continent, made African nationalist leaders to seek reparations for the atrocities of slavery and colonialism by bringing back the initial identity and culture of an African person. Within this emerging background, W.E.B.Dubois championed Pan-Africanism and argued for the intellectual understanding and cooperation among all groups of African descent focused on bringing about the emancipation of Black peoples by emphasizing the notion of African people as subjects rather than objects, Kwame Nkrumah, in his contribution to the struggle for the emancipation of Africans from colonialism/imperialism, reasserts the African identity in his *Philosophical Consciencism,* Julius Nyerere in *Ujamaa*, Kenneth Kaunda in *African Humanism*, Tom Mboya in *African Socialism,* while Sedar Senghor decried Africa's loss of identity and championed a course to reclaiming it through his philosophy of Negritude. Negritude rejects the assumption that an African is inherently inferior to the "white man". For Senghor, Negritude is a weapon against any Western imperialism and an instrument of liberation (Senghor, 1993, p. 27). Senghor's conception of Negritude is for the revival of the African cultural identity distorted by the historical trends of Western invasion.

This then became the core of philosophical vision of Negritude as a philosophy of socio-cultural identity and affirmation of being. Senghor's Negritude claimed to have and provided a unifying, fighting, and liberating instrument for development as well as an expression of a new humanism that positioned Africa as unique entity within a global community. It is this claim that formed the thrust of this research with a view to evaluating how identity can serve as a tool for development.

Why the Search for an African Identity?

A primary factor that entwines Africa with European modernity is the philosophical shaping of the concept of 'race' by four of the most prominent modern Western philosophers: Hume, Kant, Hegel and Jasper each of whom, perhaps unwittingly, established a rationale for conquest and subjugation of people of the black race (Bell, 2002, p. 7). They portrayed the black race as being inferior and even sub-human incapable of reasoning which led to the conquest of Africa. Hume took the lead in his essay *On National Character* with this comment:

> 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 among them, no arts, no sciences. These NEGRO slaves dispersed all over Europe, of whom non ever discovered any symptoms of ingenuity; though low people, without education; will start up amongst us and distinguish themselves in any profession (Hume, 1969, p. 208).

Hegel on the other hand had written off Africa south of the Sahara in his introduction to *Philosophy of History*:

> Africa proper, as far as history goes back, has remained for all purposes of connection with the rest of the world, shut up. It is the gold land compressed within itself, the land of childhood which lying beyond the days of self-conscious history is undeveloped in the dark mantel of night. The Negro exhibits the natural man in his completely wild and untamed state. We must lay aside all thought of reverence and morality; all that we call feeling, if we would comprehend him. We leave Africa never to mention it again for it has no historical part of the world. It has no movement or development to exhibit (Hegel, 1956, pp. 91 - 99).

In his *History of Philosophy*, he claims that black Africans not only constitute a unique and separate race, but that humanity lacks the scientific or intellectual tools with which to comprehend black Africans.

Similarly, Max Weber was caught in this web of intellectual rascality when he averred that all forms of indices for civilization existed in Europe namely arts, music, architectures, printing, science, politics and other aspects of human endeavour. He asserts that it is only in Europe that science had reached its apex of development which

> We recognize today as valid. Empirical knowledge, reflection on problems of the cosmos and of life, philosophical and theological wisdom of the most profound. The full development of a systematic theology must be credited to Christianity under the influence of Hellenism (Weber, 1958, p. 13).

