

The Paradox of Independence and Cultural Assertion: A Eurocentric Analysis of John Nkemngong Nkengasong's *God Was African*

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ABSTRACT

This paper sets out to prove that the situation in independent Africa is paradoxical, as illustrated by John Nkemngong Nkengasong in *God Was African*. The work is undertaken because, in a dynamic where migration is unavoidable, social relations are constrained by numerous differences and practices still practised, which were hoped to have been abolished at independence like slavery and slave trade, racism and inequality of races. John Nkemngong Nkengasong focuses on the postcolonial era where migration has made it inevitable for the once colonized people of Africa and their former colonizers to co-exist. Anxieties, tensions, crises and binary sentimentalities plague this co-existence. The work is based on the hypothesis that the characters depicted by John Nkemngong Nkengasong in *God Was African* are plagued by crises and binary sentimentalities which threaten their worth as a people and a race although these binaries were said to have been abolished. In this guise, they try to project their cherished values. The Post-Colonial Theory and Eurocentricism sheds light on the binary polarities between the two distinct races (the grand North and the grand South) that result in tensions and crises. The findings revealed that independence did not bring equality in races as Europeans made Africans to believe. There still exist prejudiced behaviours practised by the colonisers on the once colonised.

KEYWORDS: Eurocentricism, postcolonial, paradox, Migration, crises, culture, Assertion

I. Introduction

Before eventually achieving independence, Africans had experienced European invasion starting with the scramble. This took place in the 19th century and it came with a series of political, social, economic and moral impacts on the lives of Africans. Ronald Robinson et al. in *Africa and Victorians: The Official Mind of Imperialism* describes the Scramble for Africa as Europe's original sin. The ills that accompanied the Scramble like exploitation and marginalization destroyed the pride and dignity of Africans. Given that there exists a thin line between literature and society, that is, society influences literature and vice versa, some

writers who lived and witnessed the injustice inflicted on Africans as a result of the Scramble chronicled their experiences in their literary works. This falls in line with Laurenson and Swengwoods assertion in *The Sociology of Literature* when they assert that:

As with sociology, literature too is pre-eminently concerned with man's social world, his adaption to it, and his desire to change it. Thus the novel, as the major literary genre of industrial society, can be seen as a faithful attempt to recreate the social world of man's relation with his family, with politics, with the state; it delineates too his roles within the family and other institutions, the conflicts and tension between groups and social classes (12)

It is therefore clear that the society in which an author lives affects his writing and his subject matter. The writer under study here is not an exception to this assertion. He focuses his attention on looking at the relationship between the colonizers and the colonized after independence. This research answers questions like: how is the relationship between the former colonizers and the once colonised? What is the aftermath of this relationship? As an objective, therefore, this paper will focus on examining some of the Eurocentric ideologies still held by the colonisers about Africans even after independence. This paper also has as objective to look at the aftermath of these Eurocentric behaviors on Africans as depicted in the text understudy.

Eurocentricism is entwined in the twin processes of the crystallization of European society and Europe's conquest of the world. According to Ilia Xypolia in *Eurocentricism and Orientalism*, "Eurocentricism is a discourse that emphasizes European concerns, cultures and values at the expense of those of other cultures" (1). A Eurocentric analysis or interpretation of Nkengasong's *God Was African* will therefore entail looking at how the white races undermine the black race. To back this up, the post-colonial theory will be used as the analytical tool as per Ashcroft et al. in *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practices in Post-Colonial Literature*. According to Aschroft et al:

Postcolonial theory involves discussion on experience of various kinds: migration, slavery, suppression, resistance, representation, difference, race, gender, place and responses to the influential master discourses of imperial cultures such as history, philosophy and linguistic. (1-2)

Postcolonial theory concerns several dimensions. The analyses of works depicting all the societies which were colonized correspond with this theory given that such analyses set out to deconstruct the discourses which imperialists laid down as parameters and writings of the colonized. As stated in the quote above, Postcolonial theory therefore considers experiences of various kinds such as migration, slavery, suppression, resistance, representation, difference, race, gender, place, and responses to the influential master discourses of imperial cultures such as history, philosophy and linguistics. The theory questions unjust power relations like that which Nkengasong presents in *God Was African*. Kendem keeps wondering why the white race still sees Africans as barbaric and inferior even after the civilization mission was declared successful and independence was granted subsequently. The postcolonial theory as an analytical tool in this research gives room for the power of the colonizer to be contested.

