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Exploring Pan-African Unity and Development in Yoruba Arabic Literature

دراسة الوحدة الأفريقية والتطور في الأدب العربي اليورباوي

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Abstract:

This article examines the theme of Pan-Africanism in Yoruba literature in Arabic and analyzes the perspectives of Yoruba literati on how unity of the African nations and leaders could function in evolving a new Africa that would withstand socio-economic and political challenges. The article investigates the following questions: how might the views and insights of Yoruba writers and critics benefit Africa in achieving unity for development? And how might Yoruba Arabic literature on Pan-Africanism contribute to switching and shifting the paradigm of development in Africa? To provide answers to these questions, I selected the works of three Yoruba Arabic scholars namely, Adam al-Ilori, Isa Abu-Bakre and Abdul Aziz Azakawi for analysis. The article benefits in its discussion from historical, descriptive and analytical methods. Employing several historical and analytical methods, the article draws on some of the views of prominent Pan-Africanist intellectuals such as Du Bois, Kwame Nkrumah, Nelson Mandela, Julius Nyerere, Frantz Fanon, Chinua Achebe and Wole Soyinka among others. I argue that the selected Yoruba Arabic writers consider unity as vital to the economic, social and political progress of Africa just as requisite ingredients for its renaissance.

Keywords: Yoruba Arabic Literature; Pan-Africanism; Development.

الملخص:

هذه المقالة تبحث في موضوع الوحدة الأفريقية في الأدب العربي اليورباوي، وتحلل المقالة وجهات نظر أدباء اليوربا حول كيفية توظيف وحدة الأمم الأفريقية والقادة الأفارقة في تطوير أفريقيا الجديدة، التي من شأنها أن تصمد أمام التحديات الاجتماعية والاقتصادية والسياسية. وتبحث المقالة في التساؤلات التالية: كيف تُفيد آراء الكتّاب والنقاد اليورباويين، بلاد أفريقيا في تحقيق الوحدة الأفريقية لتطور القارة؟ وكيف يُمكن إعمال الأدب العربي اليورباوي حول الوحدة الأفريقية، إسهاماً به في تعديل وتغيير وضع التطور الراهن في بلاد أفريقيا؟ فلإجابة عن هذه التساؤلات، اخترت للتحليل إنتاجات ثلاثة علماء يوروبا عربيين، وهم آدم الإلوري وعيسى أبو بكر وعبد العزيز الزكوي. وستفيد المقالة في مناقشتها الموضوع من المناهج التاريخية والوصفية والتحليلية. وباستخدام المنهجين التاريخي والتحليلي، تعتمد المقالة على آراء وجهات نظر المثقفين الأفارقة البارزين، الداعين إلى وحدة أفريقيا، بما فيهم ذو بويس، وكوامن أنكروما، ونلسن مانديلا، وجوليوس إنويري، وفرانتز فانون، وشينوا أشيبي، ووولي شونكا، وآخرين. وأنا لاحظت من خلال البحث أن كتّاب اليوربا المختارين للدراسة، يغيثون الوحدة الأفريقية أمراً مهماً لا مناص منه للتقدم الاقتصادي والاجتماعي والسياسي لبلاد أفريقيا، كما يعتبرونها واحدة من المكونات الضرورية لنهضتها.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الأدب العربي اليورباوي؛ الوحدة الأفريقية؛ التطور.

1. Introduction

Development is simply defined as 'good change' (Allen & Thomas, 2000). However, in modern times' economy, it is interpreted as increase in Gross National Product (GNP), that is, in terms of economic growth (Duffy, 2002). Therefore, a 'developed' economy or country may be described as one whose Gross National Product (GNP) is remarkably high and as such is classified as 'rich'. 'Underdeveloped' economies or countries, on the other hand, there are "countries in which per capita real income is low when compared with the per capita real incomes of developed countries, such as United States of America, Canada, Australasia and Western Europe" (Kirder, 1966). As Allan Mountjoy (2007) writes, 'underdeveloped' countries are 'poor' and 'backward' nations that:

..lie mainly in South and Eastern Europe, in Asia, Africa and Latin America, and their economies are regarded as underdeveloped in comparison with the few rich lands whose economies reveal a wider diversity of activities embodying the fruits of science and technology and heavy investment of capital [...] Underdeveloped countries are characterized by a high degree of subsistence production with a very limited application of technology; as a consequence ...the agricultural sector is paramount.