Anthony Areji pointed out that Weber is even a little more sincere than other racialists. According to Areji, Weber admitted that there existed other forms of civilizations elsewhere outside the occidental culture. But he contends that these civilizations are valid, systematic and authentic only as they manifest in the Western culture (Areji, 2008, p. 150). The black peoples wanted a re-affirmation of their culture and personality in the face of Western bias fed by the realities of racism, slavery and colonialism. African nationalist philosophers make a case for this search. They include: Kwame Nkrumah, Tom Mboya, Julius Nyerere, Kenneth Kuanda, Nnamdi Azikiwe and Sedar Senghor. Kwame Nkrumah as a social revolutionist was very critical of capitalism, neo-colonialism, imperialism and other vices of colonialism. These issues according to Nkrumah needed a radical transformation of African society through a revaluation and the establishment of socialism. Nkrumah believed that the present-day African society has lost its identity as it is buffeted by three rival ideologies. The traditional beliefs and practices engaged in a tug of war with Euro-Christian tenets on the one hand and Islamic tenets on the other. According to Nkrumah, the resolution of this conflict will be found in Consciencism. He defines philosophical Consciencism as that philosophical stand point which taking its start from the present content of the African conscience, indicates the way in which progress is forged out of the conflict in that conscience (Nkrumah, 1974, p. 79). For him, Consciencism is a map in intellectual terms of the disposition of forces which will enable African society to digest the Western and Islamic and the Euro-Christian elements in Africa, and develop them in such a way that they fit into the African personality.

Tom Mboya viewed African independence as a means of creating modern, sovereign states, giving Africans a sense of nationhood, and of engendering prosperity with equity to fight ignorance, poverty, and disease. This comes out very clearly in his book, *Freedom and After*. Mboya according to Mule, envisaged the emergence of modern and vibrant nation firmly rooted in the best of the traditions and cultures of African society. To achieve this, he pushed for a variant of African socialism, which advocated for a mixed economy, a mixed ownership of productive assets, an economy opens to international trade and capital, and an economy guided by principles of efficiency, equity, and fairness (Mule, 2006, p. 22). The essence of his articulation of *African Socialism* was to restore traditional African socialist mentality and outlook which will create new values in the changing world of money economy which will reflect the thinking of the entire Africans. Julius Nyerere also supports the idea of African identity as being rooted in African Traditional System. The family is the prototype of any nation and this should form the basis of African identity. This is realizable through Ujamaa. "Ujamaa" in Swahili literally means "familyhood". Familyhood in Africa is extended beyond the basic family unit. Thus, for Nyerere, the root of African socialism is the idea of familyhood which goes beyond the tribe, community, the nation. It must include the entire humanity. Nyerere wrote:

> The foundation, and the objective, of African socialism is the extended family. The true African socialist does not look on one class of men as his brethren and another as his natural enemies. He does not form an alliance with the 'brethren' for the extermination of the 'non-brethren'. He rather regards all men as his brethren as members of his ever-extending family (Nyerere, 1968, pp. 11 - 12).

With this understanding of the basic socialist principles of the traditional African society, Nyerere attempted to build a socialist society in which the principles of human equality, freedom and solidarity would be applied to the social, economic and political organization of the society.

Kenneth Kaunda dubbed his philosophy 'humanism' because after Zambia gained independence from British colonial rule on October 24, 1964, he set out to develop the country into a modern African nation-state along socialist lines. Zambian (African) humanism according to Kaunda was a form of African Socialism which combined traditional African values with Western socialist and Christian values. Kaunda argued:

> It was partly to throw off the moods of despair which from time to time threatened to destroy me that I prayed and thought my way through what has been somewhat grandly called the philosophy of Zambian Humanism. It is simply the goodness about man (sic) derived from my study of the Bible and other great writings, supplemented by my own experience (Kaunda, 1980, p. 164).

This ideology was eventually declared the Zambian national ideology and philosophy in 1967. The argument made by Kaunda and his followers was that Africa had always contained much indigenous socialism which colonialism had destroyed, and so the experiment with Zambian humanism was an attempt to rescue pre-colonial values and traditions and to use these as the basis on which to build the modern state.

Short Historical Background to Sedar Senghor's Philosophy

The lines of partition of Africa generally affected almost everything in the life of the colonized Negro. That of the French was stretched to the extreme such that the colonized had to be assimilated. Against this backdrop, Senghor saw negritude as springing from the failure of assimilation to completely eliminate the black race through miscegenation. It therefore became incumbent for Senghor to use that only value which could not be assimilated to project African identity and personality. According to Cesaire, as noted by Okolo, Culture is a process through which any group acquires its own personality (Okolo, 1993, p. 60) and in Satres's phrase, according to Njoku, his "existentialist integrity" (Njoku, 2002, p. 55) which he paraphrases as the original purity of the black African existence, the sole aim of his endeavour is self-actualization through the implement of being and culture. This desire of a black man to be in consonant with himself and his culture or identity gave birth to the concept negritude.

