

The Munificent Approach in Social Science

Richard Amoako Baah

Department of History and Political Science, Faculty of Social Sciences, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi, Ghana

Kofi Osei Akuoko

Department of Sociology and Social Work, Faculty of Social Sciences, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi, Ghana

Mohammed Abass

Department of History and Political Science, Faculty of Social Sciences, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi, Ghana

Abstract

There seems to be a growing distraction in academia which threatens the ethos of social science research. With issues of ideology, different sides dig in their heels to defend their positions often without objective consideration of the facts presented. Politicians take positions on issues that would win them points no matter the absurdity of the position. “Heroes” are defended by focusing exclusively on their “good deeds.” Though this phenomenon is on the increase in the popular media, its effects is mitigated by explanations from academics and experts, which minimize the extent to which pundits and spin doctors can distort facts. When academics too join the fray, the last vestiges that safeguards academic integrity are at risk. The tendency to consider an issue in a positive light to meet an existing expectation even in the face of evidence to the contrary is operationalized in this paper as the “Munificent Approach.” The munificent approach is based on the need to highlight the importance of an issue, institution, or a person not by an objective and systematic review and exposition of existing evidence, but on parochial or psychological grounds even in the face of overwhelming evidence to the contrary. This paradigm incorporates all the biases found in academic enterprise including ethnocentrism, Afrocentrism, Eurocentrism, and other unsystematic and non objective approaches in social science. By its parameters, the munificent paradigm will allow academics of all disciplines to be aware of unsystematic presentations and patently bias assertions and analysis, thereby safeguarding the intellectual integrity needed in all academic work. If this becomes part of undergraduate foundational work, it would ensure integrity and objectivity in students’ presentation and outlook and minimize academic and intellectual dishonesty.

Keywords: Munificent, Ethnocentrism, Afrocentrism, Eurocentrism, Systematic

Introduction

The tendency to be biased toward issues and personalities that we hold close to our hearts is an attribute of all humanity. When considering such issues and personalities, one’s judgment may easily be clouded by parochial considerations which often make our assessment lack objectivity. This is partly the reason why good surgeons are often prevented from operating on their family members. The pressure to save a family member alone may cause the surgeon to make mistakes because under those conditions systematism and focus are what is needed for a successful operation; all other considerations are distractions.

There seems to be a growing distraction in social science which threatens the ethos of social science research. With issues of ideology, different sides dig in their heels to defend their position often without objective consideration of the facts presented. Politicians take positions on issues that would win them points no matter the absurdity of the position. Heroes are defended by focusing exclusively on their “good deeds.” Though this phenomenon is on the increase in the popular media, its effects is mitigated by explanations from academics and experts, which minimize the extent to which pundits and spin doctors can distort facts. When academics too join the fray, the last vestiges that safeguards academic integrity are at risk.

After the fall of the Soviet Union, it became apparent how shallow the claim of ideology as a driving force behind non democratic regimes was. Many of the authoritarian regimes quickly adjusted themselves to meet the changing world. The bipolar superpower relation was no more, and gone with it was the counterbalancing force of the east that many of the authoritarian governments had hidden under. Most of the dramatic changes came from Eastern Europe. The fall of the Berlin wall marked the beginning of the end for authoritarianism, so it seemed. Russia itself was not spared as its people were swept up by perestroika. This contagion of democratization seemed unstoppable. Many regimes around the world began to make changes for citizen participation in government. Academics in the West joined this phenomenon by proclaiming a new “world order.” Samuel Huntington’s Third Wave was instrumental in driving home this euphoria of democracy sweeping across the globe. Hitherto authoritarian regimes were relabeled if they instituted changes along democratic lines. Names

such as “semi-democracy,” “virtual democracy,” “illiberal democracy,” “partly free,” “electoral democracy,” etc. were coined to categorize these regimes (Levitsky and Way, 2002). Where changes were slow in coming, they were said to be undergoing a prolonged transition to democracy.

Many academics caught up in the wave of democratization came to see the proverbial cup one quarter full instead of three quarters empty, a psychological predisposition that clouded their sense of fairness and objectivity. According to Levitsky and Way, many of these studies were “characterized by a democratic bias.” The new “wave” allowed academics to re-label different mixes of authoritarian regimes as either hybrid or transitional, when in fact in many ways they remained authoritarian.

Many would consider the relabeling of authoritarian regimes as transitional democracies or otherwise democratic as simply, wishful thinking. However, when this behavior of wishful thinking in academia becomes entrenched, it threatens the objectivity and disciplinary rigor needed in any social science consideration. This outlook distorts the picture being presented and points us in a direction the author wishes to point us to instead of the direction the facts should point to. In the discussion above, even when regimes failed to meet conventional minimum standards of democratization, they were categorized as “diminished forms of democracy” when according to Juan Linz, they should have been appropriately called “diminished authoritarianism” (Linz, 2000).

The tendency to consider an issue in a positive light to meet an existing expectation even in the face of evidence to the contrary is operationalized in this paper as the “Munificent Approach.”

Parochialism of the Munificent

The “munificent” tends to be generous in casting a desired issue in a positive light, accentuating the positives and often minimizing the negatives or disregarding undesired attributes altogether. The munificent approach is based on the need to highlight the importance of an issue, institution, or a person not by an objective and systematic review and exposition of existing evidence, but on parochial and psychological grounds even in the face of overwhelming evidence to the contrary. This approach falls within the framework of ethnocentrism in that the munificent ceases to be objective and often presents whatever is under consideration only in the light he wishes to see it. Kwasi Yankah’s description of “praise singing” is an example of munificent tendencies in the Ghanaian culture:

The overzealous respect for age is reinforced by praise singing, bootlicking and uncritical adulation of leadership in the contemporary nation state. Self-serving counselors and sycophants, who ignore executive excesses, and indulge in flattery, deceit, and bootlicking more often surround leadership to undermine the tenets of good governance (Baffour, 2008).

Afrocentrism

Though found in many areas of social science, minority communities tend to use afrocentrism more often as a way of “defending” their leaders and institutions against what they perceive as unwarranted and often critical outlook and biases of the larger society. In America, this perception has created a “hands off” situation when it comes to issues involving blacks. Whites are especially careful in their assessment of black issues for fear of being branded racists. The long history of subjugation of blacks by whites still endures today in different forms, giving blacks the moral, ethical, and legal justification in their fight against discrimination, and at the same time mitigates the extent to which whites can go in their criticism of issues involving blacks. In many cases when redress of grievances is not forthcoming from the government, blacks have had to take to the streets in protest before government action is taken. The present case involving a black teenager Trayvon Martin, shot to death by a volunteer guard in Florida is part of this long history of discrimination and injustice. When the police did not charge the shooter with a crime and released him on claims of self-defense, it set off another round of street protest, which President Obama has added his voice.

