

Research Article

Honorific Conception of Philosophy and Exclusionism in Nigeria

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It is still debatable whether Nigeria (Africa) is the sole cause of its democratic and developmental challenges. While some argue that Europeans are Africa's problem, others argue that Africans are their own problems. One of such developmental problems facing Africa and Nigeria particularly is exclusionism (simply, exclusion from rights or privileges or even both). Recently, Nigeria conducted its presidential election on February 25, 2023. The election witnessed lots of exclusion on the basis of party affiliation, ethnicity, location, and religion. It becomes pertinent to examine the basis for exclusionism and the role of the Enlightenment Era in the practice of exclusionism globally but in Nigeria particularly. This paper aims to identify the origin of [some form of] exclusionism in Africa through the lens of Nigeria. Critical thinking and analysis are applied as a method in arguing that exclusionism was scientifically and philosophically enshrined by the Enlightenment philosophers but had existed among Europeans and among traditional Africans (Africa before the colonization era). A recurrent factor in critical thinking and analysis is that exclusionism is part of human nature and this arises in the quest for power and control, to identify oneself as superior and the 'other' human being as inferior.

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Introduction

The fact that exclusionism, discrimination, conflict, inequality, injustice and imperialism are still ingrained in philosophy and human relationships is unquestionable. Non-Western expression of philosophy, be it African, Indian, or Chinese, is still dismissed, by many, without the benefit, of an argument. This is because these adjectives challenge the conception of philosophy, as springing from Greek. However, teaching that philosophy began in Greece puts all the other great civilizations, like

Babylon, Egypt or Jews, into question. And this is one reason why this topic is problematic and significant at the same time. It is problematic because it questions human basic nature. And it is significant because it explains to a puzzled mind how the rich philosophical traditions of China, India, Africa, and the indigenous peoples of America are completely ignored by almost all philosophy departments in both Europe and the English-speaking world. As Park convincingly argues, Africa and Asia were excluded from the philosophical canon by the confluence of two interrelated factors. On the one hand, defenders of the philosophy of Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) consciously rewrote the history of philosophy to make it appear that his critical idealism was the culmination toward which all earlier philosophy was groping, more or less successfully. On the other hand, European intellectuals accepted and systematised views of white racial superiority that entailed that no non-Caucasian group could develop philosophy.¹

So, the exclusion of non-European or Western philosophy from the canon was a decision, not something that people have always believed, and it was a decision based not on a reasoned argument, but rather on polemical considerations involving the pro-Kantian faction in European philosophy, as well as views about race that are both scientifically unsound and morally heinous. This quest is important because many works have been written on the enlightenment period and philosophy but there is non-known work to the authors that proves or disproves or links the enlightenment era with the practice of exclusionism in Nigeria specifically. This paper, therefore, aims to show the foundation of exclusionism and how it is practiced in Africa and Nigeria, particularly today. This will be done by dividing the paper into sections. The first section will offer a glimpse of the problem of this paper and the expected outcome. The second section will portray how Western philosophy introduced the practice of exclusionism, tracing its origins before, during and after the Enlightenment era. The third section will focus on the practice of exclusionism in Nigeria while the last section will summarize and conclude the arguments made by this paper.

The Enlightenment Era and Non-Western Philosophy: the Practice of Exclusionism and Exclusionism among Europeans

Exclusionism is the political ideology and practice of excluding people from the community, especially in the context of ethnic nationalism, racism or xenophobia. It is exclusion from rights or privileges or even both. Tragically, non-Western philosophy and non-Westerners have been on the receiving end of

this practice of exclusionism. This was on the ground that these non-Westerners did not possess philosophy, could not philosophize (because they lacked reason), are not part of the kingdom of humanity, are not civilized, had no scientific breakthrough and lacked great individuals who have made contributions to development, etc. For instance, Kant is easily one of the four or five most influential philosophers in the Western tradition. He asserted that the Chinese, Indians, Africans and the indigenous peoples of the Americas are congenitally incapable of philosophy. Kant also went ahead to provide examples of Continental and analytic philosophers engaging in extraordinarily dismissive (exclusionary) ways towards non-Western philosophy. Unfortunately, contemporary Western philosophy has taken it for granted that there is no Chinese, Indian, African or Native American philosophy.² The era of 'Enlightenment' which Kant himself belonged to enshrine this idea that it is only the European race (Western world) that can substantially philosophize and that they were 'humanity per excellence' (which means that people of the West are the true and complete human beings or models of humanity). This was done through the argument that reason was an essential feature to consider one human or to grant to one people or race the status of humanity and the ability to philosophize.

