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Contents

Notes for Contributors	iv
Editorial Note	v
List of Contributors	vi

1.	Nigeria-France Interplay: The Role Of Francophone African Theatre In The Training Of French Graduates In Nigerian Universities Raufu Adebisi	1
2.	Return to the Motherland and Coming to Terms with Exile: The Motif of Homecoming in Yema Lucilda Hunter's <i>Road to Freedom</i> and Isidore Okpewho's <i>Call Me by My Rightful Name</i> Remy Oriaku.....	26
3.	Transition from Slave Labour to Free Labour in British Caribbean B. Sofela	46
4.	Historical Facts and Ethnic Dimension in the Caucasian Conflict Chuka Chukwube.....	63
5.	A Critical Analysis of Populist Aesthetics in Soyinka's <i>The Beatification of Area Boy</i> Adebayo Mosobalaje	74
6.	Politeness as Power in Post Office Service Encounter in Ibadan Metropolis, Nigeria I.E. Arua	113
7.	Contextual Tonal Interaction in Spoken YNE (Yoruba Nigerian English): Evidence for variety Eunice Fajobi.....	134
8.	Conceptualizing Continuity and Shifts in the African and the Black Diaspora Performance Traditions Sola Olorunyomi	219

9.	A Study on Tacitus and His Use of Rumour in the Annals Gill Oluwatosin Adekanbi	249
10.	A Historico-Cultural Trail of Cultural Distance in Intercultural Postcolonial Relations and Translation: Between the Igbo and German Cultures, Between Africa and the Euro-West Joseph N Eke	264
11.	Un Prince dans la république de Kourouma : regard sur le conflit des valeurs culturelles dans <i>Les Soleils des indépendances</i> Samuel Dipo Ajewole	306
12	Elements of Egyptian Culture in Greek Civilization Doyin Odebowale	320

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A Historico-Cultural Trail of Cultural Distance in Intercultural Postcolonial Relations: Between the Igbo African and German European Cultures.

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Abstract

Cultural Distance (CD), the mean of proximity and distance resultant from cultural difference, is critical to intercultural postcolonial relations of asymmetry and textual interpretive practices like translation, media imaging of the other and the like. This is because it potentially affects interpersonal, intergroup, business and interstate relations. It can also affect the understanding of cultural text units, images and contexts, as well as attitude to and reception of the otherness of the culturally different. Whereas CD has been measured by variables subjected to mathematical calculations, this paper used the spatial and temporal convergence and divergence between the Igbo African and the German European cultures as a subset of that between Europe and Africa in general. Adopting a historical comparative and textual analyses of data, it suggests a view of CD in an intercultural postcolonial context between Europeans and Africans in the relations of Europeans to their traditional pasts and to the African traditional cultural other.

Key words: Cultural distance, Intercultural postcolonial relations, Igbo African culture, German European culture, African-European relations,

1. Introduction

This paper historically investigates cultural distance within the postcolonial context of African-European intercultural (and race) relations. It traces the roots of German tribal/traditional culture and the belief system that informed their traditional institutions, values and organisations. These cultural underpinnings of the society are set in comparison and contrast to those of the Igbo. The departure of the German European from the comparative commonalities of culture with the Igbo African is traced with the consequent creation of cultural distance between both cultures. The paper concludes on how to solve the problem of distance and achieve mutual cooperative coexistence between African and European cultures and peoples.

1.1 Conceptual Background and Problem of Study

This subsection briefly and concisely reviews the idea or concept of cultural distance and its focus on the intercultural postcolonial relations context. Cultural distance (CD), the mean of convergence and divergence between different cultures or the measure of the difference between one culture and another, is recognised as a critical factor in various relations of cultural encounter. It is strongly emphasised in international business investment and management where it is understood more as a construct for measuring numerical differences in cultural values. These values are relevant to making and explaining investment decisions regarding investment destinations, mode of entry, mode of operations and marketing for multinational and international joint venture enterprises (see Shenkar, 2001:520). It is also important in understanding and making managerial choices and understanding behaviours regarding, for instance, reward allocation, human resource practices, strategic choices and negotiation styles, among others (see West & Graham, 2004:240).

Among the numerical measures of culture used in the cultural distance construct are Hofstede's composite variables of Individualism, Power-distance, Uncertainty Avoidance, and Masculinity (1984); and a fifth orthogonal dimension of cultural values, the "Confucian Dynamism" or Long-term Orientation produced by Michal Bond, et al's Chinese value survey (cf. in West & Graham, 2004:241-242). West and Graham developed a linguistic-based measure of cultural distance that could be linked to the cultural-value dimensions of Hofstede. The linguistic-based measure relies on the hypothesis that the language a person learns as a child influences that person's values. Thus the extent of difference in cultural values is associated with or is directly influenced by the linguistic distance between cultures (246-7).

These measurable variables of cultural differences account for values as they are manifested in daily social and corporate interactions and as they impact on cultural encounter contexts including those of international business investment and management, textual interpretative practices like translation, imaging of the other in the communicative media, and others. They do not, however, explain the process of cultural distancing that creates differing values and worldviews and the emotional attachments to them which lead to the acceptance or rejection, affirmation or devaluation of other cultures in such contexts as intercultural postcolonial relations contexts – the contexts of asymmetry, inequality and conflict in intercultural contacts and relations between former coloniser/imperial cultures and societies and former colonised societies and cultures.

1.2 Methodology

This paper deploys historical comparative and textual analyses to critically explore the dynamics and sequence of worldviews and cultural patterns that diverge the Igbo African and German European cultures and peoples. It further explores how this difference or divergence is (mis)managed to create distance

between both peoples and cultures and the realities that this distance engenders in intercultural perception and relations of asymmetry. This Igbo-German analogy equates a subset of African-European cultural distancing that demonstrates a process of cultural distancing of the other in an intercultural postcolonial context that is the result of a historical process whereby contemporary European culture, in distancing itself from its own tribal culture, distances itself from the otherness of the African culture that links to or reminds of that European tribal past. The Igbo African traditional culture, well reflected in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (TFA) and *Arrow of God* (AOG) and affirmed in other cultural texts, and the German European traditional culture assessed through secondary literature were used for this study. The foregoing Achebean texts are relevant because of their cultural anthropological narratives that serve as a mosaic of cultural texts and intertexts that cohere Igbo cultural details of worldview, norms and values, customs, institutions and much else to reveal the Igbo African cultural self.

2. Tracing German Tribal Culture From "Germania": Institutions, Beliefs, Values And Worldview

From their geographical origin in southern Scandinavia and northern 'Germany', between the Elbe and Oder rivers, within the years 2000 and 1000 B.C. (Boer, 1976:122) to their appearance in history at about the mid-first century BC (Ozment, 2004:17) when they established themselves in the eastern Rhine valley within or along the borders of the Roman Empire, the German people (then collectively known as Germanians, Germanic peoples or Germanic tribes)¹, were neither racially uniform nor transregionally united but existed in composite tribes.