The Origin and Concept of Negritude

The term, *Negritude*, has been used in a variety of contexts by a variety of authors and critics. It is difficult to pin down a clear-cut definition, but in essence, etymologically, Negritude is a Latin word "Negritudo" meaning blackness or black colour. It is seen as a literary and cultural movement developed by Aime Cesaire, a West Indian from Martinique, Leon Damas from Guyana and Leopold Sedar Senghor from Senegal, who were studying in Paris within the late 1930s. The major aim of it was to bring back the dignity/identity of the blacks distorted by the West. It was the experience of discrimination in France that gave the founders a great deal of impetus to think or offer rationality towards self-liberation, which led to the formation of Negritude. The French policy of assimilation mentioned above made nonsense of the black man's identity, thus the formation of Negritude was an attempt to assert the uniqueness of the black man.

Identity in Sedar Senghor's Philosophy

We had earlier noted that the search for identity was part of a general postcolonial soul-searching in Africa. Because the Western imperialists perceived African culture as inferior in so many

respects, slavery, racial discrimination, colonialism and neo-colonialism on one hand and the French policy of assimilation on the other hand included systematic programs of de-Africanization. Now, Sedar Senghor's philosophy of Negritude was by no means only an intellectual reaction to racial discrimination, colonialism, neo-colonialism and the French policy of assimilation; it was also an affirmation of the black man himself. Senghor, according to Njoku insists that Negritude is not racialism or self-negation; it is simply rooting oneself in oneself, and self-affirmation; confirmation of one's being (Njoku, 2002). Negritude was therefore a public proclamation of a black man's place on the walls and values of his civilization which aided the black man to consider his civilization as authentic as against the Western assumption of being inferior. Negritude therefore became an attempt to regain the original purity of black man's existence/identity.

Moreover, Negritude was not a mere theoretical speculation or philosophy of being; it was a philosophy of praxis aimed at liberating Africa from Western imperialism. For Senghor, Negritude is a weapon against any Western imperialism and an instrument of liberation (Senghor, 1993, p. 27). The most important and lasting influence of Negritude is best seen on the post-independence struggle of the black man for statehood. Its aims and objectives are the same if compare to the pursuit of other African nationalist thinkers. The whole idea of Negritude was a black man's struggle for his freedom, self-actualization, self-assertion and self-affirmation. Thus, Negritude movement came into actualization as a result of a black man's struggle for his freedom and liberty. To actualize the essence of the struggle, Negritude movement emphasized the possible negation of subjugation, exploitation, degradation, oppression and humiliation of Africans by the Western imperialists. In addition to Negritude as a cultural movement re-asserting African culture/identity, values, and traditions as part of the common heritage of mankind as seen above, African Socialism was the second part that completed the Negritude thought as defined by Senghor. The phrase 'African socialism' seems to espouse the view that the traditional African society was a classless and egalitarian society imbued with the spirit of humanism which Senghor's Negritude seems to express a nostalgia to that spirit. For Senghor, the value of African socialism is founded on the African understanding of the family. By family, Senghor understands not the Western concept of mother, father and children but the family as a natural and spiritual union in which the living and the dead commune with each other in all its roots. He states: the family in Africa is the clan and not as in Europe 'mum, dad and the baby'. It is not the household but 'the sum of all persons, living and dead, who acknowledge a common ancestor'. As we know, the ancestral lineage continues back to God (Senghor, 1998, p. 430).

In support of Senghor's views on African socialism, is the conception of Julius Nyerere's version of African socialism, summarized in what he calls 'Ujamaa or Familyhood'. To this regard, Cranfold Pratt, writes:

> The foundation and the objective of African socialism is the extended family.
> The true African socialism does not look on one class of men as his brethren and
> another as his natural enemies. He rather regards as his brethren as members of
> his ever-extending family Ujamaa, then, or 'Familyhood' describes our
> socialism. It is opposed to capitalism which seeks to build a happy society on the
> basis of exploitation (Pratt, 1999, pp. 137 - 152).