After this sustained pressure, the shooter was officially charged with murder. The appearance that whites see blacks as criminals or potential criminals and therefore are quick to believe the shooter rather than follow the law is at the bottom of this issue. How can an ordinary citizen shoot and kill another without being formally arrested and charged with the crime? In this instance, the police was acting as judge and jury just because the victim was black. This culture of discrimination has made blacks distrustful of the US government in general and the American criminal justice system in particular to the extent that they are willing to overlook corruption and poor performance in public office by black officials in order to ensure equality. This translates into “A black man in charge, no matter how corrupt or incompetent is better than a competent white racist.” Blacks are quick to come to the aid of any black leader they feel besieged by whites or the government. For example, former Washington DC mayor Marion Barry was caught on tape in a hotel room with a prostitute doing cocaine. The outcry from the black community was not one of outrage and shock that the mayor would engage in such irresponsible and criminal activity, but rather why the FBI targeted him. In spite of his conviction of the crime and his acceptance of it, he was reelected. In Africa, the same dynamics are at work. All one has to do is substitute tribe for color.

This tendency to “defend our own” manifested itself in southern United States in the heydays of Jim Crow laws. Many murders of blacks were never investigated, and mob killings of blacks became almost accepted as instant justice. When federal pressure was brought to bear for prosecution, juries were manipulated to acquit white supremacists of murder when evidence clearly pointed to them. In time, this tradition became so entrenched that it made mockery of the criminal justice system. When such acts of terrorism went unpunished, it emboldened many white supremacists to commit crimes in the name of “defending their race,” until this same attitude was turned on the US government itself in 1995 when a white supremacist bombed the federal building in Oklahoma, killing 168 and injuring more than 800 people. The handling of Travon Martin’s shooting by the police could be said to have its roots in Jim Crow.

Whenever groups feel besieged, their intellectual mode of defense is likely to fall within the munificent approach. Ghana’s fraud and corruption crisis involving senior Mills administration officials and Mr. Woyome concerning the payment of GHC 52 million (about \$35 million) to a party member who had no contract with the government is another example. People came from Mr. Woyome’s hometown in bus loads to “defend” him because they felt that he was being “lynched.” In the mist of this support for one of their own, the issue of Mr. Woyome’s complicity in this fraudulent scheme was lost. Shallow excuses were offered, and illogical and unsystematic explanations along the lines of munificence were his primary defense.

In the holistic context of social science, afrocentrism falls within the munificent approach. However, the munificent paradigm broadens the scope of this outlook to include all who engage in the practice of bias and unsystematic analysis of an issue that allows one to cast the issue in a positive light or otherwise minimize the negatives in “defending” it. Often, the author may not be aware of his bias towards the issue under consideration as his perception may be clouded by his prior leanings. While he may see himself as being systematic and objective in his assessment, others would quickly see his analysis or presentation as patently biased based on the evidence provided or omitted. The munificist could be said to have a skewed psychological orientation that predisposes him to be overly generous in his defense of an issues or personality to the extent that he loses his sense of objectivity and consistency. In this sense, one who refuses to see the merits on a given issue due to his prior intellectual inclinations may also be said to be a munificist, while one who simply refuses to accept facts would be considered a fool. The fool simply refuses to accept facts while the munificist distorts facts to support his position. While the munificist is sympathetic in spite of evidence to the contrary, an unsympathetic look or a critical review of an issue cannot be seen as munificence since this is what allows rigor, objectivity, and systematization in social science, and therefore part of the ethos of the discipline.

The long years of slavery, colonialism, and ongoing racial discrimination in the world has given Africans especially, the need to defend their leaders and institutions against what they perceive as unfair assault by the West on their societies. This psychological need to defend one’s self has resulted in the deplorable situation of incompetence, fraud, and decay in many African countries and black institutions of higher education worldwide. In the attempt to prove equality with others, blacks have by and large sacrificed excellence and competence for “being in charge of our own affairs.” There is nothing wrong with any group wanting to be in charge of its own affairs, but when this outlook trumps all other considerations, it threatens society itself. For the idea of being in charge to be respected, the performance of those in charge must speak for itself. However, this is often not the case. Instead, words in the form of the munificent approach are the only tools often used in the defense.

Racial Suspicion and Munificence

The abbreviated speech of King Leopold to his missionaries in 1883 below and that of apartheid president of South Africa, P. W. Botha to his cabinet in 1985, which many would consider offensive and therefore inappropriate to use in an academic paper, in this instance speak directly to the issue at hand, and therefore deemed permissible. In addition, their Eurocentric pronouncements are examples of munificence, and therefore relevant to our discussion. Indeed, those who dismiss the “truth” simply because of the source of that “truth” also operate in the munificent paradigm. It can be argued that one can learn more about one’s shortcomings or perceived inadequacies from one’s enemies than from one’s friends.

Leopold, 1883

"Reverends, Father, and Dear Compatriots:

The task that is given to us to fulfill is very delicate and requires much tact. You will go certainly to evangelize, but your evangelization must inspire above all Belgium interests. Your principal objective in our mission in the Congo is never to teach the niggers to know God. Thus they know already. They speak and submit to a Mungu, one Nzambi, one Nzakomba, and what else I don't know. They know that to kill, to sleep with someone else's wife, to lie and to insult is bad. Have courage to admit it; you are not going to teach them what they know already. Your essential role is to facilitate the task of administrators and industrials, which means you will go to interpret the gospel in the way it will be the best to protect your interests in that part of the world. For these things, you have to keep watch on disinteresting our savages from the richness that is plenty in their

underground. To avoid that they get interested in it, and make you a murderous competition and dream one day to overthrow you. Your knowledge of the gospel will allow you to find texts ordering, and encouraging your followers to love poverty. Like happier are the poor because they will inherit the heaven and it's very difficult for the rich to enter the kingdom of God. .. You must singularly insist on their total submission and obedience, avoid developing the spirits in the schools, teach students to read and not to reason.

P. W. Botha, 1985

We are not obliged even the least to try to prove to anybody and to the Blacks that we are superior people. We have demonstrated that to the Blacks in a thousand and one ways. The Republic of South Africa that we know of today has not been created by wishful thinking. We have created it at the expense of intelligence, sweat and blood. Were they Afrikaners who tried to eliminate the Australian Aborigines? Are they Afrikaners who discriminate against Blacks and call them Niggers in the States? Were they Afrikaners who started the slave trade? Where is the Black man appreciated? England discriminates against its Black and their "Sus" law is out to discipline the Blacks. Canada, France, Russia, and Japan all play their discrimination too. Why in the hell then is so much noise made about us? Why are they biased against us? I am simply trying to prove to you all that there is nothing unusual we are doing that the so called civilized worlds are not doing. We are simply an honest people who have come out aloud with a clear philosophy of how we want to live our own White life.

We do not pretend like other Whites that we like Blacks. The fact that, Blacks look like human beings and act like human beings do not necessarily make them sensible human beings. Hedgehogs are not porcupines and lizards are not crocodiles simply because they look alike. If God wanted us to be equal to the Blacks, he would have created us all of a uniform colour and intellect. [/b]But he created us differently: Whites, Blacks, Yellow, Rulers and the ruled. Intellectually, we are superior to the Blacks; that has been proven beyond any reasonable doubt over the years...Nevertheless, it is comforting to know that behind the scenes, Europe, America, Canada, Australia-and all others are behind us in spite of what they say... The very truth is that we are their people and they are our people. It's a big secret. The strength of our economy is backed by America, Britain, Germany...By now every one of us has seen it practically that the Blacks cannot rule themselves. Give them guns and they will kill each other. They are good in nothing else but making noise, dancing, marrying many wives and indulging in sex. Let us all accept that the Black man is the symbol of poverty, mental inferiority, laziness and emotional incompetence... Come to think of what would happen one day if you woke up and on the throne sat a Kaffir! Can you imagine what would happen to our women?

