



SCHOOL OF RELIGION, PHILOSOPHY AND CLASSICS

**A Defence of Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze's
Conception of Reason.**

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Declaration of originality

The research reported in this thesis, except where otherwise indicated, is my original research, carried in the School of Religion, Philosophy and Classics, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg from February to November 2015.

I hereby declare that the content of this thesis is my work, unless specifically indicated to the contrary. This thesis has not been submitted in any form for any degree or diploma to any other University. All citations, references and borrowed ideas have been duly acknowledged.

Sign.....

Date.....

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Introduction

This thesis is a defence of Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze's Conception of Reason. It begins by stating the origin of Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze's thought on reasoning in philosophy, the conflict raised by the concept of universal reason in philosophy, and the new way of viewing diversity as presented by Eze. Generally, this study critiques the concept of reasoning in philosophy as viewed by philosophers from different backgrounds with two conceptions of reason. These conceptions include the 'Universal reason' and the 'Ordinary reason' which this study also examines. In this light, the study focuses and delimits its contentions on Eze's conception of reason as ordinary rather than universal.

Reasoning is an act or an exercise of thought carried out by individuals, and it is worth acknowledging that the individuals in this world are completely diverse in all perspectives. Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze speaks of diversity as a thing that always exists, and enumerates different ways in which diversity is generally noticed and expressed in our everyday language. For example, diversity is always talked about in terms of race, gender, and class, which Eze refers to as the 'trinity'. Critics of contemporary times usually set these categorisations as a reference in many cases¹. However, Emmanuel Eze looks at diversity as a good thing which must never be condemned but rather be embraced. This is evident in his postulation that "there is another meaning to diversity, a meaning somewhat removed from the present cultural and political contestations of the term through which we can understand identity"². By mentioning this, Eze was clearly paving his path to the criticism of the 'Universal Sameness'. In his writing, Emmanuel Eze vividly highlights that diversity exists both in thought or reasoning, which he explains stating that "in this thoughtful act the diversity in reason poses a particular problem for any identity that legitimately wishes to constitute itself as historical singularity"³. Given this, I see Eze as a

¹ E.C Eze (2008) "On Reason: Rationality in a World of Cultural Conflict and Racism". Duke University press. P 2

² Ibid, p2

³ Ibid

philosopher who believed that diversity is part and parcel of existence itself. This is especially given his belief that diversity is also manifests in thought and not just in the political and social realm. In his world view it is clear that “without diversity there is no thought, and without thought there is no mind”⁴.

In this thesis I defend Eze’s refutation of the notion of reason as universal. In so doing I start by examining what Western philosophers wrote about other nations, specifically at the writings of David Hume and Immanuel Kant who seem to have thought that their reasoning or philosophy was universal. Within this work I also look at the ways in which this idea of universal reason may be defended by those who agree with it. Furthermore this writing argues for the Ordinary way of reasoning which speaks to the nature of diversity as it exists in this world. This study is motivated by the conflicting views of philosophers relating to the manner of reasoning; and to the notion where some philosophers seem to be wanting to universalise reasoning, while others do not consider that a progress at all. Owing to these conflicting views Eze came up with another way of viewing diversity in reasoning which encourages philosophers to embrace it rather than renounce it. Consequently, this thesis analyses, critiques and assesses all arguments for both Universal reason and Ordinary reason. In essence, the aim of this study is to unearth the reasonableness of rejecting the idea of Universal reason and embracing Ordinary reason by drawing largely from the work of Eze. Eze started his writing by referring to the writings of Rene Descartes, wherein Descartes calls to mind that the science of ‘human’ is more important than all other sciences that exist in the world⁵. Eze discusses Descartes writings of 1637 where he dealt with the question of “l’homme” which means ‘the man’⁶. According to Eze, the question of man constitutes an inquiry, which when resolved would create a fundamental principle of formulating the reconstruction of all philosophy and science⁷. From this, Eze⁸ elaborates that Descartes question of “what am I” was made clear. This is in the sense that, the inquiry is not only limited to explaining ontological make up

⁴ Ibid, p 3

⁵ R. Descartes (in Eze, 2001) Ch. 1 p2

⁶ Ibid, p 1

⁷ Eze (supra 5)