In another example, Wilhelm von Humboldt made a painstakingly detailed study of a great number of languages including Greek, Latin, Basque, the languages of Central America, Sanskrit, North American Indian, Chinese, Polynesia, and Malaysia. However, his learning convinced him that the Indo-European languages (the Sanskritic ones) were the best for methodical reasoning.³ This is clear evidence of exclusionism. However, it took the racist arguments of Meiners to introduce the idea of excluding Africa and even Asia from modern histories of philosophy on a scientific plane. Christoph Meiners' argument was that the human races are of different origins and that black Africans (ugly Black race), have distinct attribute or nature that makes them inferior. He further argued that the Negro does not have human feelings and barely any animal feelings. Meiners thereby introduced the thesis of naturally distinct races adding that Jews and Negroes could not demand the same privilege and liberties as the Christians and Whites because they were different-belonged to different levels of humanity.⁴

Having made bear the fact that non-Western philosophy, non-whites and non-Christians suffer from exclusionism, it will be necessary to state that the practice of exclusionism predates the era of enlightenment. The Enlightenment Age is a European intellectual movement of the 17th and 18th centuries in which ideas concerning God, reason, nature and humanity were synthesized into a

worldview that gained wide assent in the West and that instigated revolutionary developments in art, philosophy, and politics. Central to the Enlightenment Age were the use and celebration of reason, the power by which humans understand the universe and improve their own condition. The goals of rational humanity were considered to be knowledge, freedom and happiness.⁵ The practice of exclusionism predates this era because there is evidence to show that an early form of Western European exclusionism first began among Europeans.

For example, ancient Greeks described ‘other’-inferior- European groups, such as Scythians and Celts as barbarians (people from central and northern Europe). The Ancient Greeks defined and based their prejudices and the practice of exclusion on physical preferences for certain bodily and facial features, including lighter skin. As a result of these differences, the ancient Greeks even discouraged intermarriage. Greek scholars like Hippocrates gave this practice of exclusionism in Western Europe a philosophical backing when he attributed place and climate as the defining factors in shaping different physical appearances. Additionally, the Greeks, in general, argued that certain physical traits signified mental and behavioural inferiority. On their part, ancient Romans based their practice of exclusionism on ‘civilization’. They believed that being civilized marked their superiority, both physically and mentally over the Gauls and Germani of Europe.⁶ By attributing inferiority to these other European groups, the Ancient Greeks and Romans excluded them from certain rights and privileges.

Eventually, in the Early Greek and Roman states (2BCE-5BCE), certain peoples referred to as ‘foreigners’ were discriminated against and excluded from certain human rights and/or privileges, skin colour notwithstanding, on the fact that they were ‘Barbarians’-Egyptians, Persians, Indians, Celts, Germans, Macedonians, Vikings, Goths and any other non-Greeks. The Early Greeks, on the one hand, viewed their discrimination, injustice and unequal status (all forms of exclusionism) on the belief that the Greek people and culture were superior to all other cultures and people. For this reason, they argued that ‘barbarians’ were naturally meant to be enslaved. On the other hand, the early Romans like the early Greeks argued that all other people and cultures, particularly, the Syrians and Asiatic Greeks were inferiors, worthless peoples among mankind and born for slavery.⁷ Having been excluded from a ‘certain community of rights and privileges these people were treated very harshly.

The above paragraphs have pointed to the fact that exclusionism had existed among Europeans on account of bodily features, skin colour and culture. But it was during the period of Enlightenment that the practice of exclusionism was anchored on scientific philosophy. During this period, the talk of

non-Western philosophy became widespread. The persons who entrenched this idea were known as the Enlightenment philosophers. Kant and Meiners, Hume and Hegel all fall into this category. For example, David Hume on the basis of racial prejudice excluded Africans, and other non-western philosophy as properly speaking philosophy. This he did by arguing that non-whites, especially Negroes, are naturally inferior to whites.⁸ By the Negroes, Hume meant African blacks and people of African descent. For Hume, in the black and non-western world, no individual had made any great discovery either in the arts or the sciences.⁹ In this, Hume draws a distinction in the world community of human beings. On the one side, the Whites, who are the models of humanity existing in the West and on the other side, are the Negroes, who occupy the lowest rung in the hierarchy of human beings. Herein, Hume's argument is that only the races that possess reason can philosophize and only those who can philosophize can be given the status of humanity. Only the West possesses these qualities while the other species of men simply have religious beliefs.¹⁰ So, every other group outside the West was excluded from the kingdom of humanity and self-rule. These groups could not demand the same privileges and right as the Westerners.