Paradox, in the context of this paper, can be referred to as a situation that is made up of two opposite things which seem impossible but are true. In other words, Pierre Larousse in *Dictionnaire Larousse Poche* defines the word as “an argument that derives self-contradictory conclusions by valid deductions from acceptable premises” (41).

From Laurenson and Swengwoods assertion as stated initially, it can be opined that Nkengasong’s Eurocentric critique of colonialism and the post-independence situation of most African states is born of his life experience as an African who lived and witnessed the colonial and post-colonial situation of Africans. He is also concerned with the rampant brain drain syndrome among the African youths, coupled with the famous “Bush falling” syndrome which has intensified the Eurocentric mentality held by the grand south.

II. The “Grand North” and the “Grand South”: Uncovering the Truth

In their exploration mission of other parts of the world and their geographical discoveries which began in the fifteenth century, Europeans came in contact with other humans whose physical appearances seemed different and strange to them. Africa was one of such continents where European exploration took place. Europeans found the inhabitants of Africa completely different from themselves in many respects. Of all the factors of differentiation, the colour of the Africans was the most arresting characteristic that differentiated them. Lord Lugard in *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa* states that “In colour they [that is, Negro Africans] are very black” (n.p.). Consequently, the first item they mentioned when describing Black Africans was their complexion and then moved on to dress, or the lack of it, and manners. The exploration mission later resulted in the scramble, annexation and colonization of African countries by the Europeans in order to civilize them. This civilisation mission finally came to an end with the granting of independence to the African people by the colonial powers. Independence by implication meant Africans have been made civilized by their colonizers and thus fit to rule themselves. Paradoxically, the contrary exists today as presented by Nkengasong in *God Was African*. There still exists a binary between these two races where in the “Grand North” (Africa) is still considered barbaric and backward while the “Grand South” (Europe) is still considered the centre of civilization.

God Was African chronicles the experience of the main character, Kendem, a university instructor in Africa, who journeys to America for an academic conference. In America, Kendem is surprised at how “the Grand South” views the African race. The mentality held by these people during the colonial period has not changed as they still consider Africa as a continent of low birth. Nkengasong in this novel brings to light the awkward mentality still held by the colonizers against the colonized even after the so-called ‘civilization’ mission had long been

accomplished in Africa. The complexity of civilization in America is what paints a picture of the Orient (Grand North) and the Occident (Grand South) in this novel.

Nkengasong's description of Kendem's ultimate experience in the United States reflects the characteristics of a dominant power over a subordinate. It is evident from all indications that the West still considers themselves as the occident while regarding Africans as the orients. While introducing himself in the conference that is made up of a mixture of many races, Kendem explains that:

And I tried to exercise caution and respect in whatever I did and said. I understood that the rest of the group was observing Tugu and me with curiosity hoping to find stereotypical evidence to feed their prejudices about people from our part of the world. As I talked about my professional status I wondered whether I made any sense at all, especially with the sour looks I could discern on the faces of some of the participants. Lebanajjar laughed grumpily, sat back in his chair and stared at me with a sour expression. I rounded up with the introduction of myself to avoid any embarrassment. (63-64)

The stereotypical notion that still exists in the Western world about Africans makes us wonder if their civilization mission and later on independence were successful as they claim. Paradoxically, what Africans expected of independence is far fetch from what they are getting. The expectation of being on the same status quo as the colonizers is a fiasco as they are still regarded as garbage, uncivilized and backward. By wondering if his introduction makes any sense to the other participants, Kendem brings to light the frustration among Africans in the Western world who experience marginalization and oppression even after they think they have been "civilized" by these very people. Kendem without being aware of the oriental position he occupies in the white man's country even after being enlightened and granted independence travels without being conscious of the realities that await him. His blindness to the realities that await him leads him to discover the realities only when he has to mingle with the white race.