2.1. Social and Security Organisations

The Germanic tribes developed a warrior culture with the “comitatus” being the most significant aspect of their socio-military structure. The “comitatus” was a retinue of warriors that voluntarily attached itself to a warrior-lord or king through oaths of loyalty. This retinue militarily protected the lord or king, who in turn provided the protection of the “comitatus” to individuals and rewarded them with wealth (Tenbrock, 1979; Hooker, 2004). The “comitatus” was thus a sophisticated military organisation built entirely on the economic logic of reciprocity on which the Germanic tribal economy was also based.

The warrior lords or kings were rulers of the Germanic tribes; they were “leading men” (in West German dialect, *kuning*, “leaders of the family”), whom Romans variously called *principes*, *duces*, and *regas*. They were chosen in times of war by an assembly of nobles and common warriors (the tribal host) from among the most outstanding men based on the criteria of royal birth, family service, and exceptional valour. Only such men might hold that exalted position (see Tenbrock, 1979:10; Ozment, 2004:18). Before contact with the Romans, these German tribal leaders ruled more by persuasion than by coercion and maintained social peace by equitable divisions of land and wealth within the tribe (Ozment, 2004:19). Julius Ceaser, among early observers of the Germanic tribes, is quoted to have described “their governance as informal and inconsistent, their society communal and egalitarian, their military tactics haphazard and ignoble”; ignoble, meaning their ability to “compose”, that is, to surprise and ambush, in the battlefield (Ozment, 2004:18).

In the reciprocal economy of the Germanic tribes, goods and services were distributed as gifts in an expression of the social responsibility and mutual obligation inhering between members of the group. The social structure also consisted of class distinctions between the Freeman (nobles and commoners) who had the right to bear arms and participate in the tribal council or

assembly; Freedmen (serfs) comprising subjugated aliens with limited rights and freemen who had fallen into dependence or serfdom, either by gambling away their freedom or selling themselves for food during times of famine, and Slaves employed as domestic servants and administrators of large estates. The hereditary aristocracy and nobility dominated the tribal assembly. Serfs and subject peasants tilled their estates, craftsmen produced their jewelry, and ceramics and funerary offerings and sacrifices were made to their burials (Tenbrock, 1979:10).

However, the crucial social bond among the Germanic peoples was the family, especially the extended family of husbands, wives, children, brothers, sisters, cousins and grandparents. In addition to working the land together and passing it down to future generations, the extended family also provided protection, which was sorely needed in the violent atmosphere of these early times. Times of peace seemed much like times of war. Every man carried his weapons about with him and used them freely. Human life was held cheap, and a quarrel was often settled by the sword. There was no strong government to punish wrong and protect the weak, so men had to protect and help themselves (Harding, 2006). It was regarded as a universal duty to afford protection to one's kinsmen, to assist them in the redress of wrong and to exact vengeance or compensation in the case of death. Germanic laws were personal. When a homicide occurred, vengeance was regarded as a sacred duty incumbent on the relatives and, sometimes, at least, the lord also of the slain man. An injury by one person against the other could lead to a blood feud in which the family of the injured party took revenge on the family of the wrong doer. Feuds could lead to savage acts of revenge, such as hacking off of hands or feet, gouging out eyes or slicing off ears and noses (Duiker and Spielvogel 1998:405).

The system for redressing wrong including murder was the payment of the "*Wergeld*", which was the value of a person in monetary terms based on social status. It was a fine paid by a wrongdoer to the family of the murdered or to the injured. However, the fine is light, especially for those not belonging to the nobility. There was no fine for killing a serf (Tenbrock, 1979:11). Guilt is determined under Germanic law by compurgation and the ordeal. Compurgation involved the swearing of an oath by the accused person backed up by a group of twelve or twenty-five 'oath helpers', who would also swear that the accused was telling the truth. The ordeal was based on the idea of divine intervention: divine forces would not allow an innocent person to be harmed (Duiker and Spielvogel, 1998:405).

2.2. Settlement and Family Life

These early Germans were organised in clans of fairly nomadic settlements consisting of 100 to 500 persons living in cabins or huts made of wood roughly hewn into boards and timber or of twigs woven together or in caves. A settlement can move when existing pasture was no more sufficient for the entire community. The clan had a legal and defensive significance, while each settlement was a patriarchy inhabited by small families whose fields, homes and cattle were private property, divided among the heirs in the event of death. Men built the homestead and sheds for livestock and tilled crops, fought or hunted and when not doing any of those would mostly be found by the fire sleeping or engaged in gambling, while the cultivation of the field and garden, the care of the home and domestic animals, and the upbringing of the children fell chiefly to the women in a natural division of work (Tenbrock, 1979:10; Harding, 2006). Marriage was monogamous; adultery was forbidden to both partners in marriage, but was severely punished in the case of the wife, "an offended husband could whip and even kill an adulterous wife" (Cole, 2004:5).

They lived in a natural forest environment in which vast and gloomy pine and deciduous forests that worsened the humidity covered mountains and plains like a virgin forest. The few

villages and farmsteads as well as the infrequent roads that crudely cut through the thick woods were concealed behind the impenetrability of their trunks. These Germanians were never colonized by Rome because Julius Caesar believed that such a country "inhabited by barbarians with its thick forest teeming with unicorns and other mysterious animals could never be colonized and was best ignored" (Kitchen' 1996:16).

2.3. Religion and Worship

Germanic tribal religion was both polytheist and pantheist. It consisted of "a form of nature worship in which everything was full of gods"(Gerrish,1987:445): water, spring, stream and river, mountain, tree and plant, air, wind and storm either manifest divine powers friendly to man or they manifest superterrene forces and powers against him. Although they share a religious awe of the divine, "attribution of certain divine powers do not necessarily carry with it attribution of divine personality" (Tenbrock,1979:11). Cole, however, notes that personal relationships did exist in certain cases between the Germans and some of their gods: "Germanic gods were perceived as superhuman and powerful, with whom tribesmen had a very personal and mutual trust, service and loyalty – except, of course, when particular gods were duplicitous, selfish and cruel" (2004:6).

Consequently, there was no special place set aside for the worship of the divine; no specific picture, no shrine, no special representation in wood, stone or statute in which the divine was especially dwelling. Religious practice was largely shamanistic. Prayer, sacrifice and religious worship took place in sacred groves and, sometimes, by bodies of water offered by a man, or mostly, a woman who was believed to enjoy a special relationship with the divine (Hooker, 1996; Tenbrock, 1979:12). Germanic tribes approached their worship in an appeasement

mode that sometimes included human sacrifice, often but not always, prisoners of war. Among the Germanic tribe of the Cimbri, white-clad priestesses supervised the ritual of suspending the victims over a large bronze cauldron, cutting their throats and letting the blood flow into the vessel. Human sacrifice also included drowning young girls (Cole, 2004:6).