As the records show that the Black man is dying to go to bed with the White woman, here is our unique opportunity. Our Sex Mercenary Squad should go out and camouflage with Apartheid Fighters while doing their operations quietly administering slow killing poison and fertility destroyers to those Blacks they thus befriend. We are modifying the Sex Mercenary Squad by introducing White men who should go for the militant Black woman and any other vulnerable Black woman. We have received a new supply of prostitutes from Europe and America who are desperate and too keen to take up the appointments...

We have enveloped excellent slow killing poisons and fertility destroyers. Our only fear is in case such stuff came in! ! to their hands as they are bound to start using it against us if you care to think of the many Blacks working for us in our homes. However, we are doing the best we can to make sure that the stuff remains strictly in our hands. Secondly, most Blacks are vulnerable to money inducements. I have set aside a special fund to exploit this venue. The old trick of divide and rule is still very valid today. Our experts should work day and night to set the Black man against his fellowman. His inferior sense of morals can be exploited beautifully. And here is a creature that lacks foresight. There is a need for us to combat him in long term projections that he cannot suspect. The average Black does not plan his life beyond a year: that stance, for example, should be exploited... For the time being, we should also engage a higher gear to make sure that Black men are separated from their women and fines imposed upon married wives who bear illegitimate children. I have a committee working on finding better methods of inciting Blacks against each other and encouraging murders among themselves. Murder cases among Blacks should bear very little punishment in order to encourage them. My scientists have come up with a drug that could be smuggled into their brews to effect slow poisoning results and fertility destruction. Working through drinks and manufacturing of soft drinks geared to the Blacks, could promote the channels of reducing their population... My latest appeal is that the maternity hospital operations should be intensified. We are not paying those people to help bring Black babies to this world but to eliminate them on the very delivery moment. If this department worked very efficiently, a great deal could be achieved... (Nairaland Forum, 2012)

The foregoing gives ammunition to the avowed Afrocentric and Africans in general not to trust the white man. The speech given in secret indicts not just the South African white supremacists, but whites in general as

Botha reiterates the tacit support apartheid South Africa received from the West. When thousands in America and elsewhere engaged in demonstrations against the apartheid regime in the 1980s, President Reagan's solution was "constructive engagement," rhetoric for maintaining the status quo. This perceived racial hegemony makes some Africans want to have nothing to do with the West. Others have developed ambivalence towards the West, admiring their technological advancement and at the same time finding it irritating when western developmental comparisons are made in relations to theirs. It should come as no surprise then when South African President Mbeke dismissed the AIDS epidemic as a fabrication by the West. The consideration of slavery in America, the annihilation of American Indians, and the legacy of colonialism and subjugation draw a composite picture of racial hegemony against non-Europeans, a legacy that entrenches the siege mentality and fosters munificence.

Eurocentrism

While Afrocentrism has become widely accepted as an outlook in social science, that labeling carries with it the connotation of bias towards Africa in a positive light. Indeed, the labeling of one as "Afrocentric" is at the same time a suggestion of unreasonableness or bias and therefore not to be taken seriously. For example, Cheikh Anta Diop's attempt to connect some present African cultures to ancient Egypt was simply characterized as Afrocentric, and therefore not deserving of further inquiry. In this case, the charge of being Afrocentric was not in line with the munificent approach since the evidence presented by Diop warranted some of the assertions and conclusions he made. For example, Diop asserts

In practice it is possible to determine directly the skin colour and hence the ethnic affiliations of the ancient Egyptians by microscopic analysis in the laboratory; I doubt if the sagacity of the researchers who have studied the question has overlooked the possibility (Diop, 1951.)

Writing in the 1950s, Diop's assertions went contrary to the accepted norms of the time—the superiority of whites. In his attempt to tie black African cultures to ancient Egypt, Diop was headed directly against Eurocentrism: the idea that anything good must of necessity originate from or be tied to Europe. Since Egypt could be said to be the cradle of civilization, the tying of black Africans to Egypt means Africans, not the Greeks were at the center of world civilization, a notion that disturbed the established order. Diop's argument in his 1951 dissertation that Egypt under the early Pharaohs like Tanakha, Pianke', Akhenaten, and Khufu was an African civilization was rejected. Two other attempts to have his dissertation accepted for defense were unsuccessful until 1960 when a group of sociologists, anthropologist, and historians came to his defense.

In Diop's example, the Eurocentric outlook of the times trumped all evidence presented, and hence put Eurocentrism squarely in the munificent approach, since the admittance of Diop's views threatened the prevailing European outlook, which labeled everything good as European and everything African as bad. Along the same lines of Eurocentrism, R.S. Rattray, one of the first European authors of Ghanaian history calls the Akan God the "sky god" (Rattray, 1969) claiming simply that the source of this interpretation came from the "natives." An anthropological investigation of a core religious issue of a people cannot be based on "the man in the street interpretation," unless the investigator is either not serious, or by prejudice does not expect anything more. In his own Christian religion, the "skygod" is called God of Heaven, but Rattray could not bring himself to accept that the people he had branded savages, could on their own evolve a religious belief that is monotheist and in many ways resembles his own. As J.B. Danquah put it, "It is painful, sometimes, to encounter learned men and civilized anthropologists who refuse to believe that the non-European, non-Moslem or non-Aryan, or lately, non-Japanese, races are capable of any originality which is not merely primitive" (Danquah, 1944). Modern social scientists have worked hard to minimize this parochial outlook by instilling in students of social science the awareness of ethnocentrism in general and Eurocentrism in particular.

Africanism and Chieftaincy

The literature on chieftaincy in Africa is ripe with the munificent approach as many African authors find the need to defend the institution of chieftaincy on the grounds that it has some inherent democratic values. For example, one of Ghana's preeminent jurists, J.E. Casely Hayford described the territory which the British came to call the Gold Coast as "Federated together under the same laws, the same custom, the same faith and... speaking the same language and owing allegiance to a paramount King or President who represented the sovereignty of the entire nation" (J E Casely Hayford, 1903).

Casely Hayford's description gives the impression of a federation of a homogenous people with one custom and laws, owing allegiance to a single king or president. The history of the Gold Coast however tells a different story. Though there were similarities in custom and law, the tribal groups were not "federated" in the real sense of the word; many were co-opted through conquest as in the case of Ashanti with the "federated" owing allegiance to the Golden Stool, or by reason of mutual security, belonged to a loose association of tribes as in the case of the Fantis. The structure of the Ashanti nation with a centralized authority embodied in the Golden Stool and headed by a Asantehene who presided over paramount chiefs and sub chiefs is the only one that could be

said to have had a king. The rulers of other tribes, no matter how powerful, were more appropriately called paramount chiefs. Casely Hayford's need to equate the Ashanti king to a president brings to light the tendency many have in describing traditional Ghanaian society as equivalent to a democratic one. Though certain parallels may be drawn in terms of duties of a chief and a president, that alone cannot make a chief president or a president a chief. The idea of a "president" is an alien one in Ghanaian culture. Indeed, there is no equivalent word in any of the languages spoken in Ghana. Today, the president of Ghana is referred to as "Oman Panyin" (elder of the country). Indeed, it can be argued that in most African societies, the idea of popular election is alien. A president is neither an elder nor a king, but an ordinary citizen who is elected by the people to serve a term of office as the leader of the country. He or she is not above reproach and accorded respect due to his or her competence and the office he or she occupies. It is evident that gender considerations alone would prevent the equation of the president to a chief because while women can become presidents, women cannot become chiefs.

