

**THE DIALECTICS OF AFRI-ZEALOTISM  
(IN EKWURU’S RE-ARTICULATION OF AFRICAN VALUES)**

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**Abstract**

*Afri-zealotism as a concept was coined by Ekwuru E. G. not as an abstract term for an abstract reality rather an articulation of a practical reality hence he would say; “it is a word that arose in the dawning of the African self-understanding within a situation of abandonment and need. The African knocked down by series of tragic events of his particular history suddenly recognized himself in such a situation and decides to rise up and claim an upright posture and status as a human being in the landscape of humanity”<sup>7</sup>. As an action born-word, it is a term of decision, it is a decisive and energetic cum radical gyration and migration back to Africanness with an unutterable zeal and passion. Afri-zealotism is therefore defined as an all-encompassing and unflinching zealous and passionate love for Africa and everything African in the right sense of the term. Hence, it is a redefinition of Africanity and African reality. It is a concept designating the African existence as self-actualization through the process of zealotization.*

## **Introduction**

The quest for meaning has led many scholars to lend their views either towards answering the question of meaning or proffering means towards the realization of the answer. Now this quest and the tool for the quest is not a particular phenomenon to a particular people or a particular prerogative of a special people. No, this quest is a universal phenomenon which is usually provoked by similar experiences of neglect, confusion and disillusionment<sup>1</sup>.

Africa as a whole continent is one of such people in search of meaning. This anxiety was born out of the utmost crime of the worst forms meted out to her by her colonial masters. India as a people also witnessed the same type of experience. Other people of world in one way or another suffered some kind of disillusion and eventually came to an answer. Why not Africa?

In this presentation, we shall attempt to make a case for African predicament with a possible solution in the light of E. G. Ekwuru's Afrizealotic Revolutionary movement. We shall do this by reviewing the question of African identity, the concept of Afri-zealotism, the process of Afri-zealotism realization, and the Difficulties of Afri-zealotism with a conclusion showing the way forward. B this as it may, what is the problem with Africa and Africans or in another way what is Africa and who is an African and what is that, that makes one African.

## **African Modernity/Identity Crises**

The question of who and what we are, what is that, that makes us African and as such what is Africanness or Africanity. Some scholars have tried to address this issue positively or negatively but according to Ekwuru E. G in his book "The Dynamics of Afriraciogenesis and the Dialectics of Afrizealotism", the answer to the question of African identity modernity crises should not be peripheral and superficial but rather has to go beyond Psychoanalytic and psychosomatic

definitions delving towards psycho-socio-ontological definition to determine fundamentally the grounds of identity<sup>2</sup>. Onyeocha I. M in his book 'Africa; The Question of Identity' would advocate for a concerted efforts towards determining the grounds on which Africanity is hinged however opined that due to the pluralistic nature of Africa the search is still in the primary stages<sup>3</sup>. Ekennia N.J in his book 'African Modernity Crises' would advocate for a committed dialogue towards solving the modernity crises and establishing grounds for identity and unity<sup>4</sup>.

Osuagwu M.I devoted his whole work on African philosophy towards a historical deconstruction and Reconstruction to demonstrate the reality of African philosophy and the grounds of unity and identity<sup>5</sup>.

The foregoing notwithstanding, one discovers immediately that question of identity in Africa is still a project and according to this submission, a herculean project. For while it is important to know who we are and demonstrate it, we wish to say that it is not all that necessary. For it is not only difficult to prove who we are to the other but also considered to be redundant for you are, to say who am I. it is very pathetic to say who am I because another doubts my integral identity. Again, while we may not be able to say it we know it that we are. Then the question would be how do I know that I am? Modern philosophy is awashed with proffered answers. But the issue is a very serious matter in Epistemology and metaphysics to determine being and 1-in-being and knowledge and, how I know that I know; that is not really our concern. Here suffice it to say we know who we are, how do we know that we are and that we know? This is not a peculiar Epistemic reality and existential phenomenon, for every right thinking-thing knows that it knows that knowledge by intuition is simply self-evident and intuitively grasped are most times impossible to express. So we know ourselves, we are Africans. But what is Africanity/Africanness? Again it is difficult to say. We Africans know what it is, it is our very

essence, it's our beingness. Now this never the ascribed designation, no never, it is that very breathe within us which is felt and known intuitively<sup>6</sup>. It is the fire of conflict within us constantly enkindled by the thought of blackness as beautiful or ugly as it has been made to appear. Be that as it may, we can only become by being in-being hence according to Ekwuru, we can further realize our identity by being ourselves, to be ourselves is to be African and to be an African simply means to be an Afrizealot.