In the pantheon of Germanic tribal gods were *Odin* (*Wotan* or *Woden*), the oldest and most powerful and the chief of the Germanic gods. He was the storm and wind god or the god of the heavens or the sky. He was the principal representative of the forces of nature, but he was also the god that led souls to the afterlife and was the source of all magic and special knowledge (Hooker, 1996) as well as the god of war (Harding, 2006), who would summon warriors that had gloriously fallen in battle to *Valhalla* (hall of the slain) and drink and carouse with them (Oster, 1998: 3). The spear was his emblem. *Odin* was believed to have been married to *Freya*, the goddess of fertility, considered the only important goddess of the Germanians (Carr, 2007). However, Reaves (2004) records that *Odin* was married to the polynymous earth-goddess or mother-earth, *Jord* (variously known as *Frigg*, *Nerthus*, *Fj"rgyn*, and *Hlodyn*), who was the foremost goddess, the patron of marriage and motherhood and the goddess of love; they also gave birth to *Thor*, *Balder*, and *Hodr*. From a marriage with *Audir* (also *Njord*), the god of commerce and the seas, *Frigg* or *Jord*, the earth-goddess, also gave birth to *Frey* and *Freya*, the goddess of love and fertility. *Freya* was the most beautiful and propitious of the goddesses; she is the patron goddess of crops and birth, the symbol of sensuality. *Frigg* was thus the mother of gods. She also possesses the power of prediction.

Next in the pantheon was *Thor* (*Donar*), the god of thunder and lightning. He is the Germanic god of strength who defended the gods and people against the dangerous giants in Germanic myths (Reaves, 2004; Carr, 2007). He carried a big hammer. *Loki* was the German god of tricks, who could transform himself into lots of different shapes if he wanted. He was the father of

Fenrir, the giant wolf and of *Hel*, a goddess who ruled the kingdom of the dead. Then was *Tyr*, the god of war treaties and contracts, of keeping promises and of law. He is a god of order as opposed to chaos (Carr, 2007).

Besides the gods mentioned above, there were others in the pantheon, and both heaven and earth were populated with nymphs, spirits, elves, goblins, witches, werewolves ranging from friendly to the hostile, "and spirits of the dead were believed to live on in trees and waters near the locales where they had dwelt in life" (Cole,2004:6).

2.4. Myth of Creation

The Germanians were also held together by a common myth of creation and origin by which they believed that "the world started with nothingness" and one primeval giant being emerged out of the nothingness. His name was *Yamir* (also *Twisto* or *Tuisto*), an anthropomorphic, androgynous primeval being, who engendered the dreadful brood of frost giants. *Yamir* was fed by a cow, *Audhumla*, which formed out of melting rime. This cow made another primal being, *Buri*, which she shaped out of the salty block of ice from which she fed. *Buri* begets a son, *Borr*. *Borr* marries *Bestla*, the daughter of the giant *Bolporn*. *Borr* and his wife beget three sons: *Odinn*, *Vili* and *Ve*. *Odin* and his brothers killed *Tuisto*, the primeval giant. The flow of blood gushing from his wounds drowns all the frost giants except *Bergelmir*, who escaped mysteriously with his family to continue the race. *Odin* and his brothers created the world from the dead body of *Yamir*, the earth from his flesh, the mountains from his bones, the sea and the lakes from his blood, the sky from his skull, his hair the trees, his brain the clouds (Polome,1995:522-533). They also created man and woman from two pieces of drift wood (Carr, 2007).

The Germanians called the main part of the world where people lived, 'middle-earth', and they believed that a big ocean surrounded it. Somewhere within middle earth, they said was *Asgard*, where the gods lived. You got there by crossing the rainbow like bridge. The world of the dead, *Hel*, was somewhere in the cold north and sometimes associated with a world of giants, who attacked fertility goddesses and carried them off to *Persephone* (Carr, 2007). They also conceived of a cosmic race of giants separate from the gods and with whom the gods made a war that eventually culminated in their destruction in the 'Götterdaemmerung' (twilight of the gods). These gods and giants were considered to be beyond good and evil; they were powerful and awe-inspiring; however, they were neither eternal nor omnipotent (Cole, 2004:6).

3. Convergence and Divergence Between the German and Igbo Tribal Cultures

The possibility of comparison and contrast between the German and the Igbo traditional cultures exist in the egalitarian and communal organisation of their societies; in the appeal of both cultures to the divine, the supernatural, the transcendental and the spiritual; in their location of man between the divine and nature; their recognition of life beyond the material life and of the continued existence of the dead as spirits capable of presence and involvement in physical life; their possession of pantheon of gods with anthropomorphic characters, for instance, we note in the narration of Igbo tribal culture that *Eru*, the god of wealth, goes to visit *Idemili* or the other deities (Achebe, 1964: 8-9), and that the mother of *Agwu* (a goddess) gave birth also to madness (Achebe 1964: 202).

Furthermore, except for *Chukwu*, the supreme God and creator of all things, and *Chi* in Igbo culture, gods in the religion of both cultures are not eternal. Both cultures have a sense of communality, support and defence that arise from the kinship of the extended family; however, the Igbo traditional culture locates this kinship within a broader communality with deep

spiritual significance and implications. Both cultures are characterised by an attitude of independence and individual self-assertion, but within the clan and community, seen in the democratic spirit of participation in the tribal assembly – the Igbo are traditionally organised in village republics in which collective decisions are taken in the communal assembly of all men and elders. Both traditional cultures have an autochthonous myth of origin, and each of them is capable of that bizarreness of conduct, like human sacrifice, that can be understood and explained only within its own internal logic.

In the ancient traditional culture, the Germanians, like the Igbo, have no kings only “warrior leaders” who must continue to be powerful and provide leadership in war times, in battle and at critical points in communal life or be dropped as leaders. Both societies are class-structured and included slaves and, significantly both traditional cultures had the comparative ‘(dis)honour’ of being labelled “primitive” and “barbaric” by imperial powers: Rome, in the case of the Germans, and Europe, in the case of the Igbo.