Casely Hayford further asserts that "Rulers at village, town or state levels, exercised authority by hereditary right which vested in a designated matrilineage known as the 'royal' family" This statement alone should have prevented any further attempt of equating chieftaincy to presidency. Many others have argued that the structure of Ghanaian society accorded the ordinary Ghanaian a say in their governance and therefore traditional Ghanaian society was democratic. Pre-colonial Ghana was predominantly agrarian with chieftaincy as the prevailing administrative structure. Academics and laypersons alike are quick to defend the institution of chieftaincy as being democratic whenever a structural or philosophical flaw of the system is pointed out.

Casely Hayford's attempt to equate chieftaincy to presidency is clearly in line with the munificent approach and highlights the dominant flaw in the approach: the lack of critical awareness of one's assertions due to one's psychological predisposition on an issue. Gender considerations in Casely Hayford's case should have prompted him to reconsider his remark. Perhaps he could be excused on the grounds that there had theretofore not been a female president in the world.

While the Afrocentric places Africa at the center of his considerations with a positive spin, the munificist places whatever is under consideration in a munificent light, thereby highlighting the "positives" even in the face of evidence to the contrary. For example, Robert Addo-Fening asserts in his presentation on chieftaincy,

These deficiencies notwithstanding, the practice of traditional governance revealed rudimentary or burgeoning principles of modern democratic governance. The concept that authority derives from the people was implicit. It was the people, the ordinary citizens, not the rulers who were the basis of properly constituted authority. (R Addo Fening 1997)

The above citation is a classic example of the munificent approach. Addo-Fening exhibits the idiosyncratic predisposition of a munificist: the need to defend chieftaincy as democratic even in the face of evidence to the contrary. In the background of these defenses is usually the refrain, "This is what we have," as if a review of the system is at the same time a condemnation of it or a call for its abolition. These attempts prevent any revision of the system, as the reactionary response silences any critical assessment of it. After going through a litany of what he calls deficiencies, Addo-Fening still finds the need to assert that "The practice of traditional governance revealed rudimentary or burgeoning principles of modern democratic governance." One can see the manifestations of the munificent approach. Chieftaincy cannot reveal both "rudimentary" and "burgeoning" principles of modern democratic governance at the same time. To describe chieftaincy as revealing rudimentary principles of modern democratic governance is to accept that it is generally undemocratic. The insertion of "burgeoning" negates that assertion and tacitly asserts that democratic principles are increasing in chieftaincy.

Addo Fening's attempt to cast chieftaincy in a democratic light is supported by his assertion that "It was the people, the ordinary citizens, not the rulers who were the basis of properly constituted authority," perhaps alluding to the democratic principle of social contract. In reality, the ordinary people had little or no say in how authority was constituted, as previously stated by him: "The hereditary nature of chiefs denied ordinary citizens the direct right to choose and change their rulers" (R Addo Fening, 1997).

After a lengthy discussion of what Kwesi Yankah calls negative cultural traits centered on chieftaincy, he concludes, "In the case of chieftaincy, it has not only survived, but has helped to consolidate and stabilize the modern democratic system at its most fragile moments," (Yankah K 1983) referring to how chiefs were instrumental in averting political crisis during the Rawlings administration. This is also an example of the munificent approach tacitly highlighting the importance of chieftaincy even though no one has suggested it is not. An episode of successful political mediation by certain chiefs in averting political crisis cannot form the basis for the assessment of chieftaincy as an institution since several units in society at different times have acted successfully in that capacity: layers, professors, soldiers, etc.

Yankah's "Negative Cultural Traits" involving chieftaincy deals with what he calls "patrimony" in which he asserts,

The hereditary nature of chieftaincy, considered as undemocratic and unreflective of popular will, has been blamed for entrenched leadership in contemporary African governance where life presidents have been proclaimed and leaders have been unwilling to relinquish power once they assume it (Yankah 1983)

He goes on to explain that African modern leaders confuse their role with the hereditary status of chiefs. Yankah's statement here is in direct contradiction to his earlier assertion. The institution of chieftaincy cannot be undemocratic and contribute to the tradition of political dictatorship and at the same time save democracy. Certain actions of individual chiefs in averting a political crisis cannot be attributed to the institution itself as evidence of democratic dispensation; many despots have done the same in history. Yankah's assessment here does not only show the usual contradictory statements found in the munificent approach, it is tautological as well.

In trying to prove that traditional African societies had elements of democratism, and hence human rights, authors like Kwasi Wiredu and Francis Deng have attempted to draw parallels between certain indigenous African traditions that enhance human rights, and thus claim that Africans have had human rights all along. The literature on human rights and liberal democracy confirms Jack Donnelly's assertion that, "Traditional societies, wherever located seem to have had no place for human rights" (Donnelly, 1985).

Given that certain parallels can be drawn between liberal democracy and chieftaincy, that in themselves do not make chieftaincy democratic. Though the element of consensus building in many traditional systems may be in line with democratism, that cannot be misconstrued as being equivalent to majority wishes as found in liberal democracy. While liberal democracy demands compromises reached by a settlement through give and take, consensus in the African tradition often means the absence of disagreement. But the absence of disagreement does not necessarily mean approval of the decision taken; it may be an acquiescence of certain groups because of lack of clout or due to the power position of those who support the decision taken. In this case, though a consensus has been reached, the disagreement that existed before becomes latent, manifesting itself later in different forms. As Addo-Fening asserts, the modalities of Ghanaian traditional politics offered "little tolerance for dissent, and the system did not accord all citizens a say in the affairs of the state."

Liberal democracy is a decidedly western idea that directs the structure of society with the individual at the core. While Africans generally stress duty to society, liberal democracy stresses rights. While duty obliges one to act a certain way, rights demands one to be left alone. Duty breeds conformity within the group while rights breed autonomy from the group. As Claude Ake puts it, "Rights...are not very interesting in the context of African realities...the right to peaceful assembly, free speech and thought, fair trials, etc....appeal to people with a full stomach (Howard, 1990).