Once in America, Kendem begins to experience cultural prejudice from the whites. Kendem is confused and probably wonders, if the civilization brought to Africa, was different from the one practised in Europe itself. Kendem realizes that the peripheral position occupied by Africans even after independence gives them the status of Orientals. His experience of oppression makes him resort to sarcasm to cover up his frustration. This is seen in a conversation he had with one of the conference participants about roads in Africa:

*Ken, d'you have roads in your country? No, I said.
How do you move around?
We skip from tree to tree until we reach our
destinations.
How do you mean I can't understand you, said Dos
Santos.
I mean, we skip from tree to tree. Bigger trees than
these. And your country's ambassador is an excellent
tree climber. A good skipper too. In fact he occupies
one of the biggest trees in the capital city, I said (93)*

Kendem is aware of the fact that Santos's intention is to hurt him so as to conclude stereotypes concerning Africans. This accounts for the reason why Kendem replies with sarcasm in order not to feel the peripheral position being melted on him. Another conversation still resurfaces in the course of the conference when another participant asked Kendem about the publication of his articles:

*Ken, if I may ask. Apart from the books you brought
to Para. have you published any articles?
A few, I said. How many? Some eight articles, I said.
In eight different journals? In eight different journals,
I said. Journals approved by the MLA? She asked. Of
course, yes, I said.
Journals approved by the Modern Language
Association of America? She asked emphatically...
Journals approved by the Modern Language
Association of Africa, I said staring directly into her
eyes. Is there any such thing? She asked after a while
(175)*

Africa was generally considered a wholly pre-literate society until the contact with Europe and, therefore, had no history. In *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa*, Lord Lugard begins his introduction with the assertion that "Africa has been justly termed "the Dark Continent," for the secrets of its peoples, its tales, and mountains and rivers, have remained undiscovered not merely to modern civilisation, but through all the ages of which history has any record" (1). This according to Lugard implies that literacy was brought to Africa by the Grand South so it is somehow confusing and disappointing to hear a white being surprised that an African has published articles. This makes the reader and Kendem himself to ask questions if the whites think their 'civilization' mission was accomplished. If it was, then we wonder why they sound surprised at the fruits of their civilization. The reaction of the whites is what makes Kendem disappointed because to him they should not be surprised by the growth of Africans because that is what they instilled in them. This Orient/occident binary according to history is supposed to be abolished since the colonial period had long passed and all races are seen and believed to be civilised and therefore there is no lord over another. It is rather unfortunate that this knowledge is only being spoken and written but far from being practiced.

While in the United States of America, Kendem is continuously seen as an inferior being given his origin as an African. In a presentation in which he talked about races, describing and classifying them, Eugenic White, the presenter, classified African races as being the last. He concludes that blacks are unclassified if it were to be looked at from the purity of the races. Kendem is disappointed with Eugenic White's conception of Africa and so has to clear his doubts by asking a question.

You said a while ago that the black race is unclassified. But I remember that before slavery was abolished blacks in America were classified as slaves. Don't you think it is questionable today to say blacks are unclassified, about two centuries after the abolition of slavery and after racist mentalities have long been cleansed with more global concern for the

*respect of individual rights and liberties, a cause
which the United States has long championed? (93).*

It is paradoxical notice that despite the abolition of the racist mentality by the United States of America, they are still the same people who are the brains behind racism today. This is what postcolonial literature and postcolonial theory talk about. They amongst other things address issues of marginalization and racism during the post-independence era. According to Ashcroft et al. in *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practices in Postcolonial Literature*, Post-colonial literature refers to writing which has been affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day (2) and it also addresses questions of history, identity, ethnicity, hybridity, feminism, gender and language among others (130).

Eurocentricism views civilization in a binary manner whereas in Europeanness is contrasted with primitiveness and barbarism. According to Jack Goody in *The Theft of History*, Europe has underplayed the history of other cultures. The European perspective, when analyzing European wealth, stresses the country's cultural and ideological supremacy rather than the material condition that permitted the emergence of the "European miracle". This is what Kendem faces in the USA. Eugenic White, a European considers his race superior and then describes Africa as unclassified. This is a recurrent tendency in Eurocentric behaviours wherein other cultures are marginalized and regarded as inferior. This is done by giving very little or no space to the coverage of their achievements and/or underrating their contributions to world development.

