

A Critical Discourse Analysis of African Liberal Speeches on TikTok

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Abstract

This study describes the rebirth of liberal conversations about the liberation of African nations from external powers. The conversations are usually laden with persuasive ideological ontologies with the aim of demystifying the White assumed supremacy over the rest of the world and the attendant hegemonic power brokering. Four speeches of African liberal discussants were randomly selected across Africa for analysis. The speeches were harvested from a social media application known as TikTok. The application has millions of viewers within Africa and beyond. Owing to the overwhelming viewership, TikTok site proves to be one of the fertile grounds where the liberal speeches are presented to create a paradigmatic shift in the thinking process of the Black race, thereby, prompting them to vociferate for a liberated Africa. Using Critical Discourse Analytical Model and Dependency Theory of Underdevelopment, the study investigates how the speech makers frame their discourse representations to criminalise Europe's and America's involvements in: the animalistic slave trade that depleted African ablest population; extravagant evacuation of economic and material resources; the disproportional socio-economic scales of trade; as well as the continued parasitic neo-colonial ties that hamper development in Africa. Though an on-going research, the findings of the study, among others, establishes that going forward, African nations want a collegial engagement with the so-called 'super powers' where socio-political and economic treaties are diplomatically and reciprocally discussed. The African Continent cannot develop with such heavy yokes on its shoulders, hence the call for liberation.

Key words: Critical Discourse Analysis, Freedom, Liberal Discourse, Power, TikTok App.

Introduction

There is a strong rebirth, rethinking, repositioning as well as reorientation of African socio-economic and political landscape by renowned African speech makers in the 21st Century. Such political representations are usually laden with persuasive, sensational and rhetorical ideological narratives. They are intended to establish a social order that conforms with the true African histories, traditions and experiences. The African audience is informed to reject Western models such as forms of government, life-style, taste, currency, capitalist mentalism, among others, on the premise that such models are alien, incongruent, oppressive, and predatory to the emancipation of African development agenda.

Basically, most of the discourse representations are intended to prepare Africans for the realisation of the 'Africa We Want' which is one of the cardinal provisions of The African Union Agenda 2063. The Union celebrated her Golden Jubilee in the Summit of May 2013. On this 50th Anniversary, the leadership of the

Union took stock of all the achievements and challenges of the African continent and re-dedicated itself through a pragmatic proclamation to throttle the socio-political and economic opulence of African sister states to the trajectory of development (Aongo 2021, p.25). The developmental trajectory is construed to be achieved through a fifty-year continental framework. This framework is what is known as African Union Agenda 2063. This study categorises African liberal discourse into two phases:

Proponents of discourse representations of the colonial phase argue vehemently that colonisation of African nations was one of those many accidents of history that occurred on the African Continent. According to them, colonialism ought not to have happened at all, if not for the oppressive, predatory and exploitative agenda of the colonisers. Conversations of this kind reveal atrocious and disproportional evacuation of African choice resources (human and artificial) by the European super powers in exchange of finished goods. Discourses of this genre are usually sensationalised to expose the moral deficit base of the colonial masters who shipped the African populace like lesser-humans in containers on high seas to work on their plantations and mine coasts under harshest conditions of living.

Narratives of the neo-colonial phase question the continued vested interests of the former colonisers in the socio-economic and political affairs of African nations. Discourse representations of this genre problematise pretentious world donor agents such as World Bank, International Monetary Funds (IMF), United Nations Organisation (UNO), and other international Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) who are quick to offer relieve materials and other forms of palliatives to Africa in times of crises with very stiff conditions. In most cases, these world donors are accused of either causing or aggravating socio-economic and political calamities that befall African nations in the first place. Also, the narratives question the rationale behind warehousing military equipment on the African soil by America, France and other European countries. Discourse representations of this nature are framed to show military supremacy on the side of the foreign powers and psychology intimidation on the side of their African victims who live in constant fear on their own land.

Generally, the insinuation is that, the animalistic slave trade that depopulated the most energetic Africans, the disproportional scales of trade, as well as the parasitic neo-colonial ties, all championed by Europe and America hamper development in Africa. The African Continent cannot develop with such heavy yokes on her shoulders hence the call for liberation. The call is that Africa should own her discourse, and by extension, her own destiny.