Both cultures were patriarchal; however, marriage was dominantly polygamous in the Igbo traditional culture. Furthermore, though both cultures acknowledge the wonder of nature and have each a pantheon of gods and goddesses dedicated to each aspect of mysterious nature, the Igbo gods and goddesses, beneficent or malign, are lesser divinities (*Alusi*), who are properly seen merely as particular manifestations in time and space of the omnipresence and omnipotence of ‘*Chukwu*’, “as shaped and fleshed out by cosmic forces acting on the human perception” (Umezuruike, Iroaganachi, Nwaogugu, Agba, Elezue, 1989: ix). *Chukwu* is the one supreme immanent Being; God, who is creator of all things, including man, spirits and the lesser gods and whose awesomeness nature reflects; and human nature instinctively

seeks, asserts and confesses its author. *Chukwu* is high above His creatures in nature "but present among and in communion with them in action and influence" (Iwe, 1989:11). However, as Echeruo (1979:20) makes clear:

God among the Igbo is certainly nothing like the God of the Christians. ... He has no heaven and no troop of angels and saints ministering to him. He has promulgated no Decalogue, and He has not appointed a day he will judge the living and the dead. In fact, the dead are not dead...because among the Igbo there is continual coming and going from this life to the other and back [in reincarnations].

Iwe (1989:8) presents the basic elements of Igbo traditional religion as a geometrical triangle with '*Chukwu*' at the apex; the two sides symbolizing the good and evil divinities, while the baseline represents '*chi*' and the ancestors. Iwe also gives a list of and comments on the major deities of the Igbo pantheon of divinities (1989:12-16). The first is "*Ala*" (*AniorAne*), the goddess of fertility and custodian of public morality in cooperation with the spirit of the departed, venerable and deified ancestors. Echeruo (1979:19) refers to *Ala* as "one divinity beyond the capriciousness of Igbo men ...which no man or woman and no community could afford to offend, much less discard..."

Next is *Ahiajoku*, the god of yam and farm work. It is the custodian of soil fertility and good harvest; *Anyanwu* is the sun god regarded as a benevolent divinity, and prayers are offered to it for good health. The cult of this divinity is, however, more important in the northern Igbo sub-cultural area around Nsukka and Obolafor. *Amadioha* (also *Kamalu* or *Kalu*) is the god of thunder and lightning regarded in Igboland as a divinity of vengeance against the wicked and evildoers. It is *Chukwu*'s minister of justice. As a rule, victims of *Amadioha* are not given normal burial, and their possessions, especially movable property and personal effects, are either alienated or publicly

cast away as refuse. *Igwe* is the god of the sky who sends rain to irrigate the earth. In Igbo mythology, he is the husband of *Ala*, the earth goddess in union with whom the earth is rendered fertile and productive. However, the cult of this divinity is not widespread in Igboland; *Agwu* is the god of medicine, the patron deity of health and divination. *Ekwensu* is the Igbo trickster god of bargains, chaos and change. His symbol is the tortoise. This god is invoked in trade and negotiations and revered as the god of war and victory, who ruled over wicked spirits and the chaotic forces of nature. He was the testing force of *Chukwu*, and death is his companion. The advent of Christianity and the misrepresentation of this deity as *satan* by missionaries supplanted his beneficial characters (see Anabaraonye, 2015).

These gods and divinities were intermediaries to '*Chukwu*' and it was the height of spiritual arrogance and personal and social indiscretion, considered to amount to suicide "to ignore these powerful intermediary spirits by appealing to God [*Chukwu*] directly" (Iwe, 1989:14). *CHI*, as Echeruo (1979:20) rightly explains, "[is] probably one of the most complex theological concepts ever devised to explain the Universe. It is a concept which both accounts for the Universe, and explains Good and Evil, tragedy and good fortune, order and conflict, character and destiny, freewill and metaphysical order". In a closer and more specific individual usage, it refers also to the personal divine essence or "spark of the divine in man" with whose cooperation, action and interaction, auspices and guidance every human being lives out his or her divinely ordained course of life, participates in the divine ordering of the universe and shares in the Supreme Being. It is "the basis and pledge of each man's immortality and reincarnation, and his avenue of communion with his ancestors and posterity" (Iwe, 1989:3, 16). A man's relationship with his '*chi*', as Echeruo notes, "is a very complex one" (see Achebe, 1958:14, 39).

The Igbo practise a type of 'enlightened spiritual pragmatism' by which they are ever prepared to abandon the worship of any god whose relevance to their lives is not sustained. Echeruo (1979:18-19) explains this quite profoundly:

[...] part of the peculiar quality of Igbo life [...] is that the Igbo do not appear to care about churches and temples, and even about gods! This statement will shock many people who would want to simply hear that the Igbo people are a very deeply religious people, which is true. What is equally true is that we are a thoroughly iconoclastic people; that we keep our gods in our hearts and have only an appropriately respectful attitude to the circumstances that surround them. We respect the gods, but, [...], we also expect the gods to respect us humans. We acknowledge the power of the gods, and cultivate that power; but when these gods consistently fail to prove themselves powerful, we reserve the right to discard them and seek out new gods. In fact circumstances greater than the gods themselves will take care of the matter.

The above observation by Echeruo explains the precariousness of the priest's position in Igbo traditional culture. His god can be abandoned by the people, thereby, rendering his priestly position to be of no effect.

Given the relative nexus between the Germanic and Igbo traditional cultures and religion, a German spatially located within the proximity of or sensitive to his own traditional culture would most likely respond with less shock and aversion to the content of Igbo traditional culture or to that of a source text rooted in Igbo traditional culture, especially in view of the affinity of both traditional cultures to the spiritual and the religious and their physical location within 'undisturbed' nature.

4. Towards the Alienation of Germans from their Own Traditional Cultural Self

The cultural distance of Germans today to the comparable Igbo African traditional culture narrated in *TFA* and *AOG* and sketched out above may, therefore, be measured in the distance they stand to their own traditional culture.

4.1. Transformations in Thought and Worldview

The march towards the alienation of Germans from their traditional culture and its pantheistic spiritual inclination began with their encounter with Rome beginning from the third century C.E. when they began to move into the lands of the then Roman empire (Duiker and Spielvogel, 1998:403) to their acceptance of Christianity with its own spiritual heritage bound in one 'personal' supreme God in the catholic church. This acceptance supplanted the animist inclinations of Germans and the worldview, as well as the cultural practices and social order it engendered

The split from the dominant and monolithic Christian worldview that had become the very foundation of Western civilization (Haar, 1961:540) was inaugurated by the spirit of dissent engendered by the protestant reformation (Root, 1978:131). Although the reformation (1517-1648) had not questioned the religious, the spiritual and the monotheistic Christian view of one personal supreme God, who is creator of all, it questioned the infallibility and definitiveness of the Catholic Church's doctrines within Christendom. Its spirit of dissent was, nonetheless, carried into the enlightenment (1650-1800) though first transformed by the mechanical-philosophy of the 17th century which began the alienation of the religious by offering the materialistic worldview that "matter and natural laws of motion explained all phenomena (Machamer and Poppa, 2007).