Following Hume, Kant in his logic lectures marginalized and excluded certain peoples from the status of humanity. This he achieved by classifying human beings into white (Europeans), yellow (Asia), black (Africans) and red (American Indians) and excluded the latter three categories from the universal history of philosophy. This was on the ground that the latter three are incapable of philosophy.¹¹ According to Kant, humans are essentially different from brutes because they possess inner nature: natural disposition, temperament and morality. It is his argument that moral philosophy examines the customs of these people (Africans, Asians, and American Indians) to show that they lack authority, ethical principles and are, therefore, not essentially human.¹² He even included Hindus, Persians, Chinese, Turks and all Oriental people in this description. Kant admitted as educable and capable of progress in the arts and sciences only the "white" Europeans whom he considered as the embodiment of true humanity and superior to all others. By making European humanity the humanity per excellence, Kant excluded all other races and skin colours from the kingdom of humanity and consequently from universal philosophy. Once again, all other groups outside the West were excluded from ruling, dominating and instead were to be ruled and dominated.

In a similar pattern to Hume and Kant, George Hegel based his own exclusion of other species of men from universal philosophy on his distinction between philosophy and religion. Hegel granted humanity to only the Westerner because such had history and development whereas others did not. He

also went ahead to exclude other races from the universal philosophy of history on the ground that they could not rationalize and consequently cannot have a philosophy. These other races were thus excluded from mutual recognition on the basis that they lack culture, humanity and civilization.¹³ The result was the exclusion and absence of Africa and Asia from the lecture hall and seminar rooms of philosophy, after the period of the death of Hegel, thereby legitimizing the European canon of philosophy and scientific appropriation of exclusionism as being natural.

It is worth noting that Franz Fanon, Carothas, Gobineau and Montesquieu all excluded Africans and other non-westerners from the kingdom of humanity because they lacked reason and in the place of reason had passion.¹⁴ On these accounts, the philosophers argued that they did not have a philosophy. In other words, there was nothing like non-Western philosophy. An argument which Martin Heidegger supported his argument that there is no philosophy other than the Western one and that philosophy can be done only in Greek and German.¹⁵ In confirmation of this stance, Heidegger further categorically said in a lecture at *Lerisy-la Salle*, France, in 1995, that “the often heard expression ‘western-European philosophy’ is, in truth, a tautology”. His reason was that philosophy is Greek in its nature and this meant that, in origin, the nature of philosophy is of such a kind that it first appropriated the Greek world, and only it, in order to unfold.¹⁶ While the position of Fanon, Gobineau, Carothas and Montesquieu did not exclude fellow Westerners, the position held by Heidegger not only excluded Africans, Chinese and Native Americans from philosophy but also fellow Westerners who are not Germans. Clearly seen, the denial of the existence of non-Western philosophy was a result of the scientization of philosophy and racism.

It should be noted that the attitude that philosophy has a Greek beginning was introduced in the late eighteenth century by historians.¹⁷ This period witnessed the collection and transportation of manuscripts to Europe and which were translated into European languages, creating room for scientific appropriation, by Europeans. The names, Indo-European, Indo-Germanic, and Aryan were all coined in the 19th century to signify the relation between the languages and to prove that they descended from the same mother language, as that of Greek, Latin, Gothic and Celtic languages.¹⁸ Besides, scholarly inquiry into the exclusion of non-European philosophies from the history of philosophy yields only little explanation. Such an attempt to exclude non-European thought from the history of philosophy is problematic and requires philosophical and historical inquiry. And this is so because if one admits that reason is universal then, it is indeed a tension that its history should be localized. It is, therefore, necessary for clarity to be made on when and how the history of philosophy

became the story of Europe of the West, Greeks and Germans.¹⁹ This paper therefore dares to hold that these were indeed, based on exclusionism and racist ideological considerations. Nevertheless, the development in the writings of some of these Western philosophers claiming monopoly to the ability to philosophize primarily led to the different levels of exclusionism globally and even among non-western philosophers and philosophies.

