

THE QUEST FOR ETHICS OF JUXTAPOSITION AS A REMEDY FOR RACISM

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Abstract

Racism is the discrimination of a person on the basis of one's colour. This happens as a result of the prejudices and stereotypes a person has regarding the other person. The Critical Race Theory illustrates that racism has been a normalised anomaly in the human societies because it serves some material and psychological end for the benefactors. Using the ring of Gyges, it is evident how camouflaging and manifesting racial inclinations can be. Moreover, Jean-Paul Sartre's concept of Bad Faith and Falsehood shall be used in relation to racism and the concept of authenticity and inauthenticity. The ethics of juxtaposition shall foster an authentic consciousness especially through the present presence mode and the absent absence mode of ethical juxtaposition. The absent presence and present absence modes shall be illuminated in relation to their loopholes and how such affects autophotosynthafricanoscopy as a form of humanoscopy.

Key words: Racism, stereotypes, prejudices, discrimination, good faith, bad faith, categorical imperative

Introduction

This paper seeks to coin the ethics of juxtaposition as the solution to efface racism hence set free the alienated African spirit to manifest itself fully in the matters of practical importance in the human family. The 'quest' shall be an appraisal of the possibility of establishing a *prolegomenon* for human relations that are free from racial stereotypes, prejudices and discrimination. The ethics of juxtaposition shall be this *prolegomenon*. We shall first reflect on who a racist is, whether a nation can be termed as racist, the Critical Race Theory (CRT) in relation to the Myth of Gyges as the groundwork for the ethics of juxtaposition, and finally the ethics of juxtaposition.

Conceptualising a Racist

A racist is that individual who discriminates another on the basis of colour. Racial stereotypes and prejudices fuel this discrimination. Trevor-Roper, for example, claims that the world is dominated by European technology, illustrations, and ideas; hence, people should focus only on the European culture not African which he sees as barbaric and useless for humanity since Africans have never made any contributions to the development of humanity.¹ This is a toxic prejudice. Indeed, "...there are many times when Africa was favourably falsified as the land of the noble savage, with all the grandeur of moral simplicity. But this was not nearer to the complete picture."² This means that the faulty classification of Africans' cultures as useless is

¹ Broadcast Lecture by Hugh Trevor-Roper, reprinted in *The Listener* (London: 28 November 1963), 871.

² Ali Mazrui, *European Exploration of Africa and Africa's Self Discovery* (The Journal of Modern African Studies, Vol. 7, No. 4 (Dec., 1969)), 672.

not a representation of the reality about Africans and African cultures, but a racist expression and attitude towards Africans.

From the periods of slave trade, colonialism and post-colonialism, a section of human beings have attempted to establish racism, racial stereotypes and prejudices so as to discriminate other human beings on the basis of colour. Hence, a nation can be said to be racist when it establishes manifest or clandestine policies that disadvantage other people within her or outside her on the basis of their colour. For example, in South Africa, the Blacks experienced racism and were discriminated in their own country on the basis of their skin colour. On the other hand, even the categorisation of Africa as a continent containing third world countries is seemingly a kind of racial stereotyping and prejudice.³ This categorization has its roots in the period between the end of World War II in 1945 till the end of the Cold War in 1991. Precisely:

...the First World countries were those aligned with the economic and political beliefs of the United States of America, predominantly related to the capitalist system, which included Canada and most countries in the western region of Europe. On the opposite spectrum, the Second World countries were aligned with the ideas of Russia and later composed a confederation, the USSR that in 1922 with the help of the Red Army implanted a government based on socialism. The rest of the world, majorly composed of developing countries that didn't directly support either the USA or the USSR, were grouped in one big block called the Third World countries.⁴

African countries happen to be mostly in the third category. Despite the fact that some of the Third World countries face economic problems, the truth is that most recent developments in many African countries are not recognized because those who coined these categories of conceiving Africa do not want to acknowledge Africa's growth. They only sound a trumpet of exaggeration on Africa's problems and pay a blind eye to her development and abundant resources. The prejudiced views about Africa as a child in need of development, a corner of terrorism, a nest of poverty, a place of forced migration and diseases, are all a reflection of the hidden motives of dominance in those who call themselves First World Countries. "One thing is certain: the transformation that Africa has undergone in recent decades has been remarkable. Africa is shaping its own destiny and should be referred to as 'the African opportunity' instead of 'the African threat.'"⁵ This affirms the sixth tenet of the CRT that Africans need to air their own voice to the world as a unique people due to their unique historical experience of oppression and racial discrimination.

³ Ali Mazrui, *The Third World Countries and International Terrorism* (Third World Quarterly, Vol. 7, No. 2 (Apr., 1985)), 349.

⁴ Beatriz Freitas, *Why is it wrong to call developing countries Third World countries?* (July 28, 2020) <https://biafreitas.medium.com/why-is-it-wrong-to-call-developing-countries-third-world-countries-be522af5f214> [April 6, 2022].