The attempt to cast African traditional societies as democratic is a manifestation of the siege mentality as described in the munificent approach. Instead of defending chieftaincy for what it is, the authors find the need to imbue their culture with the same attributes found in the European system, thereby making theirs' less alien and therefore deserving of acceptance and preservation by Europeans. The tendency for Africans to "defend themselves" against western criticism by engaging in attempts to make their culture closer to the Europeans' may be seen as a direct indication of inferiority complex which actually goes to support the European sense of superiority because such attempts are munificent in nature and therefore unsystematic in their presentation and analysis, which further highlights the ineptitude of the proponents, giving ammunition to the European critics. This is a sensitive issue that many western academics shy away from for fear of being branded racists. In many academic journals, articles by African authors are accepted when other articles of a higher caliber are rejected. This may be due to deference by westerners when it comes to African issues. Be that as it may, there cannot be deference when it comes to presentation and analysis of issues; it is as if Africans are not held to the same academic standard; a condition that perpetuates inequality as if nothing better could be expected from the African.

Ghana and Kwame Nkrumah

In Ghanaian academic discourse, the munificent approach shows its head the most when Ghanaians talk about their leaders and heroes. Many writers begin their opening sentences with a condemnation or words of platitude, which immediately indicates to the reader that what follows is not going to be balanced or objective. And no personality in Ghanaian history evokes this passionate divide than Kwame Nkrumah. This lack of objectivity in the assessment of personalities is not peculiar to the Ghanaian or Africans. However, since Europeans have had formal education longer, one tends not to find the prevalence of munificence in their presentation as one finds in the African case. Perhaps it's because the European feels no need to "defend" his leaders and heroes. Or perhaps European educational sensitivities have made them more aware of bias presentations. When Ghanaians write about Nkrumah, one can either see a sympathetic cord in the presentation or a critical assessment of him, seldom a balanced presentation. European writers on the other hand are able to give details and presentations that allow the reader to independently assess Nkrumah. Perhaps this phenomenon stems from the need to "defend" or "condemn" Nkrumah, which makes the assessment clouded.

In the preface of his book Landmarks of Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, Dr. David Busumtwi-Sam asserts that the purpose of his book is, among other things,

To put into right perspective, many inaccuracies in the views and opinions expressed by some writers and speakers who knew next to nothing about the man – Kwame Nkrumah – personally, but who,

nevertheless, do not feel any sense of compunction to misrepresent him to the point of being ridiculous. (Busumtwi-Sam)

Evidently, the good doctor is so close to the issue and so emotionally involved that he does not see from the onset that he is already biased. Facts may be inaccurate, but a person's opinion cannot be said to be inaccurate. Only the person can decide how to see Nkrumah based on his own perceptions. In addition, one must not necessarily personally know another in order to form an opinion of him or make pronouncements about him. This is why today, people still write about Abraham Lincoln who died more than three hundred years ago. Indeed, an assessment based on available facts in the form of official records, speeches, receipts, etc. is more likely to yield a presentation closer to reality than one presented by eye-witnesses who have a direct stake in the outcome and direction of the presentation. The picture a man paints of himself is seldom the same picture history paints of him. Those too close to the issue are more likely to see the picture they want to see instead of what the facts present.

When it comes to Nkrumah, many Ghanaians are either completely for him or against him. The noise from these two extremes makes it impossible for those with a balanced or systematic assessment of him to be heard. The moment one says something negative about him, the person is branded "anti-Nkrumaist." If one speaks favorably of him, the person is branded "Nkrumaist." Even worse, an "Nkrumaist" can become an "anti-Nkrumaist" in disguise the moment an unflattering statement is made about Nkrumah, and vice versa. This tendency is in itself part of the munificent approach: unsystematic, dogmatic, defensive, and in this case, nonsensical. Many of those who sing the praises of Nkrumah without any assessment of his mistakes, failures, and vices do so because for some, his challenge of white supremacy and talk of African unity alone are enough to overshadow his failures. Many in this group are thankful to him for the education they received, money, or prestige that came to them. Defenders of Nkrumah are quick to point to buildings and the Tema Motorway that he constructed as evidence of his performance compared to successive leaders. When it is pointed out that such an assessment is unsatisfactory since it does not take into account elements such as resources, time, and conditions of leadership, the question that follows is, "Has any other leader been able to do that?"

If leadership success is measured by infrastructure construction, Adolf Hitler and Joseph Stalin would probably rank very high if not the highest in the world. The question above is too juvenile to warrant further consideration. Do supporters expect successive leaders to construct their own motorways in order to be judged successful? When Americans are asked to pick the best of their presidents, it is not the WW II hero Eisenhower who constructed the interstate highway system that they pick; it is not the three-term President Franklin Roosevelt who brought about social services and lifted America out of the Great Depression who is picked; it is not President Theodore Roosevelt who built the Panama Canal who is picked, but rather Abraham Lincoln who never built any such monuments, followed by John Kennedy who also built no monuments. To put it simply, these two come to the fore because they challenged their fellow citizens to rise above themselves. Lincoln brought America back to live according to its creed that all men are created equal by abolishing slavery, a deed of intellectual honesty and human decency that humanity has assented. Indeed, the whole world remembers his words,

Four scores and seven years ago, our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation or any nation so conceived and so dedicated can long endure... that this nation under God shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the earth. (Gettysburg Address, 1863)

Kennedy challenged Americans to sacrifice for their country: "Ask not what your country can do for you. Ask what you can do for your country." He also challenged Americans to put a man on the moon, and they did. The greatest asset a leader can bequeath to a nation is not monuments that can crumble with time, but ideas of justice, liberty, and integrity that foster freedom and creativity, which allow future generations to build even greater monuments. Great leaders bring out the best in their people by inspiring them. As it is said, if you give a man a fish, you've fed him for a day but if you teach a man to fish, you've fed him forever. The proper development of the intellect is more important than construction of monuments.

The first lines of Dr. Busumtwi-Sams preface indicates to the reader the lack of objectivity that would follow:

*One feature of this book is that in all the four chapters, the **fine qualities** and achievements of Dr. Kwame Nkrumah run through like gossamer for readers to comprehend and appreciate his landmarks.*

An objective presenter would resist the temptation to use such words, especially since the reader has not yet had the opportunity to decide for himself whether Nkrumah had "fine qualities" or not. That assessment belongs to the reader after a balanced presentation has been made. When the author makes such pronouncements right from the beginning, the presentation becomes almost a propaganda piece, slanted to accentuate the positives, and therefore in the realm of munificence. A courageous presentation by Dr. Busumtwi-Sam would have been an attempt to shed light on the struggles of Nkrumah so that the reader can appreciate the conditions and

circumstances under which Nkrumah operated, and through that come to have a deeper understanding of the man and his times. As it is, the author presents nothing that cannot be found in other writings, except to tell us about his own achievements based mainly on his affiliation with Nkrumah.

For those who dwell almost exclusively on Nkrumah's failures and vices, there is an unanswered question of how things could have been had Nkrumah not been invited to join the others for the independence struggle. For these, Nkrumah stole their dreams, an aspiration that would never return to Ghana. They think of the possibility of intellectualism and political civility of Dr. J.B. Danquah, instead of the hooliganism of Nkrumah and his CPP veranda boys. They still attribute the present failures of Ghana to Nkrumah's legacy of corruption and oppression. They think of what could have been had the others had a chance in the governance of a newly independent country that could be molded along democratic lines instead of the culture of dictatorship, sycophancy, and oppression Nkrumah brought. Since their aspirations and questions will never be answered, many are not willing even to look at the situation objectively. When tribal sentiments are added to the fray, it becomes an untenable situation for them. Nkrumah's division of Ghana into regions along tribal lines and in the process weakening the cohesion of Akans and Ashanti power in particular makes Nkrumah an enemy.