This secular *Weltanschauung* of science was followed and deepened by the cultural movement of the enlightenment, which approves an understanding of the natural world, including humankind, on the basis of only reason with no possibility of appealing to the supernatural. The enlightenment, whose leading proponent in Germany was Immanuel Kant, not only secularised or dissolved Christian values and worldviews and adopted them as mere ethical principles (Haar, 1961:539-40), but also enthroned rationalism, liberalism, that is, the inviolable dignity and liberty of the individual, as fundamental world views and determinants of attitudes and behaviours. Swart notes that the roots of the philosophy of the enlightenment are “its rehabilitation of the principle of self-interest, its belief in the power of reason, and its distrust of social institutions including religion” (1962:82). This implies, therefore, that the worldview of the enlightenment approves of the individual to act unrestrained by collective norms and values and to exclude every apprehension of reality that appeals to the spiritual and the transcendental that is not accessible to reason. Charles Darwin’s (1809-1882) works on evolution in the 19th century staunchly supported this alienation of the spiritual worldview by demonstrating the possibility that living organisms can be accounted for on a material basis without any need of a biblical creator or supernatural purposes (Johnson, 1997:15-6).

The desire and effort of German Romanticism (1815-1848) to restore to Western civilisation “a spiritually meaningful philosophy of life” and “to reinstate man in his former position as the being ontologically centred between the divine and nature” (Haar, 1961:540) were contained, firstly, in its uncovering of the deeper irrational forces of the human spirit and releasing the yearning of the soul for the lost, the unattainable and disappearing, the religious, spiritual and traditional. Secondly, it emphasised an ‘individuality’, which integrated the individual into an ‘organic *Volk* or *Gemeinschaft*’ (see Lampart, 2004:176; Bendersky, 2004:28-29) and allowed his individual genius to flourish within the norms, beliefs and aspirations of the collective (Karlberg, 1992:337-9). This was in

contrast to the 'individualism' of the enlightenment and liberalism, that would later permit a "social Darwinism" (Karlberg,1992:339) that intensified "the spirit of everyone for himself and himself alone, resulting in a cutthroat competition and a struggle of all against all"(Leroy, 1946 in Swart, 1962: 80).

German Romanticism further foregrounded an ideal of the state that was predicated on a precarious concept of '*das Volk*' that could be radicalised. As Tenbrock puts it:

The romanticist became a political poet. However, since he had no concrete notion of the form the state would take which was one day to form the framework of political activity for the Germans, the "people" as a living organism was transformed into the mystical architect and pillar of an "empire" of indeterminate definition. This new preoccupation with the "people" and its tradition, its "spirit" and its "soil" undoubtedly proved of uncommon poetical fruitfulness and developed forms unknown till then(fairy tales, folk-songs and folk-art), but was not bereft of all political danger since one's own people could easily be elevated to an absolute value (1979:156).

The precursor to this elevation of "one's own people" to an absolute value came in early 20th century with the admixture of the notion of "*das Volk*" with that of "*Lebensraum*" and the organicist view put forward by Friedrich Ratzel, by which "*das Volk*", representative of the nation, was thought of as an 'organism' – a living and expanding community, which could justifiably lay claim to '*Lebensraum*' (living space) the more vigorous its life becomes (Smith,1980:53-54). The romantic worldview, with its cult of the nation, opposed enlightenment

and liberalism and “capitalist modernity” with their callous indifference to all hitherto sacred spiritual values (Rosengarten, 2002).

German Romantic thinking was one of the strands of thought within the German age of classical humanism, also known as German age of idealism in philosophy, located between the birth of G.E. Lessing in 1729 and the death of J.W. Goethe in 1832. The age is regarded as the most glorious period in German cultural history when the foundations for a German national literature, music and philosophy were laid; it, however, was also the age in Germany, which brought “the great shift from religious and otherworldly values to secular and worldly ideals” (Pinson, 1966: 13). All of Lessing, Herder, Goethe, and Schiller promoted a worldview that ultimately pointed to the human element in history and promoted morality and reason, rather than the theological dogma of any religion.

The attempt of Hegel, considered to be the culminating figure of this German age of idealism (Lauer, 1995: 244), to mediate between the rationalism of the 18th century and romanticism’s inclination to nature and the spiritual by synthesizing or at least embracing “the various contradictions and disharmonies of religion and morality” and reconcile “humanity and nature, science and religion” in his dialectic of history led to a “philosophy of nature” that seemed “to reassert the innate pantheistic instinct of the German soul”(Gerrish, 1987: 445). In Hegel’s philosophy, ‘God’ (Hegel’s absolute *Geist* or Spirit) is viewed not as “God within, certainly not a transcendent God without, but the God who ultimately we are ...” (Solomon, 186), that is, God existing “only as actualised in nature and becomes self-conscious only through the consciousness of human beings” (Hardimon, 1994: 51). This means that human beings not as individuals, but as “the ultimate unity of the whole of humanity and of humanity and the world” (Solomon, 1993: 186) are God. However, this absolute spirit is neither the transcendent (Christian) God nor nature nor man, but a fusion of all three such that neither God nor nature nor man possesses

individuality. Solomon notes that the essential element in Hegel's concept of spirit is precisely "this loss of individuality" (1993:187). In this hybrid identity Hegel creates a unity in the progress of history that is to be accessible to reason, and all of God, nature and man can be subjected to the observation and analysis of reason. Solomon further observes the significance of this subsumation of God, nature and man to reason in the Hegelian view and pursuit of a synthesis:

...reason resolves by harmonizing and elevating [...] the disharmonies between self and others, between God and man, between morality and personal inclination, between nature and knowledge. The spirit of absolute knowing is both immanent God and human society. It is also nature ... there is no separating God from nature or from man and it is folly to separate freedom from nature, or morality from society as Kant seemed to have done in his philosophy. (1993:205)

Although the God-nature-man identity conception of Hegel could engender a social theory that made harmony attainable and possible through the expression of solidarity within human community, that is, through the interaction of individuals with each other within the institutions of family, civil society and the modern state, Hegel's philosophy and worldview deny the personal God of the Christians (or of religion), removed him as a vital reality to man, and demystified nature. God and nature became fused in man. Meynagh (2006) notes in this regard that "a very important fact about the character of Hegel's philosophy is the absence of God as a Vital Reality, that is, not only as a matter of cognition but as a driving force of Reality as it is crystallized in the form of existence (be it human or otherwise). ... [and] in Hegel the Gnostic Cosmos turns into a Social Fabric,

which loses its sense of 'wonder' and 'awe' ". The spiritual, the religious, and the mystical including God, became subsumed to human reasoning.

Furthermore, the overall worldview provided by the entire Hegelian thought did not really succeed in removing the tension between reason and religion or faith, and between the individual and community. Hegel had sought to find a logic and inner meaning in the process of history that can be accessible to rational and scientific observation and analysis. However, as Pinson (1996:51) notes, Hegel's emphasis on the idea of development and change, his conception of the '*Volkgeist*' or unique spirit inherent in each national group, his equal elaboration of the idea of the '*Machtstaat*' with its worship of the powerful state as the highest political entity subject to no law but its own, and his acceptance of the Prussian patriarchal state of his own time as the concrete realisation of his political ideal brought him closer to romantic and historical nationalism and conservatism rather than to the liberal, rational and universal tradition of the enlightenment.