A Brief Overview of the TikTok Social Media

TikTok is a social networking platform for sharing videos owned and operated by ByteDance, a Chinese firm. In 2016, a Beijing-based company, ByteDance, launched a short-video app called Douyin for a domestic audience in China. In 2017, the company launched TikTok as an international version of Douyin. ByteDance has maintained both versions of the app since then (Abidin, 2021). According to Fan, Luo and Wang (2023, p.227), TikTok rapidly rose to become one of the most downloaded programmes worldwide since its launched in 2017. According to the service website,

TikTok aims to encourage users' creative expression and provide pleasure. It is a common platform for user-generated content (UGC), in which users, rather than the organisation, are responsible for generating information. The application can be accessed through mobile phones and computers. The application also has features that allow remixing, editing, and reinterpreting original videos, catchphrases, tales, and songs that have been presented on the TikTok platform before. The resulting videos oftentimes contain a mix of different media: audio, visual, and textual elements (Miltsov 2022, p.2)

The main feature of the platform is the ability to upload, view, and share short 15-second videos. These 15-second videos can be put together sequentially to create a longer video of a maximum of 60 seconds. Many social media platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, offer a "feed" or a continuous flow of textual or visual content to a user. TikTok, in contrast, shows one video at a time that users can swipe up to see the next video or swipe down to return to the previous video they have watched. The platform provides several typical social media features, such as a user profile, the ability to "follow" other accounts and to post comments and "likes" (Anderson, 2020).

TikTok's recommendation algorithm studies the user's past activities and adapts to changes in user preferences and engagement patterns. It also tracks popular content to offer an endless supply of videos for each user. These videos appear sequentially on the "For you" page. Each "For you" page is individually tailored to the user's preferences, past engagements, location, and other characteristics (Vázquez-Herrero et al., 2021). TikTok logo is an iconic sign of music. The logo conveys that users will have some fun and exciting musical experience using TikTok (Fan, Lua, and Wang, 2023, p.230). Apart from the entertainment aspect discussed above, TikTok application affords its users the opportunity to market their products and services on the platform since it has billions of users at its disposal.

The combination of these features has created a highly immersive and incentive environment for users to spend long hours on the platform watching and interacting with a seemingly endless stream of video content. In this respect, a number of media commentators have raised the alarm that the app is highly addictive and its use needs to be curbed (Koetsier, 2020; Matei, 2020). Certain video contents have the potential to become viral in a very short period if they are duplicated and distributed widely enough. This is the case with powerful socio-political texts credited to renowned scholars and eloquent public speakers of which Prof. Patrick Lumumba is a good example. His sensational liberal narratives on Africa's selfhood dominate the TikTok media.

Looking back, it is now clear that TikTok is no longer just a social media platform for video comedy and fun-fare. Serious discourse representations of various spectra ranging from politics, economy, religion, law, cultural practices and education among others are produced, reproduced, shared and critiqued on the platform. Thus, in as much as the app has been launched just a few years ago, it has offered immense contributions to digital communication in the 21st Century. To this end, Miltsov (2022,

p.1) states that TikTok app has overwhelming effects on society and indeed, one of the leading digital media research on social issues at present.

Conceptualising Liberalism and Liberal Discourse

The term 'Liberalism' emanates from the Latin word, *liberalis*, meaning to set free or to release one from slavery, servitude, unjust rule or any form of inhibition that transgresses one's freedom. It is a political ideological worldview founded on the ideals of liberty. According to Stephenson (2016), "liberalism espouses a wide array of views ... and can encompass ideas such as free and fair elections, free trade, private property, capitalism, constitutionalism, liberal democracy, free press, and the free exercise of religion".