⁵ Landry Signe and Ameenah Garib-Fakim, *Africa is an Opportunity for the World: Overlooked Progress in Governance and Human Development* (January 25, 2019) <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/africa-in-focus/2019/01/25/africa-is-an-opportunity-for-the-world-overlooked-progress-in-governance-and-human-development/> [April 6, 2022].

This is possible with the avoidance of the categories of discrimination as ‘Third Countries’ since as aforementioned, this is a political strategy to present Africans as a people in need of external intervention for her to make progress. Africans do not need to be oversimplified with the racial prejudices of being called forever ‘Third World’ countries yet Africa has gold, oil, cocoa, tea, among other abundant resources that are looted by the capitalist networks in Africa. For those Africans whose spirits have been squashed by pessimism that they now collaborate with the oppressors to survive, the words of Julius Nyerere may be of great significance that, “Development brings freedom, provided it is development of people. But people cannot be developed; they can only develop themselves. For while it is possible for an outsider to build a man’s house, an outsider cannot give the man pride and self-confidence in himself as a human being.”⁶ This is a clarion call for self-reliance, for self-confidence, for autonomy, for self-discovery and improvement as a people of Africa. It is an absolute negation of racism as encrusted in those belittling attitudes of the First World countries as aforementioned, who desire to bracket Africa in the pauper chalice with a grand aim of controlling her resources and everything, for their own benefits.

The Critical Race Theory and the Myth of Gyges as the Groundwork for the Ethics of Juxtaposition

Racism is closely related to the concept of unfairness. The stereotypes, prejudices and discrimination on the basis of one’s skin colour are what amounts to racism. The six tenets of the Critical Race Theory include: that racism is a normalised anomaly, that racism serves an economic and psychic end for the racists, that racism is not biological but a social construct, that powerful nations racialize small ones at different times to serve some purposes like labour, that each race has a unique history and experience, and that the coloured people have a unique voice as a result of their experience in being discriminated on the basis of their race.⁷

We shall now relate them with the myth of Gyges. This myth is postulated in Book II of Plato’s *Republic*.⁸ It is narrated by Glaucon who dialogues with Socrates about justice. The myth is about a shepherd who served the ruler of Lydia. It tells us how one day there was a violent thunderstorm then an earthquake that split the ground.⁹ Curious, the shepherd drew into it. The story goes that the shepherd took a ring from a corpse and this ring had some powers such that, if the shepherd turned it to himself, he would not be visible to those around him and if he turned the ring towards the outside, then he could be visible.¹⁰ He later seduced the King’s wife and with her help killed the king and took over the kingdom.

⁶ Julius Nyerere, *Freedom and Development* (London: Oxford University Press, 1973), 60.

⁷ Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic, *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction* (New York: New York University Press, 2001), 7-9.

⁸ Plato, *Plato Republic* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2004), 38.

⁹ Plato, *Republic*.

¹⁰ Plato, *Republic*.

Interpreting this myth in our context, we can say that the golden ring is incorruptible and can be related with the mind. The turning of the ring can be associated with our engaging with reasoning and feeling. It thus shows that the mind is affected by our feelings and thoughts. The aspect of receiving the ring from the corpse can mean the influence of our established principles upon others even in our absentia. Turning the mind into oneself (introspection), one meets oneself, with his/her values, convictions, stereotypes and prejudices. In this inward turning, one also sees others although they do not see him/her.

In other words, one encounters humanity by encountering oneself. One scrutinizes the stereotypes and prejudices in mind as gained by misguided thoughts or the influence of the associates. One can choose to use them when 'turning the ring outward' (being visible to others in the ethical choice made) or not. If one chooses to use them and perpetuate racism, then one's presence fails to honour the human dignity. But if one chooses to abandon those racial stereotypes and promotes human dignity instead of racism, then one's presence promotes the human dignity.

This symbolic turning elicits therefore some aspects of camouflaging and manifesting. This expresses autonomy that basically means a shift from value to idea whereby we are directed to winnow the contents of our souls thereby giving a sense of direction that bestows a shape on the principles of thought and action.¹¹ For an evil person, this will mean the fox and lion traits of Niccolo Machiavelli's *Prince*.¹² For a righteous person however, camouflaging and manifesting will mean, introspection and action respectively. This action must be after promoting happiness in its means and end.¹³ The camouflaged thoughts and feelings are those we do not want others to know that we are associated with them while the manifest ones are those that we know are acceptable as noble such that we can openly execute them to promote human dignity.

The Critical Race Theory informs us through its second tenet that racism serves an economic and psychic purpose for the racist individual and racist nation. This means that the biased thoughts and feelings of the racially stereotyped person are egocentric. The same is the case for the first tenet that turns the racial anomaly into normalcy because the racist does not suffer the pain of racism. For Glaucon in Plato's *Republic*, it is better to harm another person without being discovered and punished than being harmed and you have no capacity to retaliate.¹⁴ In the case of racism, the impunity of the powerful nations who set forth their projects to exploit and weaken the weak nations by the use of racism as their weapon is evident in even how they bracket almost all African nations as Third World countries always. In the case of slave trade, the African person was exploited through free labour in the farms of the slave owners. During colonialism, the colonial masters exploited the Africans as a lesser people. The apartheid

¹¹Kwame Anthony Appiah, *The Ethics of Identity* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2005), 37.