With this understanding of the basic socialist principles of the traditional African society, Senghor attempted to build a socialist society in which the principles of human equality, freedom and solidarity would be applied to the social, economic and political organization of the society.

According to Walter Skurnik, Senghor claimed that Africa's social background of tribal community life not only makes socialism natural to Africa but excludes the validity of the theory of class struggle, thus making African socialism, in all of its variations, different from Marxism and European socialist theory (Skurnik, 1965, pp. 349 - 353). However, Senghor's reflections on African socialism according to Walter, are based on his emotional and intellectual commitment to African values and realities, and on a thorough investigation of Western and communist thinkers (Skurnik, 1965). Hence Senghor's concept of Negritude according to Mboya, antedates his formal concern with African socialism, but is connected with it intimately through its early militant emphasis on the primacy of Africa and later expression of African cultural values (Mboya, 1963, p. 17).

Senghor is very explicit about how Africa's socialism is both linked to and diverges from Marxist socialism. This is laid out in his lecture at St. Anthony's College, Oxford. Senghor believed that the Marxist theory and the Soviet practice of socialism stressed 'material' development at the cost of 'spiritual' development, and that African socialism based on its humanism will fill the spiritual breech. Revised humanism, according to the "living experience" of Africans, he says, according to Richard Bell, will include revised Negritude which is a form of Humanism" (Bell, 2002, p. 38). In brief, Senghor's program of African socialism, its material and spiritual features is characterized as follows:

> The specific object of African socialism, after the Second World War, was to fight against foreign capitalism and its slave economy; to do away, not with the inequality resulting from the domination of one class by another, but with the inequality resulting from the European conquest, from the domination of one people by another, of one race by another. Here it is not only a matter of suppressing private capitalism, it is a question of replacing it (Senghor, 1961, p. 37).

And its spiritual side is deeply embedded in Africa's community-based society. Senghor writes:

> The satisfaction of the spiritual needs which transcend our natural needs has to be achieved. This has not yet happened in any European or American form of civilization: neither in the west nor the east. For this reason, we are forced to seek our own original mode, a Negro-African mode paying special attention to *economic democracy* and *spiritual freedom.* Our Negro-African society is a classless society which is not the same as saying that it has no hierarchy or division of labour. It is a *community-based society,* in which the hierarchy and therefore power is founded on spiritual and democratic values (Senghor, 1961).

On the spiritual side, Bell wrote that Senghor draws heavily on the writing of French paleobiologist and theologian Pierre Teilhard de Chardin and on his form of theistic evolutionary humanism. For Teilhard de Chardin and Senghor, Marx's matter is holy matter which according to them, subtended by a *radial* energy of a psychic nature. The source of this "radial energy" for Senghor in a poetic metaphor according to Bell is "the burning lava of our Negritude"(Bell, 2002, p. 38), and, according to Francis Njoku, Senghor insists that Negritude is not a defence for colour or skin or an attachment to some race; it is oriented towards the promotion of human dignity in general and African dignity in particular (Njoku, 2002, p.50).

Identity as a Tool for African Development
The discourse on identity has always occupied the centre stage in every epoch since every historical epoch goes a long way in forming, shaping and determining the identity and world-views of the people involved. For example, the American philosophy of pragmatism could be seen from this point of view since it has been able to stand as an identity for the Americans. The interplay of this identity has really influenced the socio-cultural, economic and political development of the United States of America. Thus, development has been conceived generally as a value word used to describe the process of economic, social and political transformation (Lawal, 2006, pp. 65-78). Hence, the question of identity and how it influences development cannot be over emphasized. For better understanding of this sub-heading, Jacques Louis Hymans identifies three currents in Sedar Senghor's philosophy, he writes:

> There are many Negritude: the aggressive Negritude clamouring for recognition of the African Values; the conciliatory Negritude advocating cultural miscegenation or cross-breeding; and an inventive Negritude tending towards a new humanism (Hymans, 1977, p.23).