Liberalism became a powerful political force in the Western world during the period of Enlightenment when philosophers and economists began to reject stereotypical inhibitions prevalent in that era. Liberals sought and established a constitutional order that laid greater premium on individual freedoms, such as the freedoms of speech and association, an independent judiciary and public trial by jury, the abolition of aristocratic privileges, absolute monarchy, and racial inequality. These sweeping changes in political authority marked the modern transition from absolutism to constitutional rule (Stephenson 2016, p.5). For, instance, John Locke, one of the early liberal thinkers who is often credited with the creation of liberalism as a distinct philosophical tradition, employed the concept of natural rights and the social contract to argue that the rule of law should replace both tradition and absolutism in government; that rulers were subject to the consent of the governed; and that private individuals had a fundamental right to life, liberty, and property (Stephenson 2016, p.2).

Discourse, in the study of language, often refers to the speech patterns and actual utterances of individuals who share similar speech conventions within a defined community or specified human endeavour. In this regard, discourse refers to the use of language above and beyond the sentence level as observed by (Schiffrin, Tannen, and Hamilton, 2001). Ibileye (2021, p.43) submits that discourse captures any form of written or spoken language that constitutes a recognisable speech event: a joke, sermon, teaching, interview, counselling etc. This shows that discourse could be written or oral. Taking the above definitions of discourse into context, it becomes possible for one to talk of legal discourse, academic discourse, religious discourse, racist discourse, diplomatic discourse, political discourse, and liberal discourse among many others. Even so, our emphasis is on Liberal Discourse.

Liberal Discourse, therefore, refers to any narrative that calls for the release of a person or group of persons from tyranny, dictatorship, force labour, colonialism or neo-colonialism, foreign or external control, etc. Liberal Discourse could take the form of a revolution since liberalism itself has close ties with revolution. For instance, the revolutionaries in both America and France used liberal philosophy to justify the armed overthrow of what they saw as tyrannical rule. In the nineteenth century, the liberalist political ideology was further entrenched in many nations across Europe, Latin America, and North America. Liberalist ideas spread even further in the 20th

century, when liberal democracies were more favoured in both the First and Second World Wars than fascism and communism respectively (Stephenson 2016, p.3). In the 21st Century, many nations across the world embrace liberal discourse as a post-modern political ideology with varying degrees of power and influence. This kind of civil engagement and eventual resort to coup-de-force is currently being experienced in some African countries such as Niger, Mali, Chad and Burkina Faso among others. The juntas claim to be liberating citizens of the respective countries from external dominance. Interestingly, citizens of those countries who are treated like sub-humans from 'powers that be' seem to be aligning themselves with the junta messiahs. Despite huge amounts of transgressional sanctions melted on the junta governments by sub-regional unions such as the Economic Community of West Africa States (ECOWAS), the coupists seem not to have been deterred.

Given the recent socio-political developments in the continent, one can safely submit that African liberal struggle in the 21st Century is essentially a hybridisation of brutal military force and democratic dialogue.

The Implications of TikTok Application on African Liberal Discourse

The TikTok app has overwhelming popularity on how millions of people around the world consume and share digital content. Consequently, it has an overwhelming impact among the African audience concerning the liberation of African nations from foreign powers. The site has proven to be a fertile ground for the emancipation of African freedom and unity, going forward. Great speeches credited to African nationalists are frequently presented on the platform for viewership of the audience. This is expected to create a paradigmatic shift in the thinking process of Africans in leadership positions as well as their followers to emancipate for a better Africa. The conversations are usually laden with persuasive ideological ontologies geared toward demystifying the White assumed supremacy over the rest of the world. The modern Africans want nothing less than a collegial engagement with the outside world where socio-political and economic treaties involving Africa and the rest of the world are mutually discussed on a round table to the benefit of all. The African continent possesses compelling human and natural resources that qualify her to occupy a seat of pride among communities of nations. Unity of Africa as the Black race is being emphasised as an important factor in achieving the 'Africa We Want' mantra. The African audience is informed that the time has ripped for a comprehensive socio-political and economic takeover from the White hegemonic power blocs.