### **The Realization of Afri-zealotism**

The process of zealotization of African by Africans is a project of self-recreation and self-actualization. It is an engagement of the new concept towards a realization of the following: re-establishing solid foundation for a new civilization, re-articulation of the history and philosophy within the African continent by Africans. It is a realization/formation of a collective myth of greatness<sup>8</sup>.

According to this paper therefore, the realization of Afrizealotism is the zealotization of Africans which can only come about through a proper individualistic re-awakening to the question of Africanity/Africanness of Africa. Ekwuru says its zealotism or passionate love for Africa and African reality. Prior to now its been difficult to say what Africanness is and how best to realize it. Africanness is love for Africa and the best way to get at it is through summoning a collective decision and will to exist as Africans for Africa in Africa or is diaspora through an individualistic reorientation towards Africa. For Ekwuru, this re-orientation should not be superficial or literal rather it is digging into the very essence of being as Africans to define ourselves as African phenomenon<sup>9</sup>.

Also this paper believes that realization of Afrizealotism is not possible unless we detect globalization principle as it has been hijacked and redefined to mean westernization though-

patterns would have coalesced to form the neosphenic stage in psychical evolution<sup>10</sup>. What is it today, nothing but a tool of subjugation and suppression, therefore, it should be rethought. It means Africanization process whereby everything must be made to reflect Africanity. These processes constitute also the difficulties of Afrizealotism.

### **THE DIFFICULTY OF AFRIZEALOTISM**

It is very unfortunate that the intimidation, suppression and oppression of the western world have left Africa and Africans very sick, weak and feeble. That is why no sooner has wonderful projects like the above been inaugurated than they fail into disrepute or serious difficulties. Like in the dialectics of oppression, the oppressed sooner or later accepts his/her subjugated and ascribed inferior status with religious sentiments and gullibility to the extent that thoughts like being oneself, knowing oneself simply become counter-productive, hence nobody revolts or rebels but simply assumes his lowly state. Afrizealotism therefore would have to confront the following threats:

- A. To dysfunctionalize western criterion
- B. To confront threat of inauthenticity
- C. To correct inferiority complex

The above is with reference to the obstacles that can militate against this messianic deliverance. For Afrizealotism to yield expected results, there has to be quantifiable amount of radicalism associated with. There is nothing like caution for that would mean playing according to some rules and the problem of determining whose rules and the purpose of such rules.

In conclusion, Afrizealotism is a stage in the evolutionary process of Africa. This stage is a revolutionary stage and that not only identifies the root causes of African problems but seeks to

correct them from an individualistic perspective. This is one timely revolution that started before it was conceived and conceptualized for a thorough examination of the African sub-saharan Maghreb would reveal a revolution against westernization and unAfricanized Africans. However, care should be taken not to allow the same enemies of the old breed usual receive the sledge hammer of the greatest guilt. If but our leaders could imbibe. This spirit of revolution, the end would be realized sooner than expected.

We have been able to show thematically the process of the Dialectics of Africzealitism through an understanding of the Dialectics of identity crisis, the concept of Afrizealotism with a submission as regard its realizability while pointing out the difficulties which include imposition of caution by ourselves, using western parameters to measure our efforts, comparing ourselves with our enemies, rejecting our uniqueness in a unique world with unique needs.

We therefore state that Afrizealotism if pursued with every vigour and radicalism. Its demands would field expected results, also that uniqueness is not wrongness therefore every from of universality thesis must be thrown out, we are what/who we are in our own world for our own world. And hereby pray the forces of psychical evolution to direct the course of Afrizealotism to produce more Africanized Africa and Africans.

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