Three arguments are axiomatic in the above quotation. First is that Africa is a 'poor', underdeveloped and backward continent. Second is that the continent still occupies the back row in availing itself of the benefits of science and technology, and lastly is that capital investment in African economy is ludicrously meager. In other words, Africa's 'poverty' and 'backwardness' is due in part to underdevelopment of its human and material resources.

Mountjoy's description above only represents a perspective on why Africa is underdeveloped and disadvantaged. A group of African scholars, writers and critics, including Frantz Fanon, have viewed Africa's underdevelopment from the angle of disunity among African nations and leaders. 'The great danger that threatens Africa' according to Fanon (1967), 'is the absence of ideology' of African unity. He drew an analogy from the case of Europe, saying that 'Old Europe had toiled for centuries before completing the national unity of the States [...]'. In other words, Fanon believed that for Africa's unity to come to a realization, its various states must be ready to labor and sacrifice for the feat.

African unity of Fanon's dream is one based on a principle to evolve the United States of Africa without the continent necessarily experiencing xenophobia and its attendant conflicts and massacres; an African unity that would come to a realization through political alliance of countries like Guinea, Ghana, Mali, and perhaps Algeria, to form a vanguard; a unity in which other African countries like Liberia and Nigeria would hold and maintain economic cooperation, and Egypt and Syria would emphasize the cultural aspect (Fanon, 1967). This standpoint, to some extent, gave impulse to the ideology of Pan-Africanism, in which the Arabic literary production of some Yoruba scholars finds relevance. paper; therefore, sets out to examine the themes of Pan-Africanism and development in Yoruba literature in Arabic. It explores patterns and perspectives between literature and politics, and the nexus between unity and development for the advancement of the African body politic.

2. Pan-Africanism: Philosophy and Origin

The term "Pan-Africanism" is credited to Henry Sylvester-Williams and Marcus Garvey amongst others. These thinkers achieved renown largely for organizing the largest pan-African movement in history (Adogamhe, 2008). Pan-Africanism references the idea that peoples of African descent have common interests and therefore should unite. It denotes a movement that encourages the solidarity of Africans worldwide. It is based on the notion that unity is vital to socio-economic and political progress of the peoples of African descent. The ideology affirms that the destinies of all African peoples and nations are intertwined. It traces its roots from ancient times and promotes the struggles against slavery, racism, colonialism and neo-colonialism. It emphasizes African unity beyond identities circumscribed by geography, primordialism and narrow nationalism and supports socio-political inclusiveness for all those who claim and identify with the "Black" race and the African continent (Fanon, 1967). It is a project aspiring towards the evolution of a world primed by solidarities and identities formed by a humanity of common problematic. The philosophy of Pan-Africanism; therefore, can "be understood as the ideology of African emancipation, of economic, technical and social modernization" (Geiss, 1967).

From papers written by Du Bois, a great proponent of the Pan-African ideology, Imanuel Geiss summarized the philosophy of Pan-Africanism as follows: (a) an intellectual or political movement among people of African descent which saw Africa, Africans and people of African descent as a unit, designed to instill self-confidence by referring the latter back to Africa as their 'Fatherland', without

meaning necessarily physical return to Africa and (b) any ideas which saw Africa as a unit, which stood for the political independence of Africa, the economic, technical and social modernization of African society (Geiss, 1967).