Previous Research

TikTok has been launched in the public space for just a few years but there is considerable literature on it already. Empirical studies have been conducted by social scientists to ascertain a number of cultural, social, and political attitudes and experiences of TikTokers around the world. Yang (2020) and Fan, Luo and Wang (2023) in their respective researches with the aim of understanding TikTok usage and its communication strategy describe how young people use TikTok to make meanings. The researches indicate that although escapism and mood enhancement are the

primary motivations for using social media, expressing the hidden self and connecting with friends are secondary causes. The study's findings aver further that TikTok platform celebrates real-life human experiences, inspires creativity in its users by providing user interfaces that are intuitive, easy to use, and straightforward, as well as editing tools that are feature-rich and user-friendly.

Miltsov's (2022) research titled, "Researching TikTok: Themes, Methods, and Future Directions" is in many ways similar to the earlier studies described above. The scholar describes how millions of people interact online and engage in artistic, cultural, social, and political activities. The study reviews several methodological approaches applied by social scientists to explore users' experiences on TikTok and the platform's effects on society, and finally, suggests directions for future research.

Haslem (2022) conducts a profound study titled, "TikTok as a Digital Activism Space: Social Justice Under Algorithmic Control". The research has overwhelming implications on the present study for it presents TikTok as a platform that is not only used to discuss popular culture topics and create trends. The scholar posits that TikTok was being used as a tool for social justice activism in the United States in the wake of the tumultuous events such as the coronavirus pandemic, the resurgence of the Black Lives Matter movement, and the 2020 controversial presidential election. Using two case studies and data compiled from interviews with content creators themselves, the study provides useful insights on how TikTok app can be used by content creators to facilitate grassroots social justice campaigns, digital activism and civic engagements.

Literat and Kligler-Vilenchik (2021) adopt a cross-platform approach by using the Fortnite videogame across Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok to study how young people expressed political opinions online. Specifically, the scholars were interested in how users engaged with the topic of building the US-Mexico border wall. This study does not only demonstrate how young people express social and political attitudes on the platform but also reveal how the structures of social media environments shape the youth's political expressions.

Lujain Ammar et al (2020) carried out a qualitative content analysis to understand how TikTok users discussed the 2019 Lebanese protests. The researchers discovered that users employed humour and satire to express their political opinions online. William Terrell Wright (2021) looks at several popular school-related hashtags to understand how students speak out against institutional dynamics and discourses. The results of the study show that in the age of digitally mediated socialising, TikTok is rapidly becoming an important backchannel for adolescents that not only helps them express ideas and thoughts about schooling but also influences their identity formation.

Finally, a digital anthropologist Chrystal Abidin (2021) conducts a comprehensive research on how the rise of TikTok affect the ways Internet celebrities communicate with their audience. Abidin argues that TikTok has introduced major changes in how influencers present themselves in the digital public space. The review above shows that TikTok as a nascent technological invention is relatively unexplored yet important platform for any researcher interested in examining the socio-political effects of discourse representations on digital media use. Expectedly,

African liberal discourses on the TikTok platform have not been conscientiously investigated, hence, the present study.

Methodology

The research is descriptive in nature and content analysis is used for data analysis. Data for the research is predominately harvested from TikTok post codes using mobile phone. Five speeches (Excerpts 1-5) were selected for analysis. The first four Excerpts are liberal speeches, authored by African liberalists. The author of Excerpt 1 and 4 is Prof. Patrick Lumumba from Kenya, one of the leading African liberal discussants on the TikTok app. Excerpt 2 is from Dr. Arikana Chihombori-Quao, a Zimbabwean medical doctor and a former African Union Representative to the United States. Excerpt 3 is from Botswana President, Mokgweetsi Masisi. The fifth Excerpt is President Emmanuel Macron's public apology to Francophone African nations on 30th April, 2023. It is a confessional speech selected for analysis to validate the claims of the African liberal speakers that Europe and America have wronged Africa.

Background Information on the Liberal Speech-makers

Patrick Loch Otieno Lumumba is a Professor of Sociology. He is a Kenyan lawyer and activist. He served as Director of the Kenyan School of Law as well as Director of the Kenyan Anti-corruption Commission from July 2010 to August 2017. Prof. Lumumba schooled in various universities within and outside Africa. He is the founder of PLO Lumumba Foundation. He is an eloquent international public speaker whose discourses are dominated by the liberation of Africa from European hegemonic powers.