These currents are geared towards the socio-cultural, economic and political development of Africa and the 'civilization of the universe'. The notion was borrowed from French Jesuit priest, palaeontologist, and philosopher, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin. The civilisation of the universe is what Senghor describes as the symbiosis of all the different civilisations. The three strands of movement in Senghor's philosophy shall be discussed to see how it influences socio-cultural, economic and political development in Africa. For instance, the aggressive Negritude which we have treated earlier forms Senghor's first conception of his philosophy which seeks for the revival of African socio-cultural identity distorted by the historical trends of Western invasion. Senghor's efforts at the initial stage of the Negritude philosophy was primarily self-assertion based on defining and presenting the essence of black culture and identity, which according to him, seeks to dispel denigrating myths and stereotypes linked to Africans. This was actualised on the ground that Senghor's philosophy fought for the acknowledgment of African culture, history, and achievements, as well as presenting Africa's contributions to the world and restoring her rightful place within the global community. The realization of the first stage of Senghor's philosophy led to liberation and emancipation of Africa because it served and provided a unifying, fighting, and liberating instrument for development as well as an expression of a new humanism that positioned Africa as unique entity within a global community. To this end, Senghor argued that African socio-cultural heritage has something unique to offer to humanity.

For Senghor, socio-cultural heritage is that upon which all other thing is based; it is the precursor to all aspects of life. As he explains the task of building a new state in "the African road to socialism", he writes:

> Our task is clear, with regard to the present and the past-colonization and traditional civilization, the history that we have lived. We must emerge from our alienation to build a new state, political, economic, and social desalination, once again, are all prerequisites of cultural desalination. Contrary to the notion of numerous African politicians, culture is not an appendage that can be lopped off without damage. It is not even a simple political means. Culture is the

precondition and the goal of any policy worthy of the name (Senghor, 1964, P. 79).

For Senghor, culture is paramount and is the precursor to politics and to all aspects of life. Perhaps this is so because culture is an inherently important part of human life and one cannot operate outside of culture. This line of thinking is similar to Senghor's ideas about the primacy of culture, for he states that "there can be no political liberation without cultural liberation" (Senghor, 1976, p. 71). The justification of Senghor's stance on culture portrays his initial stage of his philosophy which was primary self-assertion and a reaction against the Western imperialism which aided in the revival of African socio-cultural heritage. However, Senghor's idea of civilization of the universe or rather a vision of cosmopolitanism founded upon socio-cultural integrity forms his 'conciliatory negritude', which is advocating cultural miscegenation or cross breeding which Senghor describes as symbiosis of all the different civilisations which is the search for equilibrium, a shared idea and a common reason for living. Senghor's idea of civilization of the universe expresses the common work of all continents, all races. For Senghor, the civilisation of the universal is not a melting-pot where race and cultural differences are dissolved and disappear; it is rather the meeting place of giving and receiving where empathy and mutual respect, not simply tolerance, determine and govern the terms of interaction. All races contribute to the construction of the Civilisation of the Universal. Each must keep their specificity as they come to the rendezvous, otherwise there will be domination rather than mutual fertilization (Senghor, 1967, p. 28). In some ways, Senghor's conciliatory Negritude seems to contradict itself as it represents both cultural nationalism and an openness to outside influence. This seeming paradox is shown clearly in Senghor's stance as Mumm captures it:

> True culture is being rooted and being unrooted. It is being rooted as deeply as possible in native soil: in one's spiritual heritage. But it is being unrooted: open to rain and sun, to the fertile contributions of foreign civilizations. In the difficult construction of Africa in the twentieth century, we need the best of *francite*. As I like to say, it is time for us to return to Descartes: to the spirit of method and organisation. But it is no less necessary that we remain rooted in our soil. Cartesian clarity must shed light, but essentially upon our riches (Mumm, 2011, p. 71).