¹² Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince* (London: Penguin Classics, 2009), 69.

¹³ Plato, *The Republic*, 36.

¹⁴ Plato, *The Republic*, 37.

system in South Africa aimed at making the whites believe that they were ontologically superior to the Africans.

The turning of this golden ring happens even today. At a national level, this will involve the policies put in place to disfavour the Africans while favouring the material or emotional benefit of the whites. The colonisers turned the ring when our forces against colonialism reached the climax; hence, we became independent and they assumed the role of a patron in each developmental project we have, ensuring however that all African nations are seemingly free but actually enslaved through the direct diplomatic relations with countries abroad instead of internal direct rule.¹⁵ This is a kind of alienation inasmuch as the African nations' sovereignty is manipulated by the powerful nations. As a consequence, the attainment of independence can now be likened to a movement from foreign rule to foreign relations.¹⁶ This is still alienation and thus racism.

Africanisation: An Ontological Exorcism

As aforementioned, the racial stereotypes and prejudices have distorted the African identity. Africanisation in this case will invoke Steve Biko's Black Consciousness that, "Black consciousness makes the Black man see himself as a being, entire in himself. It makes him less dependent and freer to express his manhood."¹⁷ This process of making the Black man be entire in himself is important but will only be realised with the inclusion of the 'racists' in the consciousness process. This is because we are in a society where we encounter both Whites and Blacks and mutual respect ought to flow across the encounters of these two as equal members of humanity. The first part here will address Africanisation as an African consciousness of being in himself and in the world of humanity where he plays a vital part with a vital voice. It will try to reunite the African person with humanity, from where the African person had been dismembered due to racial stereotypes. The second part will be the last part of this discourse and it will be about the ethics of juxtaposition to guide humanity in effacing racism.

Therefore, Africanisation is basically a consciousness of the African spirit to be free and exude an authentic existence of the African goodwill. It is an exorcism to the extent of expelling the racial prejudices, stereotypes and discrimination while invoking the true values of humanity's dignified coexistence. To grasp fully this phenomenon, we shall delve into linking the scope of humanity, the scope of ideal Africanness, and how the two are mutually inclusive.

¹⁵ Ali Mazrui, *The United Nations and Some African Political Attitudes* (International Organization, Vol. 18, No. 3 (Summer, 1964)), 499.

¹⁶ Ali Mazrui, *The United Nations and Some Political Attitudes*, 499.

¹⁷ Steve Biko, *Steve Biko, Black Consciousness and the Quest for True Humanity*, 4. <https://disa.ukzn.ac.za/sites/default/files/pdf-files/remar72.3pdf> [20/3/2022].

(i) *Humanoscopy*¹⁸

The human species embodies all human values encrusted in all cultures, irrespective of the geographical differences. Humanity is therefore expressed in these modes of cultural expression. By *humanoscopy* we mean the scope of humanity in its totality of values as expressed in the various modes of cultures across the world. It is basically the human scope, the human extent. *Humanoscopy* is thus a form of anthropology that discloses humanity's authentic expression through especially culture. Precisely, it is a general term to encompass humanity in totality. Since Africans are part of the human family, there is need for racial discrimination upon the Africans to be erased so that the African spirit can gleam the authentic flame of true existence. *Humanoscopy*¹⁹ will thus simply mean that discourse about the scope of humanity's totality.

Humanoscopy cannot be grasped fully without our conceptualization of authenticity and inauthenticity. Ordinarily, something is authentic if it is true or genuine. It is inauthentic if it is not genuine or true. Martin Heidegger observes that:

To Dasein's state of Being belongs projection-disclosive Being towards its potentiality-for-Being. As something that understands, Dasein can understand itself in terms of the 'world' and Others or in terms of its ownmost potentiality-for-Being. The possibility just mentioned means that Dasein discloses itself to itself in and as its ownmost potentiality-for Being. This authentic disclosedness shows the phenomenon of the most primordial truth in the mode of authenticity. The most primordial, and indeed the most authentic, disclosedness in which Dasein, as a potentiality-for-Being, can be, is the truth of existence. This becomes existentially and ontologically definite only in connection with the analysis of Dasein's authenticity.²⁰

Taking Dasein to mean man in our context, it will mean that every person has the duty to strive towards their life projects in defining themselves. The African persons in our case have the role to define themselves without the racial prejudices and to realize their dreams as a people. Racism is ironical²¹ since it presents a white racist, for example, who fakes at being superior and a black person who fakes at being inferior. To fake is to lie hence it is manifest of inauthenticity.

Sartre associates this to bad faith when he says that, "We shall willingly grant that bad faith is a lie to oneself, on condition that we distinguish the lie to oneself from lying in general. Lying is a negative attitude, we will agree to that. But this negation does not bear on consciousness itself; it aims only at the transcendent."²² The lie spoken of here is the one in which the liar, for

¹⁸ *Humanoscopy*: Coined from 'human' and 'scope' in this case to mean humanity's scope in its totality of values as expressed in the various cultures across the world.