Dr. Arikana Chihombori-Quao is a medical doctor and a former African Union Representative to the United States from 2017 to 2019. She is the Chief Executive Officer and Founder of Bell Family Medical Centres in the United States. A Zimbabwean activist and public speaker whose narratives problematizes the Berlin Conference of 1885 where Africa was partitioned and exploited by Europe. She seeks to reunite African states and African in the Diaspora.

Mokgweetsi Masisi is the current Botswana President. He assumed office in 2018 after he served as the Vice President from November, 2014 to April, 2018. He is a fearless leader who had on several occasions engaged European and American leaders in heated conversations.

Emmanuel Jean-Michel Frederic Macron is a French politician and the current President of France. He became the President in 2017 at the youthful age of forty (40) years. He is the first president of France to have tendered public apology to Francophone African nations regarding France's wrongful engagements with them in the past. His speech has liberal implication on the present study and similar studies in future.

Theoretical Framework: Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

Critical Discourse Analysis is made up of three linguistic variables namely, 'Critical', 'Discourse', and 'Analysis'. Discourse has already been defined as a written or spoken

language that is above and beyond the sentence level. 'Analysis' on the other hand is a process that deals with evaluating, critiquing or reviewing things by breaking them down into units. The term 'Critical' as used in CDA relates to 'Critical Theory' as found in the famous essay of Max-Horkheimer (1937) which means that social theory should be oriented towards critiquing and changing society as a whole, in contrast to traditional theory oriented solely to understanding or explaining it. Thus, when 'Critical' is added to Discourse Analysis, there is a paradigmatic shift of attention and interest from language to society focusing on the social factors or institutions that enforce power and dominance. Wodak and Meyer (2008) opine that 'critical' means not taking things for granted, opening up complexity, making visible the interconnectedness of things, challenging reductionism, dogmatism and deep dichotomies, and through these processes, making opaque structures of power relations and ideologies manifest.

Critical theories, including CDA, want to produce and convey critical knowledge that enables human beings to emancipate themselves from forms of domination through self-reflection (Wodak and Meyer, 2008). Such theories, like is the case with African Liberal Discourse, aim at producing enlightenment that leads to high degree of emancipation. This position is in tandem with Horkheimer (1969) and Adorno (1991) who aver that the critical impetus of CDA and other 'critical' research programmes is somewhat the legacy of enlightenment. Such theories seek not only to describe and explain, but also to root out particular kinds of delusion, mystification and complexities. Critical Theory seeks to create awareness in agents of their own needs and interests. This implies that the exposure or revelation of the hidden things in a text is of immense significance because such things may not be visible or obvious to the powerless or the common man and, therefore, may not be resisted. Consequently, in carrying out their task, it should not come as a surprise that critical analysts conduct research in solidarity and cooperation with the dominated groups (van Dijk, 1988b).

In summary, Critical Discourse Analysis sets up a relationship between language and power. In that sense, Wodak (2001) regards CDA as fundamentally concerned with analysing opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language. Similarly, Fairclough (2001, p.125) defines CDA as "a form of critical social science geared to illuminating the problems which people are confronted with by particular forms of social life, and to contributing resources which people may be able to draw upon in tackling and overcoming those problems".

Dependency Theory of Underdevelopment

Dependency Theory of Underdevelopment is a post-modern theory that emerged in the 1950s. It interrogates global inequalities and the North-South divide and is still useful in accounting for the reasons that hamper development in the third world countries in the 21st Century. Theotonio Dos Santos (1970, p.231), one of the founders of Dependency Theory views dependence as "a situation in which the economy of a certain country is conditioned by the development and expansion of another economy

to which the former is subjected". The theory maintained that the unequal relationships between the central nations (core) and the peripheries in terms of trade, economic and political power, military strength, finance and technology among others, led to the development of the former and to the underdevelopment of the latter (Burkey, 1993). The Dependency Theory fits into the present study as a useful conceptual orientation for explaining global assemblage and distribution of wealth, especially, as it affects Africa. African liberal discourses implicate America, France, and other European countries that evacuated both human and natural resources from the African continent during colonialism and their continued neo-colonisation of African nations.