By placing philosophy in a position of honour ('honorific conception of philosophy') modern exclusionism emerged and the African thinkers in what is called 'African Philosophy' sought to offer a reply to the hegemonic claim of Europe. In other words, it is the quest to prove that the Africans can philosophize that works defending the existence of African philosophy and consequently Afrocentrism arose. The ideals of Nkrumah, Senghor, Nyerere, Awolowo, Azikiwe, Asouzu and the like were all responses to the place of honour given philosophy as the highest expression of humanity. Okolo captures this fact when he argued that his interest in pursuing an academic venture or of coming into the debate of the human project was to prove and grant the status of humanity, personhood or "otherness" (of a human being) to the African.²⁰ And to do so, was to prove that the African has philosophy, can philosophize and consequently could 'reason' and should therefore not be excluded from the kingdom of humanity. Today, it is accepted that indeed there is African philosophy and that Africans are humans just like the West and there have been several strives to ensure the inclusiveness of all people notwithstanding their race, ethnic background, nationality, etc. Nevertheless, it would be worthwhile to ask and to know if the position of the Enlightenment Age affected human relationships in Africa and in Nigeria particularly and how. The philosophical works of this era gave impetus for Africa's colonization and though colonization seems to have become a thing of the past, it leaves the mind puzzled as to whether the tenets of this era, one of which is exclusionism, have gone with colonialism or whether it is still lodging within just as the side effects of colonialism rampages throughout Africa and Nigeria particularly.

Exclusionism in Africa: Nigeria: A Case Study

Hegel argued that history is the progression of the World Spirit (the Absolute Mind, God as He is in Himself) as it manifests itself in man. This *Spirit* yearns for actualization and self-authentication, which requires some degree of entanglement of consciousness with the dialectical order. According to Hegel, there are four historical worlds: Oriental, Greek, Roman, and German.²¹ Hegel's four cultures or civilizations did not include Africa because Africa is unhistorical; it has an undeveloped spirit that is

still involved in the conditions of mere nature; it is devoid of morality, religion, and political constitution. For Hegel, any historical system should treat Africa as a land where consciousness has not yet realized any objective existence.²² As a result, Africans are excluded from the philosophical realm. They haven't mastered the ability to grasp the concept in its objectivity and universality, because the concept is the expression and reality of the essence. Because Africa exists outside of the idea that becomes consciousness, black consciousness cannot reach an abstract level. Therefore, Hegel believed that Europe's enslavement and colonization of Africa is justified. Hegel divides Africa into three parts: Africa proper (the territory south of the Sahara), European Africa (the territory north of the Sahara), and Egypt (the territory connected to Asia). "Africa Proper," according to Hegel, is "the land of childhood, which lying beyond the day of self-conscious history is enveloped in the dark mantel of Night".²³ This paper refutes these claims of Hegel and the classification of Africa considering it as illogical and unsound. As Adegbindin argued, it is geographically, historically, and culturally unsound to divide Africa into three parts. This is because, by implying racially that the real Africa is south of the Sahara, while geographically asserting that Africa is a continent, European ethnocentrism traps itself in contradictions.²⁴ Africa is, in fact, a continent. Furthermore, the term "European Africa" does not exist.

What is important in the preceding paragraph is the fact that colonization was birthed by exclusionism, which was incorporated into philosophy by the Enlightenment philosophers. Even though today Africa appears free from colonization, are they also free from exclusionism? Is the concept of social-self a form of exclusionism that was retained in Africa? The concept of the African social-self was a product of leading intellectuals that constructed a socio-ontological image of the African as a being that is not as human, as the European. But, even within Africa, there exist basically two social-selves: social-self according to nationality and social-self according to ethnicity. An examination into these further social-selves will unearth a denial of social-self to certain individuals (albinos, outcasts, osus, slaves, and so on, prevalent in Africa before colonization) because, of their features. So, within the shared African experience of social-self, there still exist differentiations and exclusions, some which predated Africa's colonization and others a result of colonization. Hence this paper does not fully but partly blame the European, as a social-self for both African classifications of social-selves: social-self according to nationality and social-self according to ethnicity. This argument is made on the basis that in the attempt to enshrine the primordial social-self from the withdrawing European colonizer several competing primordial social-self arose. In the course of this

tantrum, the European constructed another social-self to make members of a primordial social-self see and treat members of another primordial social-self within their country as the “other” (one different from me and who threatens my development). This can be seen in the statement often attributed to English imperialism: divide and rule as well as in the writing of Hegel which divided the continent of Africa into three: Africa proper (the territory south of the Sahara), European Africa (the territory north of the Sahara), and Egypt (the territory connected to Asia). The African social self does not necessarily have to be limited to ethnicity and tribe but rather to a broader self. In other words, in a quest by some African intellectuals to defend the African ontology, identity and philosophy and to evade the exclusionism in the writing of some Western philosophers, they created the idea of an African social self and this has in a way brought about the practice of exclusionism within Africa and between Africans.