The purposeful omission of "Dr." from Nkrumah's name is likely to bring charges of being an "anti-Nkrumaist." However, the resistance to intimidation from supporters is also part of the work needed to reduce munificence. Though Nkrumah was fully capable of receiving a doctorate, the fact of the matter is that he never did. Honorary degrees from different universities conferred on him cannot be used as an earned degree. This is why it is called "honorary." Field Marshall Idi Amin received honorary degrees too; we don't call him Dr. Idi Amin. When we condone this dishonesty, we entrench munificence. By the same token, Busumtwi-Sam should not use "Ambassador" as a title, since he is no longer an ambassador. Friends and family may address him as "ambassador" if it makes him happy, but it is not a title to be used in an official capacity. Reading Busumtwi-Sam's biography, nowhere did he mention that he earned a masters degree. It can be assumed that his doctorate is also an honorary one. Perhaps this is why he prefers to call himself "Ambassador" instead of Dr. Busumtwi-Sam. In defending Nkrumah's record without objective assessment of the full picture, Busumtwi-Sam was indirectly defending himself because his fortunes and legacy are inextricably tied to that of Kwame Nkrumah.

Africanism and the ICC Debate

The current "debate" in African magazines about the International Criminal Court unfairly targeting Africans is the munificent approach at its apex. Since these publications are not academic, one cannot be too critical in scrutinizing them. However, when their standard of presentation and analysis fall so low as in the case of the current issue of the "New African," it at least goes to show the ineptitude of the editors. However, when such ineptitude is found in almost all walks of public life, the question must be asked if the phenomenon is individually based or societal based. I would venture to say that it may be a direct indictment of African education. Unless the diehard Africanists can propagate an alternative to systematic reasoning, I'm afraid Africans have no alternative, but to accept that the present mode of social science inquiry is the only one that is viable. This mode of practicing the political systems of the West, be it communism, democracy, or others in between and at the same time insisting on using African indigenous institutions and processes to make them work has resulted in political dysfunction and chaos. Not necessarily advocating for the complete copying of western values, it is nonetheless critical for Africans to accept that the western mode of governance is at variance with the African way of doing things, and therefore demands that many of the western process must of necessity go with the western systems adopted. The need to "defend ourselves" or "do our own thing" interferes with prudence when it comes to managing public affairs. It is as if any anyone who occupies a high office becomes a chief; chiefs cannot be held to account as demanded by western bureaucratic or business practices of transparency and accountability.

In the current issue of the *New African*, the presentation and analysis are so bad that if any of my undergraduate students presented it as a paper, he would not only have received an "F," but would also have faced disciplinary action for been blatantly dishonest in his data presentation and analysis. Here is a short excerpt of one of the articles:

This conference drafted a treaty for the ICC. On 17 July 1998, the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court was adopted by a vote of 120 to 7, with 21 countries abstaining. Seven countries voted against the treaty: Iraq, Israel, Libya, China, Qatar, USA and Yemen. After receiving more than 60 ratifications by April 2002, the treaty became legal on 1 July 2002 for those who had signed up...Another tactic was to replace the consensus-based approach of customary international law with a straight vote of nations. "The bar for approval of the Rome Statute was set remarkably low, with the court to be approved upon ratification of only 60 nations out of 189 in the United Nations." Prof Davenport writes. "For a court that purports to have worldwide jurisdiction, even over citizens of countries that do not sign the treaty, this is a narrow base of approval.

Furthermore, such a process takes no account of geographic representation, population base, or strategic considerations, but simply relies upon a one-nation-one vote approach. The Statute went into effect with fewer

than half the nations of the world ratifying it, representing considerably less than half the population of the world. Strategic powers, including not only the USA, but China, India, Japan and Russia were all absent; while the total ratification number was padded with small states that traditionally play little part in international affairs.”

As of October 2009, 110 states were members of the Court, and a further 38 countries had signed but not ratified the Rome Statute. Over 70% of the world’s population is outside the Court’s jurisdiction. This imbalance is highlighted by John Rosenthal, the American commentator: “Seven of the ratifiers [of the Rome Statute] taken together—San Marino, Nauru, Andorra, Liechtenstein, Dominica, Antigua and Barbuda, and the Marshall Islands— have a population of roughly 347,000, which is less than the population of New York’s smallest borough of Staten Island. On the side of the non-ratifiers, by contrast, one finds India with its billion inhabitants; China 1.25 billion; Indonesia 230 million; Russia 150 million; Japan 125 million; and, of course the USA 312 million.”

Thus, while the ICC may aspire to be a universal court exercising universal jurisdiction, the simple fact is that it does not qualify on either count. Its members only represent 27% of the world’s population. Therefore, for all its publicity and aspirations to universal jurisdiction, the simple fact is that the ICC is little more than a European court.

For the sake of time, I will just list some of the flaws:

1. The author(s) know that international relations are carried out by sovereign states, and the United Nations itself is so structured. As part of the introductory information, they prove this point by stating that the vote for ICC’s adoption was 120 to 7 with 21 abstentions. With the exception of the United States and Israel who have their special reasons for voting against the adoption of the ICC, all the negative votes came from non democratic countries, the prime candidates for ICC investigations.

2. By the adopted rules, more than 60 ratifications constitute the majority. Why come back later to criticize the application of the adopted rules?

3. The ICC has jurisdiction over nonmember states when the Security Council votes as such.

As quoted from Robin Cook, “If I may say so, this is not a court set up to bring to book prime ministers of the United Kingdom or presidents of the United States.” When the paper uses this quotation in support of its disapproval for the Court, it indirectly discredits itself because that statement is a true statement of the realities of the world; it means the authors are not aware of the core business of the ICC. The ICC was established primarily to bring leaders who commit crimes against their own people to justice. With this in mind, we should not expect the court to focus on Western Europe. It would make no sense to send an international military force to keep the peace in Switzerland, but it would make perfect sense to send them to Mali, Senegal, Sudan, Egypt, Libya, Syria, Uganda, Kenya, etc. Logic alone would stop this so-called debate. Though the other side of Robin Cook’s statement suggests that leaders of powerful nations will not be brought to justice for crimes committed, the two situations are not the same. Alleged crimes committed in the alleviation of human suffering cannot be seen in the same light as a purposeful attempt to wipe out entire group through ethnic cleansing.

4. When convenient, the authors say that the number of nations that ratified the adoption of the ICC was too small: more than 60. To score points, this changes to the number of people under ICC. Would it have been acceptable if China, India, Brazil, Indonesia, Japan, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Russia alone voted to ratify ICC? These countries together have more than 51% of the world’s population.

5. Why are the authors using data from 2009 with 110 countries ratifying ICC when 2012 data is readily available? As of April 12, 2012, 121 countries had ratified the ICC, Guatemala becoming the latest country.