Data Analysis

Excerpt 1: Proposed United States of Africa (by Prof. Lumumba)

We must unite now.

We must have one Army.

We must have one currency.

We must have one foreign policy.

We must leave here with one government.

What we are saying is that we must define how we engage with the whole world and we are saying that as individual countries, we are weak and the rest of the world wants to operate and deal with us in our weak state. ...if we are SADAK, we can; if we are ECOWAS, we can... And we are saying that going forward, we must have to recognise our internal weaknesses. And what are the weaknesses? Chinua Achebe said it very clearly that: "The problem of Africa is simply and squarely that of political leadership." The rank of many political leaders in Africa are thieves... As long as we continue electing such individuals into positions of authority across Africa, they are going to be manipulated.

Analysis

In Excerpt 1 above, the speaker emphasises the concept of unity as an indispensable factor in Africa's victorious engagements with the outside world. Generally speaking, Africa is a plural continent in terms of her people, culture, political leanings, religion, mineral deposits, climate conditions and language etc. Thus, the speaker reminds his brethren, the African audience that the rest of the world wants to take advantage of these socio-economic disparities and plunder her mercilessly. The speaker submits that Africa lacks a common army, currency, foreign policy, and government. On the other hand, great nations of the world like America and other European countries have unified security outlets, currencies, and predefined systems of government that are congruent with their socio-political experiences. The above unity codes provide necessary ingredients for development. Apart from unity, the speaker identifies poor leadership situation as yet another problematic issue confronting African development. He simply states that the rank of many political leaders in Africa are thieves and people with diminished self-pedigree that are continuously being manipulated by their paid masters. The metaphorical representations that most

African leaders are “thieves” and people that can be “manipulated” are somewhat abusive and confrontational but nonetheless, representative of typical African leaders who are often accused of corruption, lack of vision, moral bankruptcy, abuse of power, primordial sentiments, and many other untoward practices. The accusation is huge with far-reaching consequences and the speaker quickly devises a communication schema to implant the message into the minds of the audience by making appeal to an impeccable authority. He quotes a profound speech credited to Chinua Achebe of blessed memory, a veteran Nigerian writer of international repute who once said that “The problem of Africa is simply and squarely that of political leadership.”

Thus, owing to the multiple divides, lack of internal harmony, coupled with bad leadership of the political elite, the continent has been plagued with hunger, insecurity, unemployment, religious intolerance, heightened corruption, ethnic animosity, bad governance, nepotism among others.

Excerpt 2: Slavery/Wars of Resistance and Theft of African Artefacts (by Dr Arikana)

And all we need to do is give the world an overdose of our truth and insist on it. As we speak today, I am going to take you back to centuries. Long before the children of Africa were taken out of Africa as slaves, there was some serious resistance when the occupiers from the West came to Africa contrary to what some might think. They didn't just give up their children but the fighting began long ago before the slavery. And the resistance was those who led them, the majority of them, their heads as we speak today are sitting in jars in Europe. Are you aware of that? Our leaders, our ancestors who fought the wars of resistance, their heads, their remains are sitting in jars throughout Europe. And the same people have the audacity to come to Africa and talk to us about human rights. What is even more disturbing is that we entertain them. We don't remind them of the skeletons in their closets. As we speak today, the priceless artifacts that they stole from all over Africa are sitting in their museums throughout Europe. You and I, if we visit Europe, we pay to see what belongs to us. Evidence of theft, evidence of murder, in display, on display in plain sight

Analysis

Dr Arikana is a medical doctor. Given the background of the speaker, her discourse narrative presents a heinous dismembering of the human anatomical components of African victims by powerful external executioners. This analytical procedure is commonly used in medical sciences to ease the comprehension of learners.