Pan-Africanism, again according to Geiss, began amongst Negroes or Afro-Americans in the United States of America around the beginning of the 20th century. However, as part of the struggle against slavery and slave trade, American Negroes, in the nineteenth century, had cultivated certain intellectual and political traditions which guided towards it. The abolitionist movement; therefore, somehow “can be understood as being part of the ‘pre-history’ of Pan-Africanism...” (Geiss, 1967). Martin R. Delany, an African American and member of the abolitionist movement, actually expressed in his report on the Niger Valley Expedition of 1859 ideas that could be called Pan-African, when he stated that: “Our policy must be . . . Africa for the Africans and black men ... By black men I mean, men of African descent who claim an identity with the race” (Delany, 1861). Although both Garvey and Du Bois were known to have also expressed ideas about the role of Afro-Americans, it was Henry Sylvester Williams who organized the first Pan-African Conference in London in 1900.

The term “Pan-Africanism” actually started as “Pan-Negroism”, an ideology advocated by Du Bois in 1897 (Fosu, 2020). It later metamorphosed to “Pan-African”, at the London Conference, where Henry Williams briefly communicated the key objective of Pan-Africanism thus: “to bring into closer touch with each other the peoples of African descent throughout the world” (Hooker, 1974). The foundations of contemporaneous pan-Africanism; however, were laid by the Fifth Pan-African Congress held in Manchester, United Kingdom in 1945, at which Du Bois together with Kwame Nkrumah, Jomo Kenyatta, and other notable figures in the African Liberation Movement all actively participated (Musabayana, 2013).

Pan-Africanism, as a term symbolizing the quintessence of African unity, has occasioned and it continues to stimulate intellectual legacies ‘that privilege African-centered knowledge production, epistemologies and perspectives that challenge perceived Euro-centric (mis)representations of Africa and people of African descent’ (Nyamnjoh & Shoro, 2011). These legacies include, among others, Nkrumah’s *Africa Must Unite* (Nkrumah, 1963) and ‘Unity Now’ (Nkrumah, 1963), Abubakar Momoh’s (1999) *Pan Africanism, Afrocentricity and Afro-pessimism*, and ‘Ali Mazrui’s (2005) ‘Pan-Africanism and the Intellectuals’. While the afore-mentioned works were produced in English, several other works on Pan-Africanism have also been written in Arabic. Most notable among Yoruba Arabic literary writings that explore the themes of Pan-Africanism and development are a historical monograph by Adam al-Ilori and some poems by his students, Isa Abu-Bakr and Abdul-Rahman Azakawi, which are discussed in what follows.

3. Yoruba Arabic Literature: A Review

By Yoruba Arabic literature, we mean Arabic literature – prose and poetry – produced by the Yoruba tribe of southwest Nigeria. Many significant studies have emerged on Yoruba Arabic literature; however, due to space constraint, mention would be made here of a few, such as Stefan Reichmuth’s (2019) “Arabic Writing and Islamic Identity in Colonial Yorubaland: Ilorin and Western Nigeria, 1900–1950”, Mikail Folorunsho’s (2018) “Arabic Literature in Ikirun (Southwestern Nigeria): Focus on the Propensity of its ‘Ulamā’ for Didacticism”, and “Contributions of Ilorin Scholars to Arabic and Islamic Studies in Yorubaland: Focus on Shaykh Adam Abdullah Al-Iluri” by Fatai Jamiu (2014). Other previous works on Yoruba Arabic literature include “Arabic Writing between Global and Local Culture: Scholars and Poets in Yorubaland (Southwestern Nigeria)” by Razaq Abubakre and Stefan Reichmuth (1997), as well as Amidu Sanni’s (1995) work, “Oriental Pearls from Southern Nigeria—Arabic-Islamic Scholarship in Yorubaland: A Case Study in Acculturation”. Of all these works, and many others not mentioned here, none paid attention to the subjects of Pan-Africanism and development; hence the significance of the present study.