¹⁹ *Humanoscopy*: A discourse on *humanoscopy*.

²⁰ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 1962), 264.

²¹ Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, 47.

²² Sartre, 48.

example the racist, knows the truth which he/she is hiding from the racially discriminated person.²³ Basically, this means that one cannot lie about something he/she is ignorant of. A racist therefore knows that he/she is only pretending to be superior when actually not; just like, the discriminated African fakes at being inferior when actually not.

However, it is important to highlight that it is not always the case that the lied to will discover that he/she has been lied to. Sometimes the lie is so subtle that it is hard to detect. Or, it will take time for it to unfold as a lie. Therefore:

It is sufficient that an overall opacity hides his intentions from the other; it is sufficient that the other can take the lie for truth. But the lie consciousness affirms that it exists by nature as hidden from the other; it utilizes for its own project the ontological duality of myself and myself in the eyes of the other.²⁴

In other words, the person intimidating another on the basis of racial differences is conscious that the discriminated person is not a lesser human being as he/she makes him/her feel. The fact that the racists try to exploit the African resources is often hidden from the Africans' vicinity. This exploitative intention is always camouflaged and presented in the name of humanitarianism. The racist always hides the displeasing truth²⁵ that all human beings are ontologically equal when feigning superiority over the racially discriminated African. While one lies to the other in lying; in bad faith, it is one lying to oneself. "Thus the duality of the deceiver and the deceived does not exist here."²⁶ But if we evaluate humanity as a totality, then the duality persists even in bad faith.

The reason for this is that, like our context of racism, the racially discriminated who is part of humanity, after internalizing the inferiority complex as conditioned by the discriminator, he/she ends up lying to himself/herself that he/she is ontologically inferior to the white racist. One even lives pursuant to this lie. For the white racist, he/she in the guise of superiority complex ends up lying to himself/herself that he/she is ontologically superior to the Africans he/she discriminates. A dichotomy is therefore established in humanity on racism in this respect.

The material and psychic ends of racism to the discriminator posit inherent awareness of the racist about the discrimination stratagem. It shows that one is conscious of this evil consciousness of discrimination. The racial prejudices and discrimination are both consciously constructed by those who desire to gain dominance. Thus, "That which affects itself with bad faith must be conscious (of) its bad faith since the being of consciousness is consciousness of being. It appears then that I must be in good faith, at least to the extent that I am conscious of my bad faith."²⁷ In other words, one sincere to oneself that the told lie is a lie. In their minds therefore, the racists are conscious of their discriminative consciousness. Yet, we know that

²³ Sartre, *ibid.*

²⁴ Sartre, 49.

²⁵ Sartre, *ibid.*

²⁶ Sartre, *ibid.*

²⁷ Sartre, *ibid.*

each human being or community or race ought to individually fashion their individual life projects and endeavour in realizing them, as the grand aim of being-in-the-world.²⁸ We shall expound on this in our next section dealing with autophotosynthafricanoscopy.

(ii) *Autophotosynthafricanoscopy*²⁹

Experience teaches us that all human beings are the same but each culture manifests the uniqueness of this same humanity. For the African people, we can talk of the thousands of African cultures. In relation to the human family, we have already noted how white supremacy has always made efforts to suppress or bring to extinction some of the African values through imposition of the western culture, foreign languages, foreign tastes, foreign modes of governance, and the like. This is alienation. For the African spirit to be free, there is need for the African person to express himself/herself as he/she is truly, through the indigenous goodwill and culture.

It involves the African person conceiving himself/herself without the racial biases, prejudices and noble lies of dominance and intimidation. It is thus, an image of oneself, from oneself, by oneself, with oneself, in oneself. This is what we mean by the term: *Autophotosynthafricanoscopy*. It is the image of the African person, from the African person, by the African person, with the African person, in the African person. *Autophotosynthafricanoscopy*³⁰ will hence mean a discourse about the image of the African person, from the African person, by the African person, with the African person, in the African person. For Sartre, “A person can live in bad faith, which does not mean that he does not have abrupt awakenings to cynicism or to good faith, but which implies a constant and particular style of life.”³¹ This suggests that, for the African person who has been conditioned to be inferior, there is a tendency to live in that inferiority habit as a way of life without realizing it. Equally, for the racist, his/her superiority complex can be manifest as a style of life. Although the racial prejudices are lies in the sense that they propound that which is not true about the discriminated Africans, nonetheless the reality of the material gain that the racists accumulate therefrom and the poverty and oppression upon the discriminated are not mere ‘lies’ but a reality.

We can equally well use another kind of duplicity derived from human reality which we will express roughly by saying that its being-for-itself implies complementarily a being-for-others. Upon any one of my conducts it is always possible to converge two looks, mine and that of the others.³²

This means that there is an interplay between oneself and others. “The equal dignity of being, possessed by my being-for-others and by my being-for-myself permits a perpetually

²⁸ Martin Heidegger, op cit., 264.

²⁹ Autophotosynthafricanoscopy: coined from ‘auto’, ‘photo’, ‘synthesis’, ‘Africa’, ‘scope’. It signifies an image of Africa and the African person, from oneself, by oneself, with oneself, in oneself.