Consequently, the synthesis of the Hegelian system was short-lived after his death. It broke up into the idea of the dialectic and the idea of the '*Machtstaat*' that glorified the romantic notion of the nation. The romantic worldview with its notion of the '*Machtstaat*' provided the zest to the Prussian state for the founding of a German nation-state in 1871, but it was finally turned into a despicable monster in the Third Reich of Adolf Hitler, who fused into it a 'misappropriated' concept of '*Lebensraum*' that now emphasised racial purity and domination. Karl Marx took the idea of the dialectic, removed whatever spirituality remained in the Hegelian notion of "*Geist*" and predicated the notion of 'dialectic materialism' by which matter supersedes mind and spirit; nothing is absolute, final and sacred; and change comes through the continual struggle of opposites (dialectic progression). Dialectic materialism would aid the realisation of a communist world. However, it would be a world without God and religion for religion as "the opium of

the people” is the “illusory happiness of men” that needed to be abolished so that men can attain their “real happiness” (1844).

The communist ideology further predicates a ‘cultural Marxism’ that enjoins the abolition of the family and gender. It is premised on the beliefs that prehistoric communities had neither family, private property nor state and that life in these communities was maternal, not patriarchal; that the patriarchal family arose as a product of and the basic unit and stage of private property that resulted in the unjust dominance of the bourgeoisie across time (Poster, 1980: 43-44). The patriarchal family also produces the “Authoritarian Personality” of the male that created inequality against the largest constituency of the “oppressed”, that is, the women (Raehn, 2003; Atkinson, 2004). Marxian cultural thought claims that “the first property of the family was wives and children who were slaves of the husband. This latent slavery in the family was the first property”. The patriarchal family is thus the root cause of slavery (Raehn, 2003). It, therefore, has to be abolished and with it the ‘authoritarian personality’ in order that the ‘proletariat’ would acquire political supremacy, and both masculinity and femininity transcended so that a “general humanness” suitable to a communist world would be established (see Raehn, 2003; Atkinson, 2004). The communist ideology is thus not only opposed to private property and the state, it is also opposed to God and religion, as well as to the patriarchal family and gender.

The common feature underlining the two parts into which the Hegelian worldview broke up is their isolation of God and religion and the spiritual. Nazi Germany, which was the culmination of the idea of the *Machtstaat*, de-emphasized religion. The Nazi regime retained religious instruction in schools not for instruction in any religious doctrine, but as a vehicle for nationalistic and moralistic indoctrination that “simply bolstered the ideological concepts that were congenial

to a regime based on 'blood and soil' " (Hunt,1948:309-10). Alfred Rosenberg, Hitler's supervisor from 1934 for the indoctrination of the national socialist's ideology and worldview through the schools, asserts "the structure of the instructional programme in all categories of schools has already been changed to an education in such an anti-Christian and anti-Semitic manner that the growing youth will be kept from the black swindle"(cited in Hunt, 1948: 308). This anti-religious stance of the Nazi regime was a continuation, perhaps a culmination, of a general apathy to religion that characterised the German people such that Nazi propaganda was but absorbed in minds in which Christian instruction had either been completely ineffectual or had merged with a nationalistic philosophy. Hunt (1948:310) further notes in this regard:

Prior to this period [the Nazi period], there seems to be little evidence that the brotherhood of man, the fatherhood of god, or even the ideas of mercy and charity were implanted in the German mind. Religion was undoubtedly an important influence in the lives of a minority of the German people, but in spite of a long and thorough system of instruction, the bulk of the nation seemed indifferent to the institutional program of the church and relatively unaffected by any distinctively Christian theology.

However, it was Friedrich Nietzsche who declared in finality that "God is dead" (Nietzsche, 1883/2008: 80; Haar,1961:542) validating a worldview in which "the individual human being is the measure of all things", and by which "the secular mind ultimately believes that man is the *Urbemensch*, or God-unto-onself" (Haar, 1961:542). Speaking through the authorial voice in his "deepest ever written work", *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Nietzsche writes:

Of old man said God when he gazed over far seas; but now I have taught you to say, Superman. God is a surmise [conjecture]; but I

will that your surmises overreach not your creating will. Could ye create a god? – Then be silent, I pray you, concerning all gods! But you might well create the Superman. ... God is a surmise; but I will that ye limit your surmise to the conceivable. Could ye conceive a god?--But let this be your Will to Truth, that all be transmuted to that which man can conceive, man can see, man can touch! You shall follow out your faculties to the end! That which ye have called world is yet by you to be created: It shall become your reason, your conception, your will, your love! And, verily, this shall be for your bliss, ye that have understanding. (Nietzsche, 1883/2008:76. Part II: The happy isle)

Nietzsche regarded Christianity as “an essentially medieval outlook on life” that “no longer provided a valid interpretation of life” (Bluhm,1969: 717, 721). He, however, wished to preserve “the religious attitude of devotion to lofty goals” and, therefore, proposed for the draining of the religious sentiment still operative in his age the replacement of the religious experience or spirit with a secular artistic experience or spirit in which one could “freely indulge his imperious emotional and imaginative needs”(Bluhm,1969:717,721, 725-6). Art as ‘a purely human secular culture’ replaced religion and God.

4.2. Contingent Historical Factors

However, it was not just new knowledge and ideas that alienated the German from his tribal communal culture and spirituality and sustained his progressive alienation from even his Christian spiritual heritage, from the religious and God. Industrialization, urbanization or the growth of cities, the historical accidents of the two world wars, and the speedy growth of communication and information technology did much to validate a secular,

liberal, individualistic outlook and faith in material progress which dominate the life and attitude of Germans today.

A 1992 survey of religious beliefs in Germany by Der Spiegel magazine through the Emnid Institute, Bielefeld and published in the *Journal of the Sociology of Religion* in 1998, showed that 56% of Germans in West Germany believed that God exists and a further 17% believed in a higher Being, while 12% did not believe in God and 30% did not know whether God exists. In East Germany, 27% believed that God exists, 47% did not and 25% do not know whether God exist (*Abschied von Gott*, 1992:41, 44; Shand, 1998:180-181). This means that 42% and 72% of West and East Germans respectively (or on average, 52% of Germans) were either atheists or agnostics. Furthermore, on the average, only 41.5% of Germans believed in the existence of God. A combined 29.5% and 27.5% of the respective numbers of those who did not believe that God exists and those who do not know whether God exists in both West and East Germany show that to majority of Germans (57%), God does not really matter in their daily lives.