4. Yoruba Literature in Arabic: On Pan-African Unity and Development

Chidu Amuta (1989) has recognized the significant role of literature in the stimulation of social consciousness. ‘Literature’, he argues, ‘is...one of the instruments for the sharpening and mobilization of social consciousness in the pursuit or negation of qualitative change; [it is] an instrument for the preservation or subversion of the existing order’. Arab writers and thinkers have exploited the power of literature in their quest to promote what is known as Pan-Arabism – an ideological-cultural rubric for the galvanization of the Arabs towards constructive change. Like Pan-Africanism, Pan-Arabism is a movement that seeks to recover the dignity of the Arabs, and to attain independence, freedom and unity within the Arab world. It calls for Arab unity and demands for a robust moral relationship between the Arab peoples and their rulers (Abdel-Malek & Hallaq, 2000).

Pan-Arabism thrived as a movement in the minds of the Arab masses in general and resonated as a theme in the hearts of Arab poets and their poetics. Thus, it played a significant role in shaping and sharpening the course of modern Arabic literature.

Likewise, Pan-Africanism is Afrocentric and clamors for sovereignty, dignity, unity and solidarity of Africans worldwide. Both Pan-Arabism and Pan-Africanism have enjoyed patronage from some Arab poets because a substantial number of the Arab nations are located on the African continent, including, most notably, Egypt, Libya, Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, and Sudan. Hence some Arab nationals recognize themselves as Africans and identify with the Africans of the other races. Against this background, I want to argue that while the theme of Pan-Arabism may not be relevant to the socio-cultural and geographical milieus of Yoruba Arabic literature, it has been a great source of influence on several Yoruba Arabic literati, including al-Ilori (1917 – 1992), Abu-Bakre (b.1953) and Azakawi (b.1965), encouraging them to write on the theme of Pan-Africanism, just as some of their Arab counterparts have done. In what follows, I examine the themes of Pan-Africanism and development in the works of these three Yoruba Arabic scholars. The translations of their original Arabic works studied in this paper are my own rendition.

Al-Ilori was the teacher and mentor of both Abu-Bakre and Al-zakawi. Al-Ilori is credited with several Arabic prose texts in which he calls for Pan-African solidarity in order to achieve socio-political and economic development in the continent. Giving the background to disunity among the African nations, al-Ilori (1971) writes:

Colonial hegemonies knew the perils of politics as a weapon for dividing a 'united' family, people, nation or colony. They recognized politics as an instrument for sowing seeds of rancor and hate in the psyche of peoples against one another. They were aware of the dangers inherent in electoral process and contests as potential means of instigating schism and intolerance, of libeling dignity... instituting corruption and buying peoples' conscience and voice. Hence, they did not hang back to grant freedom to its seekers among African 'nations' in the form of democracy, in which people choose their ruler themselves, as against the aristocratic system of governance which the colonial hegemonies practiced in/on the continent, even though the democratic system is not any better than the aristocratic...Was this not enough [tactic] to set African peoples against one another, so that colonialism may continue to prosper [in Africa]?

Colonialism thus becomes in al-Ilori's judgment the root cause of disunity among African nations. As evident in the above extract, he believes that the colonial masters were the ones who introduced partisan politics into Africa, which has become one of the greatest factors for corruption and division in the continent. Though Chinua Achebe partially agrees with al-Ilori on the catastrophe the colonial enterprise eventuated in Africa, he nevertheless highlights a few of its positive sides vis-à-vis the issue of African unity. In his *English and the African Writer*, Achebe (1965) writes:

...colonialism in Africa disrupted many things... Of course there are areas of Africa where colonialism divided a single ethnic group among two or even three powers. But...it did bring together many peoples that had hitherto gone their several ways. And it gave them a language...There are not many countries in Africa today where you could abolish the language of the erstwhile colonial powers and still retain the facility for mutual communication...The only reason why we can even talk about African unity is that when we get together we can have a manageable number of languages to talk in-English, French, Arabic.

The reality in Africa, says al-Ilori (1971), is that its tribes and languages are in hundreds. This; however, should not hinder the continent's attainment of unity as there is hardly any people/nation/continent of the world where heterogeneity of ethnicities, the multiplicity of languages, cultures and the plurality of religions are not known. But they are acknowledged by the people in order not to threaten the unity and 'administration' of the people/continent. West African countries though may be multi ethnic in structure; they are bonded by a common descent/lineage, close in customs and traditions, identical in tongues, similar in beliefs and religions, and 'cooperative' in defense against external raids and attacks (al-Ilori, 1971).