6. The last statement in the excerpt,

Thus, while the ICC may aspire to be a universal court exercising universal jurisdiction, the simple fact is that it does not qualify on either count. Its members only represent 27% of the world’s population. Therefore, for all its publicity and aspirations to universal jurisdiction, the simple fact is that the ICC is little more than a European court...

speaks volumes of the analytical skills of the authors. A universal court by definition has universal jurisdiction. The statement does not constitute two counts. As shown above, if population is what gives the Court its credibility, then only 8 countries in the world would suffice. The assertion, “the simple fact is that the ICC is little more than a European court” is simply silly. Though the source of funding for the Court may be entirely European, Europeans don’t constitute the majority of member states, neither do they have the majority in terms of population. If the statement is due to the funding source, then many African governments can be said to be European governments because many of their funding sources are European. The assertions by the authors are not only in line with the munificent approach; it is also the apex of academic and intellectual dishonesty. Articles like these are beyond bias, and serve mainly as a propaganda tool spreading misinformation. In the attempt to “defend our own,” the authors have managed to make their argument irrelevant by exposing their inconsistencies in presentation and reasoning, giving more ammunition to those who are predisposed to see Africans as

incompetent and temperamental.

With the four cases before the ICC, only the Darfur genocide was referred to the Court by the UN Security Council. The other three were referred by African governments. How then can one argue that Africa is unfairly targeted? The simple truth is that many African countries are ill-equipped to try these cases either due to weak judicial systems or lack of political resolve to do so. At the core of this so-called debate is the issue of Darfur. The UN Security Council referred the case to the ICC who investigated and issued warrants for arrests of the perpetrators of the crimes, including Sudanese President Omar Al Bashir. These indictments were handed down for crimes committed in 2002 and 2003. Perhaps it was partly due to the pressure from the international community that led Bashir to the negotiating table that resulted in the creation of Southern Sudan. Though commendable for finally coming to the negotiating table, that act does not remove the crimes already committed. As noted by Richard Goldstone, a former tribunal prosecutor in the same magazine, "The ICC is not a court of convenience, to be supported only when it is politically expedient."

For many of the victims of war crimes in Africa, these maneuverings add insults to injury. Kofi Annan notes that the outcry against the ICC "demeans the yearning for human dignity that resides in every African heart," and that the world has little hope of preventing atrocities "if African leaders stop supporting justice for the most heinous crimes just because one of their own stands accused."

Ironically, it was Laurent Gbagbo, former president of Cote d'Ivoire who signed his country's membership in the ICC in 2003. Little did he know that he would become one of its accused. Any further attempt to somehow prove that the ICC is wrongly fixated on Africa would not only be along the lines of the munificent approach but also lack any intellectual consistency and integrity to be seriously considered. When the Yugoslav war tribunal indicted and convicted high ranking officials with crimes, we did not hear complaints from Africans. If the argument is centered on wrongful convictions in Africa, that would be a different matter. There are many cases before the ICC including those about Palestine, Vatican priest abuse, Cambodia, etc. Just because the cases now under consideration are all African does not make the Court biased. With the exception of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, Africa is the number one spot for political and ethnic conflicts. Where else should the Court's activities be focused?

The current uproar over incendiary statements made by a Ghanaian parliamentarian, Kennedy Agyapong that if the NDC government does not curb the violence against NPP supporters, he would "declare war," has magnified munificence in Ghanaian politics. Instead of seeing it for what it is: inflammatory or incendiary statement, the government arrested him, Gestapo style with armored vehicles, shootings etc. If a riot broke out, it most likely would have come about not because of Mr. Agyapong's statements but because of the heavy handedness that was used in his arrest. Though both sides showed no restraint, the government has a responsibility to follow the law more than a private citizen does. In a typical munificent approach, to make the issue bigger than what the facts prove, a group, no doubt sympathetic to the position of the government claims to have appealed to the ICC to investigate the case based on "Article 15 of the Rome Statute of ICC."

The ICC is a court of last resort, and cannot involve itself with domestic issues involving the freedom of speech and expression. If the government supports the effort of this group in appealing to the ICC, the government is discrediting itself because it is an indication of ineptitude, to say the least. Article 15 of the Rome Statute deals with the ICC's prosecutor in terms of what cases he or she may pursue. Nothing in Article 15 speaks to the issue the group claims to appeal to the Court about. Democracy is not always peaceful or pretty. If we want to preserve freedom of speech, we should be prepared to hear nonsense sometimes. Mr. Agyapong's pronouncement was irresponsible, especially coming from a member of parliament. However, the government should have seen it for what it was: an inflammatory statement. To charge him with incitement, terrorism, ethnic cleansing, treason, genocide, etc. is along the lines of munificence and therefore unsystematic. A simple look at Article 17 of the Ghanaian constitution would have clarified the issue:

17. Subject to clause (18) of this article, treason shall consist only-

- (a) in levying war against Ghana or assisting any state or person or inciting or conspiring with any person to levy war against Ghana; or*
- (b) in attempting by force of arms or other violent means to overthrow the organs of government established by or under this Constitution; or*
- (c) in taking part or being concerned in or inciting or conspiring with any person to make or take part or be concerned in, any such attempt. (attempts above in (b))*

In trying to defend itself, the government has overreached its authority by the use of harsh measures. Treason, according the Ghanaian constitution cannot be by mere words on a radio; it must be supported by physical act to overthrow the government. Before this fiasco, I had never heard of such a thing as "genocidal speech."

Conclusion

Edward Blyden asserts that "No people can profit by or be helped under institutions which are not the outcome of their own character" (Davidson, 1964). This assertion runs through the munificent approach in the

African context. The idea of modern governance, systematism, and critical assessment of words and deeds by the elite, which in Africa includes the elderly, seems to be at variance with the indigenous way of doing things in Africa. Deference to the elderly and the powerful in Ghana precludes any critical assessment of their deeds and words. When newspapers reported an alleged rape by one of the elites, the Ghana Media Commission rather turned the issue upside down, admonishing the media for not showing respect for the elderly (Baffour, 2008). As asserted earlier, modern liberal democracy is an alien idea to the African. In the West where democracy has thrived for centuries, some consider the media as the “fourth estate” alongside the legislature, executive, and the judiciary in the structure of governance that brings about transparency and checks and balances. Instead of seeing the media as the watchdog of the government, many Africans still see it as a nuisance. If modern democracy is an alien idea to Africans, then to insist on its working through the African traditional mode is to expect nothing but failure. To make this alien idea work, Africans must embrace certain core ideas as their own. Scrutiny of public officials, honesty and integrity in the performance of public duty, systematism, competence in the public arena, dedication to one’s nation with one eye on sustainability and the other on posterity are some of the key ideas that must be ingrained in the African. In short, Africans must change their character to fit the institutions they have borrowed instead of trying to make the borrowed institutions fit them. The traditional system of deference to age and authority with its accompanying sycophantic attributes of empty accolades and imperial titles, bootlicking, flattery, and deceit are the core agents of corruption and incompetence because they impede critical assessment of performance of public officers, and point in the direction of munificence.