⁸ 2001, Ch p2

of man but extends to the epistemological explanation of what man can know. Thus in Descartes' meditations, he stated that "a man" is nothing but a thinking thing because that is the only thing that everyone can absolutely fail to doubt about himself⁹. As further articulated by Descartes, the failure of this doubt would occur when a person thinks to doubt his thinking, in which the process in fact involves thinking. Because of this, thinking is the 'essence' of man¹⁰. In this view, Descartes could be taken to be one of the traditional western philosophers who did not show any aspect of differential regard or disregard of others (also referred to as racial discrimination) in his philosophy. This simply is because he did not regard the material characteristics of a human as the constitutive factor of a 'man'. Generally speaking, the philosophical views of Descartes do not give rise to the issue of racism because his philosophy does not speak of a human as a racial animal, but rather a being that is endowed with the faculty of thought¹¹. In my view therefore, this is the kind of philosophical thought that made Eze to start considering whether there can ever be views that completely do not have or support racism, that is, views that can be supportive of what is suggested as the 'Universal reason'.

In his writings, Eze draws attention to the philosophies of Hume and Kant. Eze¹² advances that although Hume is renowned as a foe of prejudice and intolerance, he is also notorious as a founder of racism in philosophy. In his desire to expose intentionality of Hume's racism, Eze assays Hume's essay "Of National Characters¹³", which addresses the topic of race. Hume did not write much about issues of race¹⁴ in his original essay written in 1748, the which he later revised between 1753 and 1754 and before his death in 1777 to add a footnote. According to Eze, this revision by Hume was indicative of the fact that he indeed was interested in talking about human difference as a significant element in philosophy; were it not so, he would have not displayed perseverance in expressing it.¹⁵ In Eze's view, it is evident that Hume meant what he expressed about race in his footnote, given that it

⁹ R. Descartes (supra 5)

¹⁰ Ibid , p5

¹¹ Ibid, pp 53-54

¹²E. C Eze (2001) *Achieving Our Humanity: The Idea of Postracial Future*. Ch 2 (introduction)

¹³ D. Hume. "Of National Characters", in *Race and Enlightenment*. Ed E. C Eze 1997, Ch 3, pp298-299

¹⁴ Eze (supra 12)

¹⁵ D. Hume (in Eze, 2001, Ch 2)

continually resurfaced in his successive revised versions. One of the many factors indicative of the fact that racism was really intrinsic in Hume's philosophy included his affronting of Professor James Beaty "a bigoted silly fellow"¹⁶ when he challenged his footnote in 1770. Eze argues that Hume was committed to arguments of racism because he was one of the empiricist philosophers committed to physical categories of essence, such as gender and race. This simply spells out that diversity in thought was manifested in terms of race long ago and that Western philosophers had long been known to produce thoughts that undermine non-Westerners.

In Hume's footnote, he simply divided the nations of the world into five categories, where he clearly stated that all other nations are naturally inferior to the whites. He distinctly specified that race determines the level at which one's capacity of philosophical reasoning can be measured¹⁷. Emmanuel Eze supposes that the reason Hume perceived that other nations are inferior to whites is because he (Hume) believed that there was something naturally intrinsic in whites that gives them access to a higher level of philosophical reasoning¹⁸. Hume claimed that for any human to access philosophical reasoning, there are seven 'relations of ideas' that a person has to transcend. These include "resemblance, identity, space, time, quantity, quality, contrariety, as well as cause and effect"¹⁹. To Hume therefore, these relations of ideas laid the foundations of knowledge, science and art, and was not only limited to the relative construction of the mind or selfhood unity²⁰. As stated by Eze, Hume clearly believed that the mind becomes human only (and only) when it has gone beyond the "common relations" of resemblance, space, and time. Hume also held that the transcending of the mind from common relations leads it to it gain the capacity to engage in self-reflection, which is very important for the existence of the self as the same thing over time.²¹ Hume contended in his writings that the existence of the 'self' is solely

¹⁶ Eze (supra 12) p 52

¹⁷ D Hume "Of National Characters", in *Race and Enlightenment*. Ed E. C Eze .1997. Ch 3, pp298 - 299

See Eze (2001) *Achieving Our Humanity: The Idea of Postracial Future*. Ch 2 pp 66-68

¹⁸ Eze (supra 12), p 65

¹⁹ Hume (supra 18)

See Eze .2001. Ch 2 65

²⁰ Eze, Ibid

²¹ Ibid

dependent on the capacity of knowledge and science, which can never come into existence until self-generating tasks of the mind have come into existence²². Therefore Hume saw knowledge to be the “key feature of human nature” because it exhibits the “unique aspect of a human subjectivity”²³.