Al-Ilori (al-Ilori, 1971); therefore, analogizes the situation of the West African sub-region to that of other territories of Africa – North, East and South – and advocates its unity as citizens of the same continent, among whom had existed commercial and political ties since prehistoric times. Elsewhere, Al-Ilori (1985) gives the rationale behind African unity: that schism has always circumvented efforts towards development of any given people, nation or continent.

Al-Ilori, as a Nigerian Arabic scholar must have been influenced by Ibn Khaldun, an African-Arab scholar, whose sociological writings are interrelated to Al-Ilori's analysis and view on Africa. Al-

Ilori's view on Africa recalls to mind, Ibn Khaldun's theory of solidarity and social cohesion, which he clarified in his great work, *al-Muqaddimah*. Ibn Khaldun proposes the necessity to have social solidarity in constructing a great civilization. The social solidarity he implied is the state of mind that requires individuals to identify with a group and subordinate their own personal interests to the groups' interests. According to him, it is necessary to inculcate the spirit of social solidarity in people in order to keep them bonded and promote altruism and sense of cooperation which ultimately generates social harmony. This will serve as a unifying force in the rise and development of a civilization. Social solidarity, he believes, binds groups together through a common language, norms, trust, culture and code of behavior. To him, a society infused with a sense of social solidarity will fulfil its primary purpose to function with integrity and cooperate for mutual benefits and common goals (Ibn Khaldun, 2015). Ibn Khaldun's theory of social solidarity and cohesion conceivably brings to the fore, the *raison d'être* for Pan-African movement, which is solidarity of African peoples worldwide.

Al-Ilori's view of Africa also brings to bear Emile Durkheim's theory of modern societies. Durkheim argued that societies are glued together by 'organic solidarity', a form of social cohesion constructed on the differences among the members, which make them interdependent. People in this kind of society, play a variety of economic roles, have reasonably diverse experiences, hold different values and socialize their children in numerous varying patterns. Consequently, they consider themselves first as individuals and second as members of a broader social group. Thus, modern society, according to Durkheim (1984), contains a series of interconnected individuals, each with different characteristics. But because of their interdependence and complementarity, they must rely on one another if their society is to develop and function effectively. In effect, 'the basis for social solidarity is no longer the similarity of the members but rather their differences' (Robertson, 1989).

Like his mentor, Abu-Bakre explores the theme of Pan-Africanism in three of his poems, namely, *Shakwā Afrīqiyā* (Africa's Complaint) *Mukāfahat al-Faqr fī Afrīqiyā* (Eradicating Poverty in Africa) and *Afrīqiyā Jadīdah* (New Africa). *Shakwā Afrīqiyā* (hereafter *Shakwā*) opens with a dialogue through which the poet interrogates an imaginary addressee – a fellow African in this instance – about the cause of the storm of lethargy blowing across Africa. He proceeds to identify some of the 'ailments' that have caused 'dis-ease' and underdevelopment in the continent. These include self-centredness, nepotism, humongous corruption and intra- and inter-ethnic and inter-tribal violence among others as evident in the following lines from the poem:

What has afflicted Africa?

That is now like a cauldron on fire?

Looting (of public treasury) and killing

In order to satisfy personal aggrandizement

Is common in all its nations

Look at every region of the continent

You see carnages

Coveting of leadership has blinded them

And earned them shame and disgrace...