By the discussions above, it is hoped that the paradigm presented as the munificent approach becomes a useful tool in the study of social science. By its parameters, it allows academics of all disciplines to be aware of patently bias presentations, assertions, and analysis, thereby safeguarding the intellectual integrity needed in all academic work. If this becomes part of undergraduate foundational work, it would ensure integrity and objectivity in students’ presentation and outlook. Furthermore, those with the sense of “besiegement” would be keenly aware of their psychological orientation, thereby minimizing the need to “defend themselves” by engaging in selectivity and manipulations, and rather pay more attention to performance indicators in public office instead of the usual “one of our own” outlook. This outlook encourages academic and intellectual dishonesty, and reduces all considerations to convenience.

Ironically, the African Union just suspended Guinea Bissau from the union because of the military coup that toppled an elected government. The inconsistencies in AU’s decisions are a clear indication of the munificent approach at work. Why would the AU declare its decision not to cooperate with the ICC due to the ICC’s refusal to suspend charges of crimes against humanity and war crimes against Sudan’s Al Bashir and at the same time suspend Guinea Bissau for a military coup? Which is the more serious offense? Since one of the AU’s arguments is that the ICC’s indictments of African leaders undermine the sovereignty of African states, AU’s suspension of Guinea Bissau can be seen in a worst light than that of the ICC’s. After all, Sudan’s war crimes are the concern of all humanity while a military coup is an internal affair of Guinea Bissau. The AU has chosen convenience over due process. If Al Bashir’s act of negotiating with South Sudan is what has earned him this goodwill from the AU, the ICC still has to go through with its mandate of prosecuting war crimes. If upon conviction, the Court decides to be lenient because of his contribution to peace, that would be a different matter. The African tradition of strongman leadership has won over the due process of law, while we at the same time claim to champion democracy.

Careful evaluation of the ICC mandate would show that the Court’s activities would someday make military coups unlawful in all member states, a congruence of interest of both the ICC and the AU. African leaders support for Al Bashir and their declaration not to cooperate with the Court no doubt has emboldened him to once again declare his intention to invade South Sudan. I wonder what these leaders would say when the atrocities begin again in Sudan. Perhaps, nothing much would happen just as before. While people in the West were demonstrating for action to stop the Darfur genocide, very few in Africa even knew it was happening. Botswana and a few other African countries forcefully spoke out. Is it shame that makes Africans look the other way or is it lack of information? Many of the cultures found in Africa work on the premise that there is no issue that cannot be resolved through dialogue. Though a commendable trait, it nonetheless stands in the way when action is what is needed to solve the problem. Prolonged dialogue in the face of genocide is not only irresponsible but tantamount to complicity.

The munificent approach has become so prevalent in the affairs of Africa that it is even found in religion. Africans have accepted Christianity and imbued it with their indigenous way of worshipping. Constant chanting and accolades attributed to chiefs are now used for God. Attributes of demonism such as cursing and invocation of deities among disputants are on the increase. In the process of using “our own way,” Africans have in many respects corrupted Christianity just as happened in Haiti. The same mode of worshipping deities and demons are used to worship God. The retired archbishop of the Catholic Diocese in Kumasi, Rev. Kwasi Sarpong advocated for the pouring of libation in order not to “offend the gods.” His suggestion is along the lines of munificence since he had once stated,

Not every god is benevolent to man. Some indeed are, but others are mischievous. Sacrifices are made to them either to repay the benignity of the good ones or to avoid the malignity of the bad ones. (Sarpong, 1974)
One wonders what he worships, God or the gods. When his suggestion was pointed out as inappropriate especially coming from him, one of his admirers responded, “If it wasn’t for his leadership, the Catholic Church would have collapsed.”

We should praise the archbishop for saving the Church. But as pointed out, other denominations like the Methodists, Presbyterians, and Anglicans also survived the lean transitional times, and they did so without pouring libation to the gods. What good is it if the Church is “saved” but has turned satanic? We would be better off if it closed down. The response in defense of the archbishop is munificent to the core, and it should not have come from those who should know better. Even if it were true that the Archbishop saved the Church, it does not mean that his libation suggestion is appropriate. It is this same munificent mode of defense that has bullied many into silence. Saving the Church must be separated from pouring of libation to demons.

REFERENCES

- Baffour Agyeman-Duah, Ed (2008). Ghana , governance in the Fourth Republic, Ghana Center for Democratic Development, Accra
- Busumtwi-Sam, David. Landmarks of Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, Self-published, Accra
- Collier, David and Steven Levitsky (1997). “Democracy with Adjectives: Conceptual Innovation in Comparative Research,” *World Politics Vol. 49*
- Danquah, J.B. (1944). *The Akan Doctrine of God*, Lutterworth, London.
- Davidson, Basil (1964). *The African Past*, Longman, London
- Diamond, Larry (1999). *Developing Democracy*, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore
- Donnelly, Jack (1985). *The Concept of Human Rights*, Croom Helm, London
- Fening, R Addo (1997). *Akyem Abuakwa. 1700-1943*, University of Trondheim Press, Trondheim
- Hayford, J E Casely (1970). *Gold Cost Native Institutions*, Frank Cass and Co. London
- Howard, Rhoda E, (1990). “Group Versus Individual Identity in the African Debate on Human Rights” in *Human Rights in Africa*, ed. Abdallahi Ahmed An-Na’im and Francis Deng, Brookings, Washington D.C,
- Jeffrey Herbst (2001). “Political Liberalization in Africa after Ten Years,” *Comparative Politics Vol. 33*
- Joseph, Richard A (1998). “Africa, 1990–1997: From *Abertura* to Closure,” *Journal of Democracy Vol. 9*
- Juan J. Linz, (2000). *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes* Lynne Rienner, Boulder, CO
- Nairaland Forum (2012). June 30 Edition*
- New African (2012). May Edition*
- Rattray, R.S. (1969). *Ashanti Law and Constitution*, Negro University Press, New York
- Sarpong, Kwasi Peterm (1974). *Ghana in Retrospect*, Ghana Publishing Corp, Tema
- Steven Levitsky and Lucan A. Way (2002). “Elections Without Democracy,” *Journal of Democracy Vol. 13*
- Yankah, K (1983). “To Praise or not to Praise the King: Akan Apae in the Context of Referential Poetry,” *Research in African Literature Vol. 14*
- Zakaria, Fareed (1997). “The Rise of Illiberal Democracy,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 76

The IISTE is a pioneer in the Open-Access hosting service and academic event management. The aim of the firm is Accelerating Global Knowledge Sharing.

More information about the firm can be found on the homepage:
<http://www.iiste.org>

CALL FOR JOURNAL PAPERS

There are more than 30 peer-reviewed academic journals hosted under the hosting platform.

Prospective authors of journals can find the submission instruction on the following page: <http://www.iiste.org/journals/> All the journals articles are available online to the readers all over the world without financial, legal, or technical barriers other than those inseparable from gaining access to the internet itself. Paper version of the journals is also available upon request of readers and authors.

MORE RESOURCES

Book publication information: <http://www.iiste.org/book/>

IISTE Knowledge Sharing Partners

EBSCO, Index Copernicus, Ulrich's Periodicals Directory, JournalTOCS, PKP Open Archives Harvester, Bielefeld Academic Search Engine, Elektronische Zeitschriftenbibliothek EZB, Open J-Gate, OCLC WorldCat, Universe Digital Library, NewJour, Google Scholar