Through all his arguments, Hume attempted to point out that only the white race has that natural capability to transcend what he termed “common relations” to the other four relations, of which all the other non-Western nations not only lack it, but also the capacity to have art and science.²⁴ By this, Hume meant that non-Western nations did not have the capacity for knowledge that would enable them to transcend ‘common relations’ in all directions whether ontologically (psychological) or cognitively²⁵. As pointed out by Eze, Hume extremity in his racist arguments saw him using Negroes as “the paradigm of this racial inferiority”²⁶. Hume mentioned that the natural differences in terms of endowments put by nature amongst humans did not only end in being differences by race, but deeper to the endowment of races with resources or tools needed for developing the mind and progress in their culture²⁷. As such, he argued that, some races are naturally richer in mental capacities than others, but the white race to be specific is above all. This view is evident in Hume’s footnote, where he stated “I am apt to suspect the Negroes and in general all other species of men ...to be naturally inferior to the white”²⁸. In this case Eze points out that Hume was directly speaking of natural inferiority of other races and natural superiority of whites in terms of race, and this was more clearer in the phrase wherein Hume said “there never was a civilised nation of any complexion other than white”²⁹.

In the second revised version of his writings, Hume removed other groups, that is, Mexicans from this position of inferiority by nature, but remained unshaken in referring to Negroes or Africans as an inferior race and as Negro slaves who were dispersed all over

²² *ibid*

²³ Hume (in Eze, 2001) *ibid*

²⁴ Eze (*supra* 12) p 66

²⁵ *ibid*

²⁶ *Ibid*

²⁷ Eze (*supra* 24), p 66

²⁸ *Ibid*, p 67

²⁹ *Ibid*

Europe had not ever discovered or invented anything³⁰. Hume went on to argue his point by comparing whites with the Negroes when he emphasized that even the lowest class of white people usually work their way up until they eventually distinguish themselves in high profession or higher qualification³¹. From this line of argument Hume concluded that “the uniform and constant difference could not happen in so many countries and ages if nature had not made an original distinction between these breeds of men”³². The implication of Hume’s statement as interpreted by Eze is that whites have the capability of using their reasoning actively while Negroes do not have that capability at all. This to Eze proves beyond reasonable doubt that racism manifests in seeing races as different and then concludes that even in their nature they are not equal. When Hume³³ explained that “All kinds of reasoning consist in nothing but comparison [...]” Eze further explains various types of mental activities concerning this process of comparison. Eze states that there are three of them; the first is when both compared objects are physically available to the senses, the second is when only one of the compared objects is available, and the third is when both objects of comparison are unavailable to the senses³⁴. Further looking at Hume’s statement that the ‘eminence’ or superiority of one’s thought must be able to perceive things that are not yet in the senses but present in faculty of thought³⁵, Eze points out that Hume (and all those who thought/think likewise) were and are racists. Understandably, Eze is of the believe that such kind of thinking does not only exist in Hume’s mind, that is, to see people as diverse and to see their thoughts as different from others, always exists.

According to Hume, Negroes only possessed the ability to know what they had experienced or what was currently available to their senses. This meant that by nature, a Negro had a passive mind while whites were endowed with active minds that could foresee the future³⁶ (Eze, 2001, ch 2: 68). Eze pushes this argument further to allege that Hume regarded Negroes as having the same status as animals, given that Hume in his previous

³⁰ Ibid

³¹ Ibid

³² Ibid

³³ Eze (supra 24) p 67

³⁴ Ibid

³⁵ Eze (supra 12) p 68

³⁶ Eze (supra 12) p 68

script on “nonhuman animals” alleged that they only possess the capacity to enjoy basic levels of relations of ideas. Hence his view that Negroes have the ability to experience³⁷ (*taken from what Hume wrote in the section “Of the Reason of Animals” in the Treatise*). Reflecting on Hume’s inscriptions on animal objects, Eze expresses that when an animal has been beaten in a certain place she may forget, but when she sees that place again, her passive mind which operates with only the basic relations will then remember the experience³⁸. In this light, Hume made it clear that the three lower relations, which are continuity and causation (as well as resemblance) although not very remarkable, are shared similarly both by humans and beasts³⁹. Eze purports that the perspective of Hume’s “experimental reasoning” as present both in beasts and humans, is nothing but a set of instincts or a mechanical power that operates unconsciously and as such, it is not governed by any relations in the same way as the objects in the human intellectual faculties are governed⁴⁰. The significance of Eze pinpointing this fact is that it brings to light Hume’s active regard of others as non-human and others as superior. Eze calls this ‘racism by commission’, which hinders strongly the acceptance of the idea of the ‘universal reason’.