³⁰ A discourse on autophotosynthafricanoscopy.

³¹ Sartre, op cit., 50.

³² Sartre, 57.

disintegrating synthesis and a perpetual game of escape from the for-itself to the for-others and from the for-others to the for-itself.”³³ The individual and the other society members are therefore invited to coexist without racial prejudices and discrimination. In the case of racism, *autophotosynthafricanoscopy* is not applicable because that ‘image’ is an intentionally distorted ‘given’ lie³⁴ by the oppressor whose aim is to dominate and exploit the African person by all possible means. It suffocates therefore the authentic existence of the African person.

(iii) *Autophotosynthafricanoscopy* as a form of *Humanoscopy*

Here we observe that the African values supplement humanity hence are part of humanity. In the foregoing discourse, we have already seen that human values are expressed in our various cultures differently thus showing the different human societies, all forming part of humanity. Because Africans are able human beings as well, a discourse about our African values as encrusted in our various cultures is basically a discourse about humanity’s values. Humanity becomes a mosaic decorated by all the cultural deposits in the world. No culture should be conditioned to annihilate her values and copy-paste those of others. This is inauthenticity and alienation. In relation to this, Sartre notes that:

I cannot be he [the person imitated], I can only play at being him; that is, imagine to myself that I am he. And thereby I affect him with my nothingness. In vain do I fulfil the functions of a café waiter. I can be he only in the neutralized mode, as the actor in *Hamlet*, by mechanically making the typology of my state and by aiming at myself as an imaginary café waiter through those gestures taken as an "analogue."³⁵

This means that an African cannot be a European despite the fact that he/she can imitate him/her. It means that our indigenous goodwill needs to be respected as Africans and not rendered useless by the racial prejudices. In another example, Sartre observes that, “The attentive pupil who wishes to be attentive, his eyes riveted on the teacher, his ears open wide, so exhausting himself in playing the attentive role that he ends up by no longer hearing anything.”³⁶ The prejudices of racism therefore amount to lies and acting in bad faith. If we set aside the cultural hierarchies that have been constructed by racism, even the African cultures will be able to receive an international unbiased recognition just like any other cultures. Only when cultural hierarchies have been removed can we talk of *autophotosynthafricanoscopy* as a form of *humanoscopy*. Such amounts to the conclusion that *autophotosynthafricanoscopy* is a form of *humanoscopy*. This simply means that a talk about the authentic African expression of existence is a talk about humanity’s true existence as well. Hence, we have seen the scope of humanity, the scope of ideal Africanness, and how the two are mutually inclusive. This too will be treated by the ethics of juxtaposition.

³³ Sartre, 58.

³⁴ Sartre, 48.

³⁵ Sartre, 60.

³⁶ Sartre, *ibid.*

The Ethics of Juxtaposition

To grasp the ethics of juxtaposition, it is necessary to reckon that these are ethics that seek an authentic consciousness of the African spirit. The African spirit in this case includes especially the collective experience of the African person before colonialism, during colonialism, and after colonialism. Culture and politics are the indicators of the African spirit as expressed before colonialism, during colonialism and after colonialism. As aforementioned, the dichotomy of the African spirit is a result of the alienation fostered by racism.

In that case, the African spirit is cast between authentic consciousness that involves those indigenous African values as found in our African cultures; and the inauthentic consciousness manifest in the racial biases, prejudices and noble lies intentioned to dominate the African spirit. The authentic consciousness gives Africans a true identity as Africans who are part of the human family while the inauthentic consciousness gives Africans a false and distorted identity as lesser human beings who are incapacitated in all forms of practical importance.

The ethics of juxtaposition will be understood under the four modes of consciousness. We shall see the modes that depict authentic consciousness hence true identity of the African spirit, and those that are inauthentic that amount to a false identity of the African spirit. Through these modes, it will be possible to link *autophotosynthafricanoscopy* with *humanoscopy*. It is this linking that makes us call the ethics of juxtaposition, the ethics of *coniungere*. This term *coniungere* forms the root of the English word: ‘conjunction.’ The term *coniungere* is a Latin word that is an inflection of *coniungo* (second person singular future passive indicative) and it means to connect, to marry or unite, to juxtapose, or to associate.³⁷

Through the four modes of consciousness, we shall see that the ethics of juxtaposition involves a side-by-side laying of authentic and inauthentic consciousness through a critical view of what oneself and others see ‘a people’ to be. Such a juxtaposition involves the individual person and his/her society. The ethical choice and responsibility in the ethics of juxtaposition rests solely on the individual person. But the society has some persuasive influence as well. Let us examine this new ethics in a more systematic way through the modes of ethical juxtaposition.

(i) Present Presence Mode

In this mode, we talk of one being in an ideal situation whereby both the individual and the societal perceptions and ideologies are unbiased, unprejudiced and true, thus amounting to an authentic perception that yields an authentic consciousness of oneself and the other person or people. This is ideal because in a society, people have different opinions and perceptions. These opinions and perceptions are influenced by their status quo and their past as well. In a way, it is hard to experience this mode of ethical juxtaposition unless the individual and the society remain aware of the grand call for humanity to coexist with dignity,³⁸ love and harmony.