Categorically speaking, the speech is a hybrid of both colonial phase and post-colonial phase of African liberal discourse as it espouses some unpardonable atrocities committed by European super powers during and after their colonisation of Africa. The speaker opens the discourse with a literary device called personification where she talks about giving the world “an overdose of our truth”. Overdose as a term means when something is given or taken in excess. If it is a drug, it can generate an overwhelming effect on the victim. Conversely, the overdose of truth that the speaker promises her audience would definitely shock the world. With this background, the

speaker carefully takes the audience down the dark era of Slave Trade where the enslaver (Europe) killed great African leaders and men of valour that fought to oppose colonialism. The speaker claims that the remains of those African heroes alongside other priceless artefacts evacuated from African soil during colonialism are on display in strategic tourist museums throughout Europe. Africans who visit such museums are required to pay before seeing what originally belongs to them. What then can be more treacherous than that? You steal from the owner, and as if that was not enough, you ask him to pay before taking a look at his property? These same people come to Africa to preach to Africans the doctrine of human rights and possibly, equality before the law. The speaker is appalled with the sickening morality of Europe but not as much as she is worried about Africa still entertaining such hypocritical guests on her soil. The speaker wants Africa to know that the acts of the European emperors are extravagant transgression of the popular axiom, “those who call for equity must come with clean hands”.

This discourse representation has a number of implications. To begin with, the speech shows that Europe would not have been superior to Africa if the former had not assembled her economic fortunes through dubious dealings with the latter. The speech also casts aspersions on the morality of European leaders, thereby criminalising them as hypocritical power brokers with despicable and atrocious histories. Most importantly, sacrilegious display of the ancestral remains for tourism funfair is a gross transgression of African eschatological tradition regarding burial rites that are accorded the souls of the departed. Africa, like many cultures in the world venerate ancestral spirits. They believe in burying their dead according to the laid down traditions of respective communities so that the spirits of the dead would find eternal rest. Anything short of giving a dead person proper burial is abominable and sacrilegious. Eschatological scholars are of the view that such spirits hover around without final rest (Gbenda, 2005). Thus, the speaker through a sensational and rhetorical narrative reminds the African audience that the spirits of the ancestral heroes that fought against colonial rule hover restlessly in the alien skies of Europe. The audience is indulged to believe that European unfaithful activities on African soil during colonialism were not mere trespasses of theft, but brutal rape on African cultural and traditional practices. Thus, the time has come to make right those wrong acts committed against Africa.

Excerpt 3: Military Base in Botswana (by Mokgweetsi Masisi, Botswana President)

We are going to expose that American military base here all the time in the platforms we get and educate our people that this is exactly what Putin is fighting against. America will not allow that. That Russia must go and establish a military base in Cuba with missiles facing the USA. They won't allow that. So, we must not be allowed, we must not be asked to accept the things that you will not accept if they were to happen in your country and that is what we are talking about when we speak about NATO and peace not going together.

Analysis

Botswana is a country in Southern Africa. The country enjoys relative peace. This speech criminalises America's siting of military formation on foreign soils. Such an action undermines the military independence of a sovereign nation. Militarily speaking, Botswana and America had not been on war and there is no any justification whatsoever, for America to situate a military base in that country thereby creating psychological trauma to the citizens of the country and the neighbouring African countries. The speaker states that such an intimidating display of military might by one of the world superpowers (America) over inferior African nations is what Putin, the Russian President is fighting. Though, not overtly stated, the speaker is referring to Russia's War against Ukraine.

It is important to state here that Prof Mulumba in some of his speeches made similar submissions and even went ahead to encourage African countries such as Mali, Niger Republic, Chad, etc. that have formed military governments to oversee the socio-political and economic affairs of their countries from European rulership.

Excerpt 4: God Created Humanity as Equal Beings (by Prof Lumumba)

There is only one race in the world: the human race; and we had better learn that quickly and the faster we do so, the safer we are. We must look at each other as human beings. We need each other and once we have recognised that, we must trade from a position of mutual respect and mutual strength. We were wronged many years and they continue to wrong us. One of the things that I and others are working on right now is the reparation and what makes me happy is that in the recent past I have seen the French President give apology for colonisation and slavery. I have seen the Dutch also apologised. The Belgians have also apologised. I am waiting for the British to apologise properly. I hope the Spaniards will do so. The Portuguese will do so. The Americans will do so; and all these debts that we claim we owe them, the first step towards reparation is that all debts owed by African countries will be cancelled completely. That is part of reparation. Once they atone for their sins, then we will know that they mean well...