Besides David Hume, Kant also regarded ‘natives’ existence as having no status of importance beyond that of a stupid animal (a sheep). For example he spoke of the Negroes in Tahiti as things that would never be uplifted to the level of human beings unless white Europeans intervene and elevate them⁴¹. Eze remarks that Kant slightly showed that whites were committing injustice by their cruel actions to the nations that they invaded, colonised, and maltreated, and so forth, which he termed “the inhospitable actions of the civilised”⁴². However Kant himself in his writings exposed racist views when he stated that ‘when one person aggrieves another person this should be condemned and be regarded as unlawful or completely illegal’⁴³. In saying “a person” he was speaking about none other than Europeans, who in his view were governed by law; unlike the ‘savages’ who were not

³⁷ Ibid, p 68-69

³⁸ Hume in Eze (supra 16) 68-69

³⁹ Ibid

⁴⁰ Ibid

⁴¹ Eze (supra 12) Ch 3

⁴² Ibid (introduction in Ch 3)

⁴³ Eze (supra 12), Ch 3, p 78

under any law and therefore were not fitting to his mention of “a person”⁴⁴. Eze speaking about Kant’s writings, points out that the violence used by Europeans over the natives was a method or a part of developing them, to take them out of the ‘state of nature’ and put them (by force) into what I may term ‘the state of law’ like Europeans.

Furthermore, Kant argued that it was acceptable for one person to rise against another person who is aggressive and violating human rights, but the requirement or a prerequisite rather, is that they are both governed by law⁴⁵ (In Eze, 2001, ch 3: 79 *quoted paragraph*). He virtually meant that if one person is governed or subjected to the law then should he commit an aggressive action over the one who has no law, there is no need for the aggrieved one to protest. As Eze points out, the rise of the ‘natives’ demanding their freedom and respect was viewed by Kant as nothing worthwhile, since for Kant, “Freedom of the natives either as individual or as nation was not considered ... as worthy of respect by Europeans”⁴⁶. According to Kant, it was natural that other races would never reach the level of maturity and civilisation, therefore qualifying them as forever inferior to the white race⁴⁷. Eze’s aim of highlighting this perspective by Kant is to show how dangerous and evil racism can be upon people. In addition, Kant believed that whites in terms of beauty are naturally endowed with law, and divine beauty profoundly imbued in their race⁴⁸. But, as far as other races are concerned it has never been imagined that Negroes are capable of being intellectual, moral, or capable of aesthetic experience that is more than just an insignificant level⁴⁹. Kant made it more clear that blacks lack the concept of beauty because they live in the state of nature where everything is sensually experienced, and there is no way for them appreciating intellectual experience of things in a level more than just a “sensual charm”⁵⁰.

In talking about issue of races and differences Emmanuel Eze also referred to the writings of Douglass, Du Bois, Gates and West, stating that “there is a tension, a positive one [...]

⁴⁴ Ibid, pp 78-79

⁴⁵ Eze (supra 12) Ch 3, p 81

⁴⁶ Ibid, p 79

⁴⁷ Eze, (supra 46)

⁴⁸ Ibid

⁴⁹ Kant in Eze (supra 46), see the last sentence in the middle paragraph of that page.