Oh God, Africa is crying that you may salvage it

From hardship, misfortune, trouble and despair

Which all are deadly and destructive to its natives (and residents)

(Abu-Bakre, *As-Subāiyyāt*, 2008, 131)

As shown in the last few lines of this poem, Abu-Bakre personifies Africa with the phrase *Africa is crying* as if it were as a troubled human being who, owing to the hardship, calamity and despair his/her progenies wrecked upon him/her now becomes upset and distressed. Thus s/he blubs and raises his/her eyes and hands praying God to save him/her from the transgressions of her 'children' – S/he returns to God. In addition to the numerous agents Abu-Bakre identifies in the above poem as constituting impediments to development in Africa, he also identifies poverty as a major cause of regression in his poem *Mukāfahat al-Faqr fī Afrīqiyā* (Eradicating Poverty in Africa), which reads in part thus:

With poverty, [the African leaders] robe their people

And invest them with garments of adversity and torture

The efforts of Mandela won't go with the wind

They will remain a disease in the arteries

They appear brave but are cowardly in character

For the continent, they wish no development
 They rule with deceit and treachery
 Like devils, they betray Black Africa (Abu-Bakre, *As-Subāiyyāt*, 2008, 196)

But exactly who does Abu-Bakre have in mind with his poem? He probably has in mind, those rulers who see Africa as nothing more than an imperial project, when he says that Africa rulers remain a disease in the arteries as they wish no development for the continent. They rule with deceit and treachery and like devils; they betray Black Africa. The poet's prologue to this poem, written in prose form, recalls to memory Nelson Mandela's speech at *Trafalgar Square* London in 2005, where he urged leaders to fight the scourge of poverty in Africa. He said:

Massive poverty and obscene inequality are such terrible scourges of our times - times in which the world boasts breathtaking advances in science, technology, industry and wealth accumulation - that they have to rank alongside slavery...as social evils [...]

(UNDPI/2559, Mandela, 2010)

This quote buttresses Abu-Bakre's assertion that poverty constitutes part of the obstacles on Africa's pathway to development, scientific progress and technological advancement. Abu-Bakre nevertheless dreams of a new Africa that would be birthed by unity of Africa.

Furthermore, in his *Afriqiyā Jadīdah* (New Africa), Abu-Bakre envisions a new Africa that has awakened from enduring inertia and lethargy; an Africa in which will arise a liberator who would stamp out all blockades on the way to development and progress; an Africa where stagnation and recession would be too godly a phenomenon to experience. Following are some lines of the poem:

Afriqiyā Jadīdah (New Africa)

Has a new Africa evolved?
 Has Africa woken from her long slumber?
 Who will remove her impediments to progress?
 Who will save her from stagnation, recession and doldrums?
 Have her citizens acquired education?
 Have workers lived a comfortable life?
 Who will liberate her today from doom of ignorance?
 In which she has long steeped?
 Have resources of Africa been evenly distributed?
 Have Africans united in brotherhood on the path to greatness?
 If you cooperate with goodwill

For progress of Africa, your future shall be glorious (Abu-Bakre, *As-Subāiyyāt*, 2008, 173).

The questions Abu-Bakre raises in this extract are premised on the horrendous socio-political situations in Africa, which have for a long time, engaged the concern of African leaders and their umbrella organization, the African Union. These include, *inter alia*, the problem of illiteracy, disease, poverty and disunity among some African countries. The view expressed by Abu-Bakre in the above poem acquiesces to the views of Frantz Fanon on African unity, where the latter asserts that "African Unity is a principle on the basis of which it is proposed to achieve the United States of Africa... To initiate this unity, all combinations are possible..." (Fanon, 1967).

Moreover, in the above poem, Abu-Bakre also appears to reiterate the message of the "Sudan People's Liberation Movement" to the *17th All African Students' Conference*, held in Namibia in 2005. The conference, which featured the theme "Pan-Africanism/African Nationalism: Strengthening the Unity of Africa," emphasized the survival of Africa through unity (Bankie & Mchombu, 2008). In his address at the conference, John Garang de Mabior (2008), charged the African States to unite not as a continent, but as one nation, for in unity lies the individual and collective survival of the African peoples. He argued that Africans have failed to heed the prophetic words of the great Ghanaian Pan-Africanist Kwame Nkrumah who once remarked: "If we do not formulate plans for unity and take active steps to form a political union, we will soon be fighting and warring among ourselves..." (Nkrumah quoted in De Mabior, 2008).