This speech collaborates what Dr Arikana claims in her submission that the remains and heads of African ancestors who fought the wars to resist colonisation as well as other cultural artifacts are displayed in European museums to generate revenue from tourists across the globe. The speaker opens the speech by stating that all humans are created as equal beings. However, due to immoderate cravings of superimposing individuals, some persons, societies, nations and even races tend to look upon other humans as inferior and treat them as such. The bipolar referents, superior/inferior or oppressor/oppressed are ex-colonial masters and their African victims. The speaker through his speech intends to correct this man-made existential divide hence, "We must look at each other as human beings." This means that treating a fellow human being as inferior to oneself amounts to a wrongdoing. By implication, Africa is being wronged by Europe by enslaving and exploiting her resources. Thus, the speaker alongside other patriotic Africans (whom he simply refers to as others) are chatting the way towards reparation of African stolen fortunes. The first demand should be an

unconditional and comprehensive cancellation of all forms of debts which African nations owe Europe.

European nations cannot deny that they have wronged Africa because the speaker lists several ex-colonial powers that have tendered public apologies to African nations in this regard. From the list, France's apology is most outstanding. The speaker chooses to use a discourse narrative schema called 'Evidentiality' which is the use of evidence or proof to make opinions, claims or points of view more plausible, reliable and credible in reporting an incident (Igwebuike, 2018, p.159). It makes an argument more forceful and endearing in order to influence the mental models of recipients/readers by persuading them to accept views as real and true (van Dijk, 2006).

Excerpt 5: President Emmanuel Macron's Public Apology to Francophone African Nations

Dear distinguished delegates, I stand before you today, April 30th 2023 as the President of the French Republic to express my deepest apologies to the African nations and peoples who were affected by France's colonial past. We recognise the harm and damage caused by our actions and we are committed to making amends for the wrongs committed during that period.

To the people of Algeria, I apologise for the harm caused by our colonisation. We acknowledge the historical injustices committed during that period as well as the pain and trauma that we continue to cause. The exploitation of natural resources and we pledge to work towards healing and reconciliation with the affected countries as well as fostering new relationships based on mutual respect and understanding. In the same speech, President Macron tendered similar apologies to Benin Republic, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Cote D'Voire, Diboujet, Guinea, Madagascar and Mali.

The epochal speech by President Macron is a major confirmation of all the socio-political injustices melted out by Europe and America on African nations. Accordingly, African liberalists want the external powers to accept conversations that are tailored towards reparation even as they await British, America, Spain, Portuguese to also tender public apologies for their wrongdoings. Once this is done, Africa and the rest of the world will sign a collegiate deal based on mutual respect and understanding.

Findings

Arising from the analysis of the study, the following findings were discovered:

1. Though, the speeches were made by different liberalists at different times, they share common themes of economic and political independence, White supremacy over the Black race, slavery/colonialism/neocolonialism, theft, repatriation and reconciliation. The preponderance of common themes in the discourse representations of the respective liberal discussants as well as the confirmation speech from President Macron is indicative of the genuine nature of the selfhood agitations.

2. The present liberal narratives are a combination of dialogue and brutal force to evict external forces from African soil. This is evident in countries like Niger, Chad, Mali etc that have formed military government to facilitate the eviction of western powers. On the other hand, weak political leadership in some African nations would delay collective bargaining and eventual liberation from external influence.
3. The resurgence of liberal discourses emancipating for the selfhood of African nations is unprecedented. There is no time in African history that liberal narratives enjoyed such a global leadership. This is largely due to the advent of social media platforms that are relatively inexpensive and easily accessible to a vast audience. The TikTok platform, especially has the potentials to enhance digital activism and civic engagements.

Conclusion

Emanating from the findings of the research, it can be summed up that if the militarised tempo of the recent liberal conversations is sustained, other Western powers would borrow a leaf from France and tender due apologies to the respective Africa nations. This is because the demands, though, bluntly presented are after all, genuine and long overdue. As aptly captured by Prof. Lumumba, Africa must also deal with her internal weaknesses of poor political leadership and institutionalised corruption. This will pave the way for positive things to happen to Africa.

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