³⁷ Word Sense, *Dictionary* <https://www.wordsense.eu/coniungere/> [April 6, 2022].

³⁸ The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948, article 2.

Immanuel Kant's categorical imperative says that act "only in accordance with that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it becomes a universal law."³⁹ In the present presence mode, each person acts on the maxim that esteems human dignity⁴⁰ hence no room for racial discrimination. It is a perfect kingdom of ends where each human person is a lawgiver giving a law that fosters human dignity pursuant to the categorical imperative. Strictly, "In the kingdom of ends everything has either a price or a dignity. What has a price can be replaced by something else as its equivalent; what on the other hand is raised above all price and therefore admits of no equivalent has a dignity."⁴¹ The human dignity is fully acknowledged in this mode of juxtaposition.

The present presence mode manifests a context where the *autophotosynthafricanoscopy* is actually a *humanoscopy*. This is a situation where the African aspirations and values receive a warm unbiased reception at the pedestals of humanity's equilibrium. Basically, there is no racism in this mode because racial biases, prejudices and noble lies are not accommodated here at all. It is therefore the present presence mode that carries the gist of the ethics of juxtaposition as an ethics of *coniungere*.

At a national level, a nation in this mode chooses to treat another nation with dignity, without racial prejudices and discrimination because all the other nations respect such a nation as such. In other words, a nation chooses not to discriminate another nation because no other country discriminates. This is ideal because as we know the policies of the strong nations tend to exploit the weaker nations. But in this present presence mode, such is not the case.

(ii) Present Absence Mode

This is basically an *ad populum*. The person involved in making an ethical choice finds oneself in a society that embraces racism and this person chooses to continue with this discrimination simply because the majority or so and so in the society did it or does it. It is a kind of a negation of the reality of racism. The individual fails absolutely to engage his/her intellectual faculty to make a sound decision other than the biased public opinion that is inauthentic hence an inauthentic expression.⁴² Speaking about the inauthentic training of the Black man, Du Bois says that the Africans are generally cultured by the ideologies of inferiority and oppression as a racial means of exploiting them and therefore:

The tendency is here, born of slavery and quickened to renewed life by the crazy imperialism of the day, to regard human beings as among the material resources of a land to be trained with an eye single to future dividends. Race-prejudices, which keep brown and black men in their "places," we are coming to regard as

³⁹ Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 31.

⁴⁰ Kant, 42.

⁴¹ Kant, *ibid.*

⁴² Martin Heidegger, *op cit.*, 68.

useful allies with such a theory, no matter how much they may dull the ambition and sicken the hearts of struggling human beings.⁴³

This means that the racial biases and prejudices that are normalised in our societies are intended to sustain the racial exploitation of the oppressed Africans. Kwame Anthony Appiah responds to Du Bois's notion of race as a reality by noting that races do not actually exist because there is too little variation across the human communities, pursuant to the biological tests' evidence.⁴⁴ Paul Taylor on the other hand responds to Appiah's article on Du Bois's concept of race by striking a difference between the two. For Taylor, Appiah eliminates the concept of race since he believes that it does not exist while Du Bois understands the race issue as a reality.⁴⁵ It is sincere however to point out that there is a difference between race and racism. Race can be associated with the different human beings and their unique geographical origins while racism is a prejudice and a vice that involves the discrimination of a person on the basis of his/her skin colour.

In this mode of ethical juxtaposition, technically, one is simply there. And his/her being present does not change the situation since one is absent individually, by choosing to swim in the floods of racial biases, prejudices and lies. One keeps on appealing to the state as the originator of the systemic racial discrimination. In a way, one fails to choose to act contrary to the societal biased assumptions regarding racial discrimination. "The principle of autonomy is, therefore: to choose only in such a way that the maxims of your choice are also included as universal in the same volition."⁴⁶ Thus, one is simply present physically but absent as far as autonomy of the will is concerned.

In Jeremy Dowsett's article: *What my Bike Has Taught me about White Privilege*, we learn that Dowsett presents the individual people involved in the racial discrimination as people who execute the discrimination unconsciously. He notes:

And so people in cars—nice, non-aggressive people—put me in danger all the time because they see the road from the privileged perspective of a car. E.g., I ride on the right side of the right lane. Some people fail to change lanes to pass me (as they would for another car) or even give me a wide berth. Some people fly by just inches from me not realizing how scary/dangerous that is for me (like if I were to swerve to miss some roadkill just as they pass). These folks aren't aggressive or hostile toward me, but they don't realize that a pothole or a build-up of gravel or a broken bottle, which they haven't given me enough room to

⁴³ Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 67.

⁴⁴ Kwame Anthony Appiah, *The Uncompleted Argument: Du Bois and the Illusion of Race*, Vol 12, No. 1, Autumn 1985 (Chicago: Chicago University Press), 21.

⁴⁵ Paul Taylor, *Appiah's Uncompleted Argument: W.E.B. Du Bois and the Reality of Race*, Vol. 26, No., 1 (Florida: Florida State University Press, Spring 2000), 103.