Accordingly, Abu-Bakre postures here as a poet struggling for African unity, African liberation, African development, peace and progress, social emancipation as well as political unification of Africa. In this poem, he added his voice to those of such pan-Africanists as Kwame Nkrumah, Julius Nyerere, Nelson Mandela, Desmond Tutu and clusters of Africanists who strove to and still are struggling to foster a spirit of Pan-Africanism in the African continent and the African Diaspora.

Mandela's perspective regarding African unity and development validates Abu-Bakre's view and is again here germane: "I dream of the realization of the unity of Africa, whereby its leaders combine in their efforts to solve the problems of this continent..." (Mandela Quotes). In other words, until Africa unites before its problems can be overcome, and until then the 'dusk' of inertia falling over the continent will not 'eclipse'. Julius Nyerere's (1966) statement is equally here very relevant. Underscoring the essence of unity for Africa's development, he writes:

Africa wishes to have the political strength to prevent other powers using her for their own ends, and it wishes to have the economic strength to justify and support a modern economy, which is the only basis on which prosperity can come to its people....For each one of us is so weak in isolation....

Like Abu-Bakre, Azakawī has explored Pan-Africanism in his poem titled *Man lī bi-Thānī Mandela Afrīqiyya?* (Who Will Bring Me Another Mandela of Africa?). Azakawī begins the poem by underlining the noble attributes that characterized Nelson Mandela's persona. These include bravery, patience, selflessness, self-sacrifice and patriotism, all in the course of the struggle for South Africa's liberation and development. The poet identifies Mandela as a model for African leaders. He moves on to picture the inhumanity, brutality and venality that typify African politics, and then figures true democracy and Africa's unity as pre-conditions for its growth and development. Here are a few lines from the poem:

Who will bring me another Mandela of Africa?
In terms of bravery, sacrifice, and exemplary struggle
He was an exemplary freedom fighter, a nationalist
He was a self-sacrificing patriot, persevering over travails...
Politics is useless until it bears traits of justice and transparency
Politics without God's consciousness is never
Politics in any system of governance
But political affairs in my continent, Africa
Is not the prototype, but one of discrimination and injustice...
It is more of bestiality and barbarity
It has been abused and bastardized
In Zambia, in Congo, politics is a fierce battle
In Zimbabwe, in Egypt and even in Angola, it is unpalatable
In Sao Tome, Somalia, Kenya
And in Ivory Coast that is complaining of, and suffering an endless war
Nigeria and Gambia are not exempt from
The hell of barbaric politics and disunity...
None of the African (nations) is exempt
From obnoxious political disunity...
The unity of African political leaders is only realizable
When African leaders do not perpetuate themselves in power ...
(African leaders!), Try to emulate the White West,
Whose leaders, at the expiration of [their] political tenure, step down
And vacate the seat honorably...
Africa! Africa!! Africa!!! Rise quickly,
To banish indiscipline from Africa (Azakawī, n.d.)

The category of Africa 'leaders' that Isa Abu-Bakre has in mind in his poem (*Mukāfaḥat al-Faqr fī Afrīqiyya*) quoted in the previous pages above are, apparently, the ones Azakawī also has in mind in his poem above, on Africa. Azakawī identifies these leaders as being obstructive to the unity of Africa, when he states that the unity of African political leaders can only be realized when African leaders desist from the act of perpetuating themselves in power. Azakawī; therefore, enjoins the African political leaders to emulate the white West, whose political leaders, step down and vacate the seat honorably and immediately at the expiration of their political tenure.

Azakawī, in this poem, appears to walk the path trodden by Frantz Fanon towards achieving African unity. A writer, a freedom fighter and a journalist, Fanon sought solutions to the numerous problems of Africa in his writing by relating the destiny of Algeria to that of the rest of Africa. He extolled unity and emphasized the necessity to attain it among African nations (Adi & Sherwood, 2003). In one of his writings, Fanon (1967) noted that: "The inter-African solidarity must be

solidarity of fact, a solidarity of action, a solidarity concrete in men, in equipment, in money... Africa shall be free. Yes, but it must get to work, it must not lose sight of its own unity..."