Furthermore, the survey shows that of the respective 12% and 47% West and East Germans who did not believe that God exists, 11% and 7% are Protestants and Catholics respectively, while out of the respective 30% and 25% of West and East Germans that did not know whether God exists 34% and 23% were Protestants and Catholics respectively (*Abschied von Gott*, 1992:41, 44; Shand, 1998:180-181). These results not only mean that more East Germans did not believe in God, but, more importantly, they showed that church affiliation neither meant belief in the existence of God nor faith in Him. Besides, the percentage of those that believe in the existence of God did not mean more church affiliation because this percentage includes Jews, Muslims and other non-Christians.

More recently, a 2012 report of researchers led by Tom Smith on 'Beliefs about God across Time and Countries' from the National Opinion Research Centre (NORC) at the University of

Chicago that analysed 30 countries based on surveys from the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) conducted in 1991, 1998 and 2008 shows that 59.4% and 9.2% East and West Germans respectively did not and have never believed in God; while 13.2% and 54.2% East and West Germans respectively believed in God then and have ever believed. A German average of those who did not believe and have never believed in God became 34.3%, while those who believed in God then and ever had was 33.7%. A most recent data in 2009 show that only 21% of Germans believed that religion was important and only 35% West Europeans believed that there was God (Joffe, 2011)

The basis of this rejection of and departure from God by most Germans lies in the desire for autonomy and independence by the secular mind to live unrestrained by any form of control that is foreign to it, be it that of any 'Being' considered almighty and supernatural or human. The church and its almighty God (considered by many Germans to be as much puzzled, indifferent, and helpless to the suffering and devastation confronting man as well as guilty of them), parents, teachers, and even institutions that tend to exercise control over the individual, including the (traditional) family with its 'conservative and old-time values' are seen as objectionable obstacles towards the consummation of an individualistic, secular and liberal worldview. The Spiegel report notes as much:

Der Wunsch nach Autonomie ist zur Grundüberzeugung fast aller Menschen geworden. Sie sind nicht mehr bereit hinzunehmen, dass ihr Leben fremd bestimmt wird. Dieser Trend, den auch Eltern und Lehrer zu spüren bekommen, trifft die Kirchen besonders hart. In Frage gestellt wird sogar Gott, ihre höchste Autorität Bis in Äusserlichkeiten

hinein ist zu beobachten, wie wenig das Leben in den Kirchen dem modernen Streben nach Autonomie und Individualität entspricht (*Abschied von Gott*1992: 44-5).[The desire for autonomy has become a fundamental conviction of most people. They are not ready to accept that their lives should be determined from the outside. This trend, which parents and teachers are also grappling with, particularly affects the churches severely. God, the highest authority of the church is called to question... In every respect, it is observable how little the life prescribed by the church corresponds to the modern strive for autonomy and individuality] (my translation).

This secular, scientific-rationalistic, individualistic and liberal worldview and the pursuit of material happiness conditioned the blossoming today in Germany, as well as in other European and Western societies, of experimentation with alternative lifestyles and with more accepting beliefs different from those prescribed and validated by a traditional cultural and religious/spiritual worldview that is currently considered to be conservative and outdated. Sexuality long repressed has become open; promiscuity is tolerable, and such traditional cultural and Christian spiritual virtues like preserving one's virginity until marriage are unfashionable. Trans-sexuality and other types of sexual perversions are being tolerated; marriage to a partner is no more necessarily for a lifetime; birth control and abortion have become relevant; the roles of couples in marriage are no more strictly regulated by gender but by contract and choice; the definitions of marriage and of couples in marriage are no more gender-fixed as same sex marriages and single parenthood by choice have become tolerable. Furthermore, women are increasingly 'liberated' and are no more accepting the traditional and gender restrictions on how they live their lives and use their bodies; marriage and having children are no more fashionable because they do not seem to fit modern lifestyles and they

restrict the freedom and self-indulgence of the individual; children have constitutionally or legally guaranteed rights and can challenge their parents. Such society, so functionally stratified by multiple and alternative moralities and in which only the individual and the state is what is left, loses the ability for spiritual communal cohesion and very sharply contrasts the culture and society of the Igbo well reflected in Achebe's *TFA* and *AOG*.

Dorsinville shows that the socio-ethical code and cultural features of today Germans, described above, also characterise contemporary European culture. The European culture is one in which religion is absent, and faith is rather invested in material progress. According to Dorsinville:

European culture subjugates the world of the spirits, the supernatural or denies it. Instead of submission to nature there is domination of nature. In ethical and social terms, Europe considers the individual as being above the group. It stresses his pragmatic sense. The measure of an individual's success in life is his ability to translate his feelings, his outlook, in practical terms of a move away from the mysteries of nature. Rebellion seems to win over obedience; the child rebels against his parents, the young man against his society (1971:215).

This contemporary German European culture sharply contrasts that of the Igbo African in which man does not see himself as an individual but as a member of a group, whether it is the family, the tribe or the clan; and this belonging extends to the animal world, the world of the "telos" (plants, rivers and air) that is, nature, and finally the world of the spirits and gods, the dead and the ancestors, and the unborn. As Dorsinville asserts:

There is a basic sense of communality in the traditional culture, a seminal stance of solidarity and togetherness. In short the group, in all its extensions, exists before the individual, who upon birth enters into an integrated order of beings (1971:214).

The contemporary German socio-physical environment also differs from that of the Igbo African that is to a greater extent still covered in natural vegetation. While the Igbo Africans of *TFA* and *AOG*, and very much less today, live in the middle of nature, 88% of Germans today live in towns and cities of differing land and population sizes (Hintereder,2005:9). These towns and cities are independent of an economy dominated by agriculture and are highly characterised by modern industries and factories, technological innovations in housing and town planning, information, communication, transportation, health, energy, water and other spheres of material. They provide numerous occupational choices and alternative lifestyles unknown to traditional cultures. The physical environment of these towns and cities represent, in the least, a conquest of nature and the natural environment known to tribal cultures.

5. Cultural and Material 'Progress' as both Escape from Traditional Self and Distancing from the African Cultural Other

The German and European peoples and societies apparently define their cultures and civilisation by this transition and departure from the communal, faith-based tribal/traditional worldview and socio-cultural order to an intensely liberal-individualistic and secular worldview and socio-cultural order that are based on scientific rationalism. They not only take pride in these worldview and socio-cultural order but, most importantly, regard them as universalistic, axiomatic and definitive, and the measure of and model for any other society and culture. In a rare critique of this "ethnocentric universalism"

of Western enlightenment to conceive the 'unity of mankind' in a progress only achievable with the subsumption of human histories and diversities to the dominance of European culture (see Halton 1992:43), J. G. Herder came up with a pluralistic notion of culture that points to 'equally valid and valuable different ways of life'. According to Spencer (2003: par. 4):

In Herder's view it was simply the most ridiculous vanity for Europeans to believe that all people in the world must live like Europeans to achieve happiness. It was also highly insensitive to the material conditions obtaining to different eras.