The post-colonial theory is at the Centre of re-narrating the story of the colonial and post-colonial people. The mere existence of colonialism is an indication that there exists a binary opposition into which the world was divided. This is what gradually established a territory dependent upon a stable hierarchical relationship in which the colonized lived as the periphery of the colonizers. Colonialism brought about the concept of Grand North/grand South given that the colonizers already labelled the colonized as backward and 'uncivilized' people who needed

to be 'civilized'. Therefore, anything that lay outside the circle of Europe (Centre) was by effect inferior. (Margin Centre-margin binarism). The colonial mission which was intended to bring the Grand North into the sphere of influence of the enlightened Grand South became the pretext and passport for the economic and political exploitation of the colonies. This binary relationship between the colonized and the colonisers was thought to have ended with independence that was granted to the colonized states. Independence was seen as a certification that, the 'underdeveloped and uncivilised' people have finally been civilized. Contrary to this certification, the post-independent era still accommodates stereotypes which see the once-colonized people as underdogs.

The constant contrast between African values and Western values places a binary between the Grand North and Grand South which dates back to colonialism. Eurocentric behaviours date back to the colonial days when Europeans considered themselves more civilized and well-cultured than the other races. They fail to understand as Yudice George in *The Expediency Culture* says that "Culture as-resource can be compared with nature-as-resource, particularly as both trade on the currency of diversity" (1). This must be fostered and conserved. With this, they embark on the journey of colonization to enlighten the Dark Continent. The memory of slavery and the slave trade is reawakening in Kendem during his visit to America which keeps him in frequent arguments with his colleagues. In one of their visits to Boston, Kendem narrates that they came across several Bostonians in colonial costumes, velvety black with large painted collars and fancy silver buttons at the pockets, front, and cuffs with slits up the middle of the back, the knickers below the knee (80). "The stripes of the elastic fitted around black colonial-style shoes... reminded me of images of slave masters in documentaries and films and the horrible images of horse ships used in thrashing the slaves, the chains on the feet or manacles worn on the neck of slaves, to hold them together and prevent them from escaping" (80). This scenario is indicative of an orient/occident relationship between the Grand North and Grand South as Kendem is puzzled to realize that slavery and the slave trade

have not been abolished as per independence. The images of slaves incite hate in Kendem coupled with the fact that initiators of this barbaric experience still consider Africans inferior even after the so-called abolition of the inhuman practice and independence. Kendem states "I did not like the idea that stories about blacks or Africans were always those of poverty and misery" (80-81) The Eurocentric feeling is intensified when Kendem comes in contact with a group of blacks who remind him of African slaves. Kendem states that:

Some blacks emerged from an inner street one after the other, crossed the road and entered another street. They look fetish and weird. Their long braided hair and thick rusty beards with grizzled patches hanging from their chains gave the impression of sinister appeal or of revolt against human dignity. They had probably never shaved since the beginning or end of slave trade, or possibly took an oath not to shave till thy kingdom come. They wore sour looks, their faces down casted, suspicious of the earth on which their feet trod, and most probably their conspire with history never to relinquish the somber expression on their faces which forever carries the marks and woes of history. Poor lost souls! An ancestor descendant has come to bear testimony of your centuries of woe. I told myself. (81)

The image of long braided hair and thick rusty beards captures the ill-treatment that was melted upon black slaves in America during the period of slavery and the slave trade. Presumably, the image of the blacks who emerged from the inner street is an indication that even though the slave trade was abolished, it still exists in disguise. This presumably also accounts for the disagreement that exists between Kendem and the other pilgrims. Kendem's angry state grows worse when McDough, a professor of Economics delivers a speech on the topic "Poverty in America: Individualism and American Business Enterprise". Ironically in this presentation, McDough dwells on poverty in the African continent. He affirms that Africans are poor and only a few of them can afford to eat one good meal a day.

This causes Kendem to reflect on the untold hazards that Africa has suffered and is still suffering at the hands of their colonial masters.

The image of the transatlantic slave trade where Africans were sold to Americans to be mechanized is indicative of an oriental society put in place by Eurocentricism which has caused constant clashes between the West and the East. Amidst this disturbing scene, Kendem laments:

Poor souls! An ancestor's descendant has come to bear you testimony of your centuries of woes, I told myself. Tears filled my eyes. I tried to suppress them but they were already settled in the vicinity of the lower eyelid... I could not overcome the intensity of the moment, to face reality even long after the pilgrims paid a visit to Harvard University. The image of the black people still filled my mind. Poor lost souls! When I returned to the hotel in the evening I went straight to bed. I had no appetite, resisting even appeals by Joda and Tunis –Aziz to take an evening walk to visit restaurants and shops. (81)

Marginalization and suppression have a way of affecting the victim's mental state. As an Orient, Kendem is affected mentally by the degradation of his race as he is uncomfortable with how the blacks are being treated in America. Kendem's realization in America is a painful one as he is shocked to realize that independence didn't mean an end to stereotypes and prejudice in America but it was just a cover.