Azakawī described the politics of Africa as one of injustice, discrimination, uncertainty, disarray and barbarism. He decried African leaders' predilection for self-perpetuation in power, often at the heavy costs to human lives and general welfare of the citizenry. He; therefore, like Fanon and Ghanaian poet Bartholomew Sarbah (2014), advocates for African unity and solidarity. But for Africa to achieve the kind of unity Azakawī desires for – an economically robust and politically united Africa – its leaders must first and foremost be God-fearing, be determined to banish mal-governance from Africa and to emulate the West in its leadership style.

But then, one might be tempted to query: if African unity has not been realized – as asserted in the above passages – of what importance and relevance then is the African Union? In other words, how has the African Union functioned as agency for negotiating the rough terrain towards African unity? Julius Nyerere again has advanced one fundamental reason why the old Organization of African Unity (now African Union) could not realize the original goal of Pan-Africanism – unity for development. He says:

For many years African politicians from all parts of the continent have called for African unity. They have presented the political and economic arguments for it, and left details alone. But this cannot continue much longer. Hard thought and detailed negotiations have now to replace slogans, if the objective is to be attained (Nyere, 1966).

Consequent upon the above, African intelligentsias and 'leaders' have undeniably engaged in 'hard thought and detailed negotiations' in their efforts to attain the objective of African unity for development of the African body politic. But then, Africa project, according to Wole Soyinka (2015), means a different thing to different people. For some – who though are the minority – it has been from the start, nothing more than an imperial project, the furtherance of the subjugation plan of European powers, only carried out by neo-colonial agents in the continent. Consequently, as corrective action is being taken by sincerely committed political leadership and fair-minded intellectuals in one region of the continent or another, to better Africa's society, identical fires to earlier trouble regions break out in another province. Thus, the pattern has been that, as one part of Africa is busy fighting their way towards desired, momentous structures, the other part watches with disparaging hilarity, erecting and consolidating miniature imperial 'empires' that may possibly submerge even the laborers of future Africa (Soyinka, 2015).

Now, how might the views and insights expressed by Yoruba literary writers and critics in the foregoing passages benefit Africa in achieving unity for development? How might Yoruba Arabic literature on Pan-Africanism contribute in switching and shifting the paradigm of development in Africa? The Yoruba literary writers and critics, studied in this article, have pinpointed certain attributes and qualities which African leaders must imbibe in order to evolve a 'United Africa'. These include God-consciousness, sincerity of purpose to lead people to a meaningful life, honesty and transparency in leadership. Other attributes to imbibe, according to them, are self-discipline, selflessness, patriotism, justice and respect for the rule of law. In addition, the literary writers stress the necessity for all African countries to see one another as sisters and partners in progress and; therefore, cooperate for the development of Africa. The forethoughts documented and analyzed in the above-cited extracts from Yoruba literature in Arabic are, without doubt, acknowledged to be individualities of leaders of developed nations. Their inculcation conscientiously; therefore, by African leaders would be instrumental to shifting and moving the pattern of development forward in Africa.

5. Conclusion

The discussion in this paper has focused on the perspectives of three Yoruba Arabic literary scholars on Pan-Africanism and development of Africa. I have examined prose texts by al-Ilorī that discussed Africa's experience of colonialism and its 'divisive' consequences on its societies. This is yoked together with critical readings of Abu-Bakre's poems, *Shakwā Afrīqiyya* (The Grievance of Africa), *Mukāfahat al-Faqr fī Afrīqiyya* (Fighting Poverty in Africa), *Afrīqiyya Jadidah* (New Africa), and Azakawī's poem, *Man lī bi-Thānī Mandela Afrīqiyya?* (Who will Bring Me Another Mandela of Africa?). These poems provide us with some insights into the writers' thoughts about Africa's burdens and the possible paths to tread towards attaining unity and sustainable development in Africa. The selected Yoruba Arabic literary writers identify acquisition and provision of quality education for the African peoples and Pan-African unity as pre-conditions to the continent's development in all spheres of life.

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