The implicit devaluation and subordination of the non-European worldview and socio-cultural order (emphasis is on the African worldview and socio-cultural other) to the self-valorised worldview and socio-cultural order of the European represent a rejection of his own traditional self by the European and a continuing flight or distancing from it.

This flight from the traditional self can be seen in the pathological obsession of the Euro-West to see the African cultural self remade into a 'distorted and hybridized' 'resemblance' of the 'enlightened' and 'liberated' European. This new hybridized monstrous African self, however, has to be distanced and dissociated from by the European because it still seems to share a vague familiarity with the repressed and detested European traditional cultural past and world view. The presence of this African self is though important to the European because, as other, it defines and makes visible the self-valorised European liberal-individualistic and scientific-rational self; notwithstanding, it has to be deliberately and cautiously avoided.

Chinua Achebe largely foregrounds this psychological ambivalence of the European towards the African cultural self:

For reasons which can certainly use close psychological inquiry the West suffer deep anxieties about the precariousness of its civilization and to have a need for constant reassurance by comparison with Africa. If Europe advancing in civilization, could cast a backward glance at Africa trapped in primordial barbarity, it could say with faith and feeling: there go I but for the grace of God. Africa is to Europe as the picture is to Dorian Gray – a carrier onto whom the master unloads his physical and moral deformities so that he may go forward, erect and immaculate. Consequently Africa is something to be avoided just as the picture has to be hidden away to safeguard the man's jeopardous integrity (1977: par. 56).

The African cultural self as the European other must be kept away at a very good distance but not out of sight. This continuing flight (that is, 'advancing in civilization') from its own traditional cultural self by the German European in order to continually convince and affirm its self to be 'cultured' and 'civilised' in addition to the ambivalent rejection of and hostility to any semblance of that same traditional self in the African other is the true source of cultural distance and the emotional and cognitive detachment from the African cultural other. The sight of an African traditional self that the European liberal-individualistic, scientific-rational self cannot fully and totally discard because this African self, as other, is integral to the self awareness and self definition of the European liberal-individualistic and scientific-rational self invokes anger in the European. It is a self-contained and virulent anger, the outburst is being difficultly restrained only by the love-hate logic of

Oedipuscomplex ambivalence. It is noteworthy that there were European missionary colonists whose preferred intent was to completely annihilate African cultures. Ezeh (2005:478) clearly points out, reading Basden(1966):

Some of the missionaries, e.g. Geoffery Basden, made no secret of their bad faith with regard to the host culture. Basden, like Mary Slessor, combined his missionary work with a high-ranking post in the colonial government. In his book, *Niger Ibos*, Basden stated pointblank that there was need to destroy the Igbo traditional way of life, not necessarily because it was bad but in his words, because it could not be allowed to coexist with Her Majesty's government. In an earlier book, *Among the Ibos of Nigeria*, he used the metaphor of a military reconnaissance squad to describe the missionary's interest in the religion of the society. The spy tries to know just as much as may enable him liquidate the enemy.

This distance created from cultural difference negatively affects intercultural relations, even at interpersonal, group, corporate and interstate relations.

This liberal-individualistic, scientific-rationalistic contemporary German and European worldview and the age-long degrading media and narratives on the African cultural self by the European represent the alienation from tribal culture. They also represent the cultural and attitudinal distance and difference from which a German and European reader of an African cultural text may receive the narratives and images of African cultures portrayed, for instance, in such texts as Chinua Achebe's *TFA* and *AOG*, translated into German. They equally

would form the background from which the German and European translators may carry out the translating of such African novels set in traditional cultural environment or, at least, the background which the translators may have to deal with in their translating practice.

6. Conclusion

The historico-cultural recession of Europe from the communality and spirituality common to traditional cultures created a 'new' European cultural selfhood that indulges a valorised sense of cultural ascendancy and snobs at an African culture that still measurably holds on to the communal and spiritual rationality of its traditional culture. The process of cultural *othering* of the African by Europe is thus ironically achieved through a process of European self-alienation from its traditional culture, and the distance to which the European stands to African traditional cultures can equally be roughly explained by the distance to which he/she stands to his/her own traditional culture.

The relevance of the historico-cultural view of CD in European-African intercultural postcolonial relations of asymmetry and conflict is in outlining that attaining cultural peace between Europe and Africa through the erasure of African cultures or critical aspects of them or through the forced hybridization of African cultures is both highly problematic and preposterous. An introspective Europe, that has confronted its fear of and flight from its traditional self and has reconciled itself across time and space with its conflictual cultural 'self-hoods', that is, its traditional communal self and its liberal-individualistic cum scientific-rationalistic self, will be best able to appreciate and understand African cultures in their differences.

Appreciating and understanding African cultures within the relational context of Europe's own traditional cultures would enable both Europe(ans) and Africa(ns) to overcome the spatial,

temporal and attitudinal distance between their cultures. It will also motivate mutual acceptance of the equal validity of a cultural worldview determined by liberal individualism and scientific rationalism, as well as one dominantly determined by communal and spiritual (faith-based) rationalism. Mutual acknowledgement and honest acceptance of what European and African cultures and peoples 'deeply' have in common and genuine respect for the differences between them will result in the avoidance of distance and in much more productive relations and cooperative endeavours at every level of intercultural encounter that would also benefit the entire world.

NOTES

- (1) "Early Germans", "Germanians", or "Germanic tribes" are used interchangeably to contrast "modern/contemporary or today's 'Germans'", who, historically, comprised of the Germanic tribes of Charlemagne's (747-814 AD {fm. 768 Franconian king, fm. 800 A.D. emperor of Germans and Rome}) East Franconian kingdom that preserved their language from Latin as "diutisc", later transformed as "Deutsch", and who, in the course of history, founded a nation state of their own in 1871, subsequently known as Germany. "Native" German speakers/readers are, however, found beyond Germany. "Early Germans", "Germanians" or the "Germanic tribes/people" refer to the historic peoples or tribes who spoke Germanic language(s) as their natural means of communication, who shared common ancestry, cosmology and (pantheistic) religion, and had similar culture and tribal organisation, despite greater sophistication in some tribes than others. Several of the historic Germanic tribes have either vanished or were absorbed into any of the larger groups of modern Germanic peoples. Modern Germanic peoples and languages comprise Swedes, Danes,

Norwegians, Icelanders, English, Frisians, Dutch and German. (Tenbrock, 1979:25-6; Kappler 93:2000; Pasley, 1972:5-6). Historians, though, tend to use "Germans" and "Germanic people" interchangeably when referring to these historic Germanic tribes (cf: Tenbrock, 1979:9; Duiker and Spielvogel, 1998:403).

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