III. The Quest for Self Aggrandisement

The general impression given by the European explorers, missionaries, colonial administrators and other agents according to Perham and Simmons in *Africa Discovery: An Anthology of Exploration*, was "...one of caprice, of treachery, of violent extremes, and of hostility to men..." (16). Therefore, the eye in which the grand South viewed Africans was that of barbarism and anarchic savagery. The binary that exists between the Grand North and Grand South has affected the Grand North in such a way that they now regard their own culture as inferior to

that of the Grand South. Nkengasong shows this in *God Was Africa* using Kendem's brother who blatantly refuses to go back to Africa because he believes that America is a land filled with milk and honey while Africa has nothing to offer. On the other hand, Kendem has taken it upon himself to showcase the prowess of the African people and debunk the mentality that Africa is the heart of darkness. John Tomlinson in *Globalization and Culture* contradicts this when he says that "Globalization lies at the heart of modern culture; cultural practices lie at the heart of globalization" (1). No culture is therefore inferior to the other. It should be underlined that respect for each other's culture reduces social conflict. Kendem's conversation with his brother, Tony reveals that Kendem is on a mission to advocate for self-aggrandizement on the part of Africans. This self-aggrandizement is the aftermath of the continuous suppression of the colonised people by the grand South. Kendem asks his brother:

Why don't you think of going back home and starting a small business, even with the small restaurant like the one you work in? things could be better there... brother, I c'n not. Who's gona led the folks over there know I got messed up in the United States? That's a dream. I c'n. I'm here, things gonna be better for sure. .. I felt pity for him. His dreams and aspiration were still very far away from reality. I wasn't sure if he would ever attain them. He had become a stranger in his native home and fugitive in his new found land. He was the tired and the poor. He was among the world's huddled masses yearning to break free, yearning to live in America, the powerful beacon of hope. He was the hungry and the thirsty, the weary and the detested in search of a better home in the world (229)

Kendem feels pity for his brother who has been brainwashed by the mentality held by many that America is a beacon of hope while Africa is the heart of darkness that has nothing tangible to offer. This claim is faulty. He is not happy with this assertion which makes him feel marginalized. He sees his brother as a victim of the re-colonization of Africans by the West wherein they make them

believe that where they come from is worthless. Kendem's survival strategy is his firm assertion to come to go to Africa his homeland which he considers a citadel. He makes his brother understand that home is home.

Kendem's firm desire to go back home is a reflection of self-aggrandizement towards the domination of Africans by the West. His affirmation of "no one ever detest home. you can only strive to make it a better place to live in" (231) is a survival mechanism which Nkengasong thinks the blacks should emulate and make their home (Africa) livable rather than longing for a place where they will be treated like underdogs. It can be said that Kendem's experience in the United States throughout *God Was African* is a painful one as he is constantly being prejudiced because of his identity as an African. Fortunately, Kendem knows his worth and he survives this pain and proves the mentality of America being a land flowing with milk and honey wrong by going home after his program. Nkengasong's message in this novel is a call for Africans to prioritize their home and culture, and make it a comfort zone to end the constant "bush falling" syndrome that like a cankerworm, has eaten deep into the Africans.

Amungwa Veronica Nganshi in the article "Socio-political Preoccupation in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and Nkemngong Nkengasong's *God Was African*" indicates that the Scramble for Africa is the root cause of the present world situation of marginalization and subordination of other races by America that consider herself as the world power. Nevertheless, her article indicates a call for resistance on the part of Africans. This is seen when she writes about Kendem's vehement reply to the journalist's assertion that Africa has chronic problems of poverty and civil strife. She states that Kendem informs the journalist that Africa has never been poor and goes on to say the scramble for Africa is the cause of Africa's woes:

Africa is a continent that was and is still endowed with the riches of the world...would there have been any need for the European scramble for Africa in the late 19th century if Africa had been poor? Would there have been a need to partition Africa and segment it

into exploitable units, and loot its rich resources with violence in the name of the "civilizing mission" if Africa had been poor? Would there have been any use storming the African continent to cart away millions upon millions of its potent sons and daughters and subjecting them to forced labor and inhuman treatment over the ages in the plantations and the factories of the world, to build those worlds under very callous conditions? (113).