Taylor while delivering his keynote address at a conference organized by the Department of Philosophy, University of Nigeria, Nsukka in partnership with William Amo and Ifeanyi Menkiti Centre for Philosophy and Public Affairs and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, (virtual) on 30th March 2023 supported the above fact when he observed that many countries in Africa, including his own native Liberia, continue to struggle with the challenges of deep and historic fractionalization and exclusions of diverse social, political, and religious groups. He added that for African nations under European colonial yoke, such distinctions existed on the bases of race (White vs. Black), ideas of civilizations, (‘civilized vs. ‘natives’) and power (i.e., colonized vs colonizers, and metropolises vs. colonies). Strikingly, he also noted that these distinctions also existed between ethnic and religious native African communities as well, for example, between Hausa-Fulani, Igbo, and Yoruba, just to name a few. From his own home country Liberia, such distinctions also existed between Vais, Kpelles, Loma, Gios, Mano, Mandingos, and a host of other African ethnic polities. He blamed this diverse exclusion practice on Liberia’s unique circumstance of having been founded by a small community of Afro-American and Afro-Caribbean emigrants which created another layer of distinction and differentiation between settler communities (commonly known as Americo-Liberians) and native Africans, and which has for so long dogged their national existence.²⁵

This attitude is akin to the European construction of the African as the ‘other’ (inferior, belonging to a different group). Thus, arise exclusion as the best way to self-preservation through the conceptualization of human beings that belong to another social-self (Igbo, Hausa, Yoruba, south-

south, south-east, Kaduna south and Kaduna north, Christian, Muslim, etc), as the dispensable “other”. Nigeria exemplifies this social-self of exclusionism²⁶ where the Hausa sees himself as born to rule and the Igbo man sees the Hausa as an enemy that impedes his progress and development thereby resulting in the issue of tribalism and nepotism witnessed in the Nigerian community. One of the underlying psychological definitions of the social self is the capacity to interact with, relate to, and perceive oneself in relation to others. An extended definition of exclusionism is the practice of being exclusive; a mentality characterized by the disregard for opinions and ideas which are different from one’s own, or the practice of organizing entities into groups by excluding those entities which possess certain traits. Inevitably then, one of the growing tensions in Nigeria is a result of exclusionism not just in terms of politics and policies but in terms of ideologies and philosophy. Prior to the amalgamation of the northern and southern protectorate in Nigeria in 1914 both the northern and southern regions had their different ideologies and philosophies and as such each region in seeking identity has formed its different social self. However, after the amalgamation till date, the Igbos from the southern region still feel suppressed due to exclusionism by the Northern region and had on one occasion or the other tried to break away from this amalgamation.

Nigeria is a melting pot of people with many social identities. A Nigerian may identify with any of the following social identities as defined by the local government, state of origin, ethnic group, religion, political party, or area. Because of the existence of such social identities, the question of whether the concept of national identity can be considered to be valid in Nigeria and how such various loyalties may conflict with one another becomes essential.²⁷

Ethnic exclusionism is so high in Nigeria and it is of no difference from that of Hegel, Kant and the rest who attempted to exclude Africans and other non-western philosophies from humanity and the universal history of philosophy. In fact, exclusionism was the major in-thing in the just concluded Nigeria’s Presidential Election. The Igbos were majorly disenfranchised, in the same manner people in the southern region were disenfranchised. There was also exclusion on the basis of party choice (political exclusion). The citizens who exercised their freedom to vote for Labour Party were excluded from voting and the votes of those who voted were largely either not counted or were given to the other parties (Mbah, Nwangwu & Ugwu, 2019).