⁴⁶ Kant, 47.

avoid—because in a car they don't need to be aware of these things—could send me flying from my bike or cost me a bent rim or a flat tyre.⁴⁷

This article raises serious concerns whether the Africans are ontologically inferior to the whites because Dowsett associates white people with cars, and bicycles with Africans. This is unfair. Worsening the situation is the claim that it is the state responsible for the racial discrimination and not the individual persons involved in propagating it. Dowsett claims that:

So the semi driver who rushes past throwing gravel in my face in his hot wake isn't necessarily a bad guy. He could be sitting in his cab listening to Christian radio and thinking about nice things he can do for his wife. But the fact that “the system” allows him to do those things instead of being mindful of me is a privilege he has that I don't. (I have to be hyper-aware of him).⁴⁸

It is true that the state has an upper hand in the discrimination of the African person in Africa and abroad. But it is also true that those whites who discriminate the Africans in Africa and abroad, simply because the state permits that, are people who refuse to express a good will in relation to fostering the human harmony. They become simply meaningless apparitions whose presence plays no role in the eradication of this illness of racism. Kant is eloquent that, “A rational being must always regard himself as lawgiver in a kingdom of ends possible through freedom of the will”.⁴⁹ A racist treats the discriminated person as a means to an end since the discriminated person as aforementioned is exploited materially and psychologically. Yet, the practical imperative says: “...act that you use humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, always at the same time as an end, never merely as a means.”⁵⁰

The person involved here therefore expresses an inauthentic perception that depicts an inauthentic identity of the ‘other’, hence ruining and bruising the human family’s harmony by promoting racism. Since a human being is not a sack of meat and bones, rather a being capable of judging and making a will, these individuals who camouflage under the shroud of the state must be held accountable for any acts of racial discrimination they do or any omission they engage in that fosters racial discrimination. This mode does not permit *autophotosynthafricanoscopy* to take place. And if *autophotosynthafricanoscopy* happens, in this mode it is seen as inferior. This mode dismembers the African person from the rest of humanity by not linking *autophotosynthafricanoscopy* with *humanoscopy*.

If it is a nation, then we see policies being made that inherently oppress people of another race simply because many other countries do oppress such a people. It is a tool of exploitation and oppression that is borrowed from the majority. One nation chooses to oppress another on the grounds of racial differences just because another nation does so. We experience the powerful

⁴⁷ Jeremy Dowsett, *What my Bike has Taught me about White Privilege* (Workforce Diversity Network, workforcediversitynetwork.com, August 2014), 2.

⁴⁸ Jeremy Dowsett, *What my Bike has Taught me about White Privilege*, 2-3.

⁴⁹ Kant, op cit., 41.

⁵⁰ Kant, 38.

nations in our geopolitics exploiting African nations. The European nations and other powerful nations through neo-colonialism continue to siphon the resources of Africa. Today, “As more African countries have looked to China for financial and technical support to rapidly boost infrastructural development, there have been loud musings about the scale of China’s lending to African countries as well as the Asian giant’s motives, which have been described in some quarters as ‘debt trap diplomacy.’”⁵¹ Gradually, we are kissing the beards of the new colonizer. We are submitting ourselves as vulnerable by dint of the huge loans we owe China. This is neo-colonialism amounting to the alienation of the African identity hence inherent racism. In the lenses of this mode of ethical juxtaposition, they are dominating Africa because others too are doing it.

(iii) Absent Presence Mode

Here, the focus is on the persuasive impact of other people’s ideas or actions or choices on the ethical choices to be made later by people other than themselves. The pace setters of the apartheid system, for example, may have died long ago. But some people can choose to discriminate the Africans because of what was established during the apartheid regime. Even the Africans themselves look unto themselves with an inferiority complex because of this very apartheid system. The individual person or the collective society with the perpetrating ideologies therefore share in the harm caused by their choices, ideas or actions since they remain persuasive to other people to emulate. So, these people are basically absent physically while their former or current actions, choices and ideologies influence others to emulate and err. Kant claims that:

Reason accordingly refers every maxim of the will as giving universal law to every other will and also to every action toward oneself, and does so not for the sake of any other practical motive or any future advantage but from the idea of the dignity of a rational being, who obliges no law other than that which he himself at the same time gives.⁵²

Human dignity is to be esteemed therefore by all persons as lawgivers. Because “the law giving itself, which determines all worth, must for that very reason have a dignity, that is, an unconditional, incomparable worth...Autonomy is therefore the ground of the dignity of human nature and of every rational nature.”⁵³ This means that our volition is vital in our choice of action despite the fact of the influence we get from our neighbours. This mode invites the individual person to choose to set a precedence that is absolutely good inasmuch as it promotes authentic expression of humanity thus linking the *autophotosynthafricanoscopy* with *humanoscopy*. “That will is absolutely good which cannot be evil, hence whose maxim, if made a universal law, can never conflict with itself.”⁵⁴ As a corollary, the socialism of Julius Nyerere can be invoked to foster the spirit of non-exploitation of other societal members by using them

⁵¹ <https://qz.com/africa/1915076/how-bad-is-africas-debt-to-china/> [1/4/2021].