Amungwa explains that the inhuman treatment of their victims is one of the trademarks of colonialists as evident in *God Was African* as Kendem goes on to enumerate the atrocities of the colonialists by stating that they are responsible for the civil strife in Africa by eliminating her heroes, philosophers and scientists through the very conspiracy of those who claimed to champion the civilizing mission (ibid). Kendem then asks incisive rhetorical questions to emphasise that the European colonialists were the cause of Africa's problems: —What happened to Ivory Coast? What happened in Togo? What happened in the Central African Republic? What had happened in Rwanda? Chad? Libya? Could anyone understand the fuel that ignited the Rwanda genocide? (ibid). He then concludes with an allusion to the Lake Nyos disaster in the northwest of Cameroon in which thousands of people and animals lost their lives in 1986 and exclaims: —Unfortunate Africa! It had become the testing ground for all kinds of ogoro to satisfy some dark animal instinct... (ibid).

How Kendem defends his continent sarcastically shows the level at which he values himself and his race. He states that he vowed to be very cautious in order not to betray his race with any embarrassing behaviour (84). Kendem constantly proves to his conference mates that Africa is not the dark and barbaric continent that they think of. His defence of Africans shows the extent to which he has acquired self-aggrandizement and love for his home. When asked about roads in Africa, he sarcastically tells his mates that they do not have roads in Africa, they skip in trees (92). Kendem's self-aggrandizement is expressed in his conversation with his brother:

I may not see you again before my departure... oh are you living so soon? He asked so surprised that I was thinking of leaving at all... on Sunday I said... you mean you really wana go back to that goddamned country?... sure, I am going back home after the program. It is my country. No one ever detests home. You can only strive to make it a better place to live in... I believe you may be better off here... hey men, I'm not gonna fly no more to nowhere and that's all (231-32)

The above excerpt shows Kendem's love for his home. It is generally believed that America is a land flowing with milk and honey thus anybody who visits will not want to go back. Contrary to this notion, Ken wants to go back home. This feeling of unbelonging to any place leads some people to escape home, this could be illustrated through Kendem's decision to go back home. Contrary to Ken, his brother detests home and doesn't show a sense of belonging to his home. Instead, he feels free in a land where he is not even considered a family member. His expression in the above excerpt shows his unbelonging to his home: I'm not gonna fly no more to nowhere and that's all (233).

Nkengasong contrasts two African brothers: one (Kendem) has acquired self-aggrandizement, while the other (Tony) has been recolonized by their formal colonisers. Kendem therefore represents the self-aggrandizement of Africans while Tony his brother represents those Africans who have been brainwashed with the notion that America is the Centre of civilization while Africa remains a dark continent. The findings of this paper show that Africans are still being prejudiced and associated with some stereotypes by the grand South; an act which is considered to have been long abolished with the attainment of independence. This is considered a paradoxical situation given that it is contradictory to what the colonisers presented as per independence.

IV. Conclusion

This paper has demonstrated that, even though independence was granted to Africans as a certification that they had been successfully made civilized by the

colonial powers, the reality remains: Africans are still considered barbaric and inferior by these same agents of civilization. The reality is that any contact between the people of Africa and their formal colonizers is always plagued by a series of prejudices which consider one inferior and one superior. Thus, Kendem questions the status of the relationship between the Grand South and the Grand North. The aftermath of this questioning is self-aggrandizement where Kendem proves to his conference members who consider Africa as backwards that, Africa is the best place so far and he is proud to be an African. Acting as the spokesman of the people, Kendem denounces the social and economic inequality between the Grand North and Grand South. Nkengasong therefore calls for self-aggrandizement and cultural assertion on the part of Africans in the form of the acquisition of knowledge (which Kendem uses to show his white colleagues the intellectual know-how of (Africans)). A close examination of *God Was African* against the backdrop of the history of the scramble to the period of post-independence brings out the conclusion that only a people can uplift their culture and show their worth. So, Africans are called upon, just like Kendem in *God Was African* to embrace self-aggrandizement rather than maintaining the status quo of an inferior like Tony.

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