From a personal experience, I (Ukwuoma) have read and heard university graduates who argued in one of our online (WhatsApp group) platforms that they would not vote for one who did not know how to speak their native/local language (mother tongue). Specifically, these individuals argued that because one of the candidates for the governorship position could not speak the Yoruba language he was not qualified to be voted for and elected as governor of one of the western states in Nigeria. Furthermore to the argument, another person said that he would not vote for a candidate for public office who did not know how to speak the Igbo language. The logic went thus: without the native language (Igbo, Yoruba, etc) such a candidate for governorship office would be unable to understand and communicate with the citizens of the state. By failing to communicate with the citizens in their mother tongue such one fails to understand and identify with the people he desires to serve. As an example, one person used another governorship candidate who speaks to the market people and rural dwellers to show that mother-tongue language is a key factor in determining not just the right choice but also who becomes governor of a state. She further asked: “how is he going to meet with the Obas” in the state, “the traditional rulers, do they speak English in their gatherings?” and follows up by saying that the people prefer one who understands them even while they are suffering than someone who doesn’t understand them. In defence of this view, one said that “you can’t be a leader of a people who you don’t understand or belong to. Speaking someone else’s language shows belonging.” Another said that “someone who feels your pain and speaks your [local] language is better than someone who feels your pain only.”

These arguments do not take note of the fact that belonging to a people or understanding them by means of the local language does not translate to having the competence, capacity and will to govern properly. And that we feel another’s pain and speaking the same local language with him/her does not translate to us doing anything to relieve the individual of his/her pain. Whereas, one who feels my pain only and doesn’t know how to speak my local language could have the will and actually do something to relieve my pain. Such a one is more of a member to me than the former. Besides, their argument is flawed in so many ways and can be placed side by side with a statement from LP gubernatorial candidate for Ebonyi State, Mr. Eze said that anyone who will not vote for Peter Obi is not a genuine Igbo man (Okutu 2023). This is another side of the argument in the last paragraph. How does not voting for Peter Obi not make one a genuine Igbo man? Who is an Igbo man? We can see how these players employ vague fallacies in their divisive campaigns anchored on identity.

Just as one of the opposers of this view held individuals are so crazy in Nigeria that they are so fixated in the most wrong and mundane things. Does speaking one's mother tongue have any consequential relation to good governance? Why have the individuals who know and actually do speak their mother tongue failed woefully in governance as even attested by the citizens? Does speaking the mother tongue of a people equate to being a member of such people? Is language the only thing that shows a sense of belongingness? What about those persons who speak Hausa in the north of Nigeria but are not identified as members of the Hausa community and so do not have any sense of belongingness to the Hausa community? We uphold that in as much as local culture should be preserved and local languages too, it should not become a criterion to occupy public offices whether in the state or federal. To make such a criterion is to apply exclusion in a unit level and one should not be surprised if this argument is used in a more general level. For instance, these individuals find it fitting to exclude a true indigene for a governorship position on the ground that he does not speak the local language or vote one from their tribe but is campaigning for an Igbo to become the president of Nigeria when the individual cannot speak the local languages of the other parts of Nigeria he desires to lead nor even a native of their tribe and ethnicity. Following the line of argument that these classmates of ours have given above, the Labour Party candidate does not qualify to be Nigeria's president, his perceivable competence and capacity notwithstanding.

That Nigerian politicians always play the card of identity politics during campaigns even clearly demonstrating how exclusion is applied in politics. In civil service job placements various levels of identity politics are also witnessed. For example, some are denied jobs on the account that they do not belong to a certain tribe, or ethnic group or do not speak a certain local language.²⁸ By insisting on one speaking a people's local language directly to them or coming from their own community, ethnic background or tribe in order to become their leader the people are showing that they are not open-minded and that we are seriously facing identity politics on the basis of local language and beyond. The world is evolving and while we should not throw away our identity within which culture is also preserved, there is a need for forward movement as the world is progressively seeking a place or world order of inclusiveness without ethnic, national, race, or party-choice identity as a barrier.