One could ponder thus: how can that which is unrooted still rooted? For Senghor, development needs to work towards this paradoxical combination which embraces cultural diversity and nationalism. Senghor's stance is that the deconstruction of cultural hierarchies and being rooted in one's culture is a precursor to ideal cosmopolitanism, which consists of dialogue between equal cultures. It must be noted here that Senghor is not fighting or asking for a return to a pre-modern Africa, but for the recognition of difference and for the strengthening of Africa's cultural identities and practices in order to avoid being dominated or assimilated by a superior culture. The goal of avoiding domination and assimilation by a superior culture does not negate Senghor's idea of cultural diversity, it is more importantly about battling mental neo-colonization, about asserting the worth and equality of black values; thus the definition of Negritude according to Shanna Lee Mumm as: first of all, being rooted in the virtues of black peoples, developing and blossoming before being open to the fertilizing pollen of other peoples and civilization (Mumm, 2011, p. 74). Senghor had noted that "to be able to become by being enriched by the riches of others, we must previously be ourselves and strongly so". This means that Senghor's cultural nationalism does not

demand a rejection of the outside world. Rather, if one has their roots firmly rooted and fertilized in the soil of one's own culture, the reach of one's culture will be ever greater and unique.

The accommodation and complementation of all values and cultures, forms Senghor's 'inventive negritude' which according to him is tending towards a new humanism. For Senghor, the aim of this inventive Negritude according to Anyanwu and Ruch is to fertilize and put more life into its own values, which shall embrace all mankind (Anyanwu and Ruch, 1984, p. 227). To this end, Senghor argue:

> Thus, though our humanism must have West African man as its major objective, it cannot, without peril, end with West Africa, not even with all of Africa. An effective humanism must be open; it obviously includes not only Malianism since we are not only Malians here assembled but also nationalism and pan-Negroism (I do not say Negritude), pan-Africanism and, with greater reason, pan-Arabism. The one ''Pan-ism'' that meets twentieth century requirements is, I dare say, pan-humanism a humanism that includes all men on the dual basis of their contribution and their comprehension (Senghor, 1964, p. 80).

Kwasi Wiredu in his *Companion to African Philosophy* noted that the above preceding forms the basis of Senghor's insistence on the creation of a Civilization of the Universe. Thus, one perceives in Senghor an advocacy for socio-cultural contact of races devoid of domination but one that aims at cross fertilization. Senghor felt that Negritude could open up a harmonious basis for integration of black and white values with a view of bringing into being a new African personality which necessarily contributes to the civilization of values. In this light, Negritude was seen as a cultural heritage of the Negros and an embodiment of cultural, economic, political and social values of the Black people.

However, Senghor's idea of pan-humanism is based on unconditional love nourished not only by the capacity to forgive, but also and especially by a willingness to accept the good in other cultures for mutual enrichment and complementarity. To argue his stance on pan-humanism, Senghor wrote the preface to a book on the New International Economic Order by the International Progress Association (IPO). Senghor's preface crystallises his effort as a pan-humanist. In that preface, Senghor wrote:

> The new order cannot be built on a hegemonic conception of the world that would establish Western society or the Communist bloc as the model to follow. This is neither desirable nor possible. It is about acknowledging the other's *right to difference*, that is, the right to think, act and live by and for oneself. It is the *dialogue of cultures* based on clearly understood and accepted differences that will enable men to know themselves, to acknowledge one another and to cooperate in the brotherhood of men. The New International Economic Order must achieve two inextricably linked goals: to change the world and to transform life in such a way that the human being can be better fed, better clothed, better educated, stronger and more beautiful, indeed more human (Senghor, 1980, p. vii - ix).

Conclusion

A thorough and critical evaluation of Leopold Sedar Senghor's philosophy especially his idea of 'inventive negritude' exposes its positive and aggressive contributions to African development and the civilization of the entire World. Senghor felt that Negritude could open up a harmonious basis for integration of black and white values with a view of bringing into being a new African personality which necessarily contributes to the civilization of values which is why his reconciliatory Negritude is tended towards this purpose. Nevertheless, Senghor's philosophy is aimed at preserving African socio-cultural heritage and also calls for integration of both African and Western positive values for the civilization of the universe. It also aimed at liberating Africans from the effect of Western imperialism by reasserting, revaluating and redefining the personhood (identity) of Africans. However, Senghor's Negritude as presented in this paper provided a unifying, fighting, and liberating instrument for development as well as an expression of a new humanism that positioned Africa as unique entity within the global community. Hence, Senghor's Negritude should be seen as a tool for African development.

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