⁵² Kant, op cit., 42.

⁵³ Kant, 43.

⁵⁴ Kant, 44.

as tools of production.⁵⁵ It thus invites the individual to be selective when it comes to the people's ideologies and choices around because not all of them are after an authentic consciousness of the human spirit.

In the view of a nation, this mode applies when a nation chooses to racially discriminate or exploit another simply because another nation did it before. It means that the Arabs and Europeans' exploitation and discrimination of Africa and the Africans do influence the modern racial biases and prejudices upon the African people as inferior. A country that gains supremacy and needs some cheap labour quickly recalls that the Europeans once used the Africans as the slave labour hence they also go for them. At the end, the oppressed remain in that inferiority corner as the oppressors multiply.

In this case, the African nations have a role in unifying themselves so as to exact global respect and even bargaining power in the global market. As Nyerere reminds us:

If African unity is to be a reality, there is no alternative. There must be one government which can speak for Africa to the outside world. There must be one organ which is responsible for the defence of Africa against attack or subversion from outside. There must be one representative body which can co-ordinate and facilitate the economic development of Africa as a whole in such a manner as to ensure the wellbeing of every part of our continent; this means there must be one currency, one tariff system, and so on, as well as other institutions to promote economic growth.⁵⁶

This is one of the surest ways for the African people to regain their dwindling vivacity in matters of practical importance. It is vital in effacing the inferiority complex and believe that Africans are good for nothing. It is not racial competition rather an authentic expression of a people through their everyday lives. It is the footprints of authentic life and expression against racism that will guide the other upcoming generations that we are truly all equal in dignity and humanity and that none deserves to be seen as inferior on the basis of his/her colour.

(iv) Absent Absence Mode

For this mode, we look at an individual in a racist society who chooses to act contrary to the societal racist expectations. One simply chooses to promote the authentic perspective hence promotes an authentic expression of a true identity of the 'other' who is oppressed by racial prejudices.⁵⁷ This enhances the reality of having an *autophotosynthafricanoscopy* as a *humanoscopy*. It fosters mutual coexistence of all races and puts focus on the individual responsibility in making an ethical decision or action. One does not choose to act because that is the societal norm rather because one has thought about the ethical situation and thus sees it

⁵⁵ Julius Nyerere, *Freedom and Socialism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), 233.

⁵⁶ Julius Nyerere, *Freedom and Development* (London: Oxford University Press, 1973), 16.

⁵⁷ Du Bois, *op cit.*, 12.

worthwhile to act so in order to promote authentic perspective of humanity and consequently an authentic expression of the ‘other’ in an authentic consciousness.

In other words, when the racist society or ideologies are assumed to influence the choice one makes regarding an ethical situation, one simply decides not to be misled by these faulty lenses of discrimination. Instead, one chooses to be a new light of humanity’s flame of authentic expression by promoting a true perception of the ‘other’ as equally human regardless of the complexion.⁵⁸ This is the absent absence mode. One is present as a gift to humanity, bringing a true consciousness of the other persons without racial biases, prejudices and noble lies of inherent dominance. Kant’s words are reminiscent here that:

Reason must regard itself as the author of its principles independently of alien influences; consequently, as practical reason or as the will of a rational being it must be regarded of itself as free, that is, the will of such a being cannot be a will of his own except under the idea of freedom, and such a will must in a practical respect thus be attributed to every rational being.⁵⁹

This means that a person’s will is therefore elevated in this mode because one is not merely imitating what others have said or done in relation to that ethical situation rather one engages reason to make a decision backed up with coherent reasons that are intentioned to promote harmony in the human family, through enhancing *autophotosynthafricanoscopy* as a form of *humanoscopy*.

In this case, a nation despite the fact that other nations are engaged in discriminating a particular people, chooses to respect them as full human beings who deserve to be treated with kindness and love. They do not come up with exploitative policies although their neighbouring nations do. They simply become unique in their according of dignity to the oppressed people. This translates to lighting a flame of love, care, and concern to the entire human family to drop the racial prejudices and discrimination against any group of persons.

Conclusion

It is evident that the African spirit has been alienated by the racial biases, prejudices and noble lies. The dichotomy of the African spirit lies between strive for authentic consciousness of the African spirit and the opposing forces of white dominance encrusted in racism. In the groundwork for the ethics of juxtaposition, we have seen the Critical Race Theory and the ring of Gyges in relation to racism and how *autophotosynthafricanoscopy* is a form of *humanoscopy*. The ethics of juxtaposition has fostered this authentic consciousness especially through the present presence mode and the absent absence mode of ethical juxtaposition. The absent presence and present absence modes have been illuminated in relation to their loopholes and how such affects *autophotosynthafricanoscopy* as a form of *humanoscopy*. Therefore, it is clear that for racism to be effaced, we must embrace the ethics of juxtaposition because it

⁵⁸ Du Bois, *ibid.*

⁵⁹ Kant, *op cit.*, 54.

advocates for the harmony of humanity through authentic perception, authentic expression and identity.

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