Evidently, there is social exclusion—the process where individuals are unable to participate fully in economic, social, political and cultural life.²⁹ Literature that abound indicates that certain attributes increase the risk of exclusionism in Nigeria. People experience social exclusion on the basis of their ideology, party choice, location, gender, religious group, social status, ethnicity, etc. For example,

women in Nigeria have restricted access to employment, education, health services, legal rights and public participation. However, the practice of women's exclusion isn't peculiar to Nigeria nor did it start today. Simon de Beauvoir building on Sartre's freedom argued that authenticity lies in extending freedom to other human beings. Against, Plato and Aristotle (Plato excluded women from politics because they do not share the same status and dignity as men³⁰, Aristotle argued that women are subject and inferior, and lack authority³¹ Beauvoir argued that women do not have an inferior status in relation to men. In *The Second Sex*, Beauvoir described the woman as an "inessential other," who has been subjugated, smothered and denied recognition by the man. Authenticity for Beauvoir then amounted to the woman's recognition as an equal subject, a claim of a certain freedom in which the woman finds her voice, and distinguishes herself as a subject in a chauvinistic world—consummation of reciprocal recognition. Thus, authentic existence is the woman's fight for her identity, instead of melting into the "crowd," world of men.³² But again, Beauvoir's sole interest was in granting the same status and recognition given to the male folk to the women of Europe (Whites) and not to people of other cultures, different skin colours and historical backgrounds. Besides, she failed to take cognizance of the fact that even among the women-folk exclusion is still evident and needs to be addressed. However, her philosophy influenced many contemporary women's emancipation works and even the movement for gender equality, feminism and the like.

Conclusion

In the Enlightenment philosophers' philosophies was found the flowering of reason. However, the worst thing of this period was that not only did exclusion take a much deeper and philosophically scientific undertone, exclusionism and discrimination of human beings on the level of mere skin colour and immaterial features were given philosophical importance. In these enlightenment philosophers one also found the transposition of inferiority that was at one time only among Europeans to people of other races and nationalities. This paper has highlighted how scholars such as Kant, Hegel, Meiners, Hume, and von Humboldt radicalized global exclusionism. However, it was also pointed out that exclusionism in Europe predates the Enlightenment Era and in Africa and Nigeria, particularly predates the period of colonization. Different forms of exclusionism were highlighted and it is fair to conclude that the tendency to exclude is part of human nature and this arises in the quest for power and control, to identify oneself as superior and the 'other' human being as inferior. Evidently, inequalities and exclusionary politics are based on identity. It is precisely this politicization

of ethnic, national, and religious identities that former colonial powers employed to avert the rise of cohesive, united, and strong African nationalities and solidarities. The result has been a continent intensely and deeply fragmented upon social, ethnic, and religious fault lines. These socio-political distinctions intensify exclusionism in Africa, Nigeria and elsewhere.

Footnotes

¹ Peter K. J. Park. *Africa, Asia and the History of Philosophy: Racism in the Formation of the Philosophical Canon, 1780-1830* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2013), xii-xiii.

² Justin Weinberg. "A Way Western Philosophy is Racist" (2017), Accessed February 10, 2023 <https://dailynous.com/201711/01/way-western-philosophy-racist/>

³ Ben Ami Scharfstein, "The Western Blindness to Non-Western Philosophies (Comparative Philosophy)," *The Paideia Archive: Twentieth World Century Congress of Philosophy*, Vol. 5 (1998): 102-108 <https://www.bu.edu/wcp/Papers/Comp/CompScha.htm> Accessed February 10, 2023.

⁴ Park, *Africa, Asia and the History of Philosophy: Racism in the Formation of the Philosophical Canon, 1780-1830*, xii-xiii.

⁵ Brian Duignan, "Enlightenment," *Encyclopedia Britannica* (2022), Accessed 10 March 2023 <https://www.britannica.com/event/Enlightenment-European-history>

⁶ Ikeagwuchi I. Ukwuoma, "Okolo's Concept of African Being-with and Heidegger's Idea of Mitsein" (2021) Master of Art Dissertation, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, 7-8.

⁷ Ikeagwuchi I. Ukwuoma, "Okolo's Concept of African Being-with and Heidegger's Idea of Mitsein" (2021), 8; Benjamin H. Isaac. *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006): 317.

⁸ David Hume, David. "Of National Character," in his *Essays and Treatises on Several Subjects*, 4th edition (London: A Millar, 1873): 277-300.

⁹ John O. Oguejiofor and Ngozi Ezenwa-Ohaeto, "Contemporary African Philosophy, Identity and The Question of African Languages," in *Ogirisi: A New Journal of African Studies*, Vol. 11 (2015): 1-18 <http://dx.doi.org/10.4314/og.v11i1.1>

¹⁰ Ovet Nwosimiri, "Do the Works of the Nationalist-Ideological Philosophers Undermine Hume's and Kant's Ideas about Race?" *SAGE Open* (2017): 1-11 Accessed February 15, 2023

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