⁵⁰ Ibid, p 82

between of the defence of a future without racial discrimination”⁵¹. In his writings, Eze imagines that state of life where everyone is a brother or a sister to another person, where the racial bonds have been broken and eliminated completely. He argues that the attitude of being immoral and carelessly regarding individuals and groups as ‘others’ happens in two ways. Firstly, it happens by omission in the case whereby one finds himself more loving and caring for one’s own kind, and then (which sometimes happen without seriously noticing) attributes negative social importance to those that are (by default) outside one’s own kind. Secondly it is deliberate when someone actively and consciously excludes others that deserve care and love from his group on the basis of ‘race’⁵². So in this perspective Emmanuel Eze⁵³ argues that “racism or racial discrimination manifests itself as a refusal to love others, that is, those who are considered literally or metaphorically non-brothers and non-sisters”. In this given, he probes what would be the importance of race when the goal of loving and caring for all, irrespective of colour, race, religion, sexual orientation, etc., has been achieved. To this inquire, he resolves by further asking that “if love knows no boundaries, racial or otherwise, of what use are these boundaries when love triumphs?”⁵⁴ All things considered, I may argue that in reading Eze’s writing and his reference to these kinds of critical questions, he was indeed trying to point out that racism and racial discrimination is evil. However, it has remains present and will continue to occur since diversity will always exist.

Taking into account that Eze mentions clearly that racism is a noticeable condition as evident in the views of Western philosophers (David Hume and Emmanuel Kant), I, in this study, examine his argument for a non-racial future and the existence of ‘universal reason’. In my view Eze succeeds in his argument because if people start showing love for and towards one another, then it is clear that some people would not be regarded as others and therefore would not be treated as inferior for some natural reasons. That is, if and only if such an era will ever come to be really true in this diverse world. I also think his explanation of racism as happening in two ways (omission and commission) is

⁵¹ Eze (supra 46) Ch 6, p 181

⁵² E. C Eze *Achieving Our Humanity*. (2001). Ch. 6 p179

⁵³ Ibid

⁵⁴ Ibid

useful so that a person may know that it is not only when one is willingly harsh to others that one become racist, but also when one favours one group more than another. To me, Eze at this point has been pointing out all angles of racism in western philosophy, and I believe if everyone can be committed to loving all and always seeking to regard all people as one big family, then many racial ills can be eliminated. Eze starts his argument by using the example of the way of thinking, that is non-racist thinking, and I personally think that he has provides a clear proof that one can think and produce a philosophy that does not contain racism. Eze's argument seems to propose the Cartesian way of thinking, which does not look at physical features when talking about people/ humans but rather at deeper constitutive components of humans⁵⁵. Eze also considers Descartes statement that a human is a thinking thing regardless of whether he is an African or a Westerner, and then suggests that through biological science it has been found that there is little difference between a white man and a black man.

In view of the above, it is evident that Eze really studied the philosophical views of the known giants of Western philosophy. He notes that they regarded their way of thinking as the only way to think. Furthermore, they considered Africans (Negroes) as having no thought process or a way of reason. In fact many Westerners who followed the same route of Hume, Kant and others like G. Wilhelm Hegel⁵⁶ faced a serious problem when talking of Africa as having a philosophy, because they thought of Africa in the light of tradition and the West in the light of philosophy. Eze saw this as a serious problem from baseless tendencies of racism and differential discrimination (which causes difficulties in welcoming natural diversity) within the field of philosophy. From these, Eze perceives it unfair that the West look(ed) down upon African thought, deeming it unsuitable to be called philosophy and at the same time pushing the idea that there can be something like a 'Universal reason'. Eze suggests that a thought is a thought and it must be seen as such, whether it comes from Africa or from the West. In general, Eze sees these perspectives as an issue of conflict within philosophy, since when a thought emanates from Africa, expressing African experiences, it is not regarded as a thought or it is taken as a thought of less

⁵⁵ See Descartes' Treatise on Meditation

⁵⁶ Eze (supra 12)

value. So within this study I intend to point out how the conflict arises around the idea of universal reason and how to support Eze's view of the impossibility of pure universal reason.

Following from above, this study presents its assessments and arguments in three chapters. *Chapter One* constitutes of a presentation of the groundworks of Eze's thought, and spells out how insensitive Western philosophers write about other nations. *Chapter Two* explain how reasonable it is to dismiss the idea of universal reason in order to find the reality and genuineness of reason. *Chapter Three* delves into the challenges that may be given against the dismissal of the idea of universal reason. In effect, the study argues and concludes that it is not charitable to dismiss ordinary reason in philosophy

Chapter One

The origin of Emmanuel Eze's thought

1.1. Introduction

This chapter discusses the origin of Emmanuel Eze's thought and the reasons behind the expression and manner of his thought. Likewise, the chapter looks at the thoughts of Western philosophers and the response by African philosophers, as well as how Western philosophers wrote/write about other nations or those they regard as different from them. This is done with the aim of establishing that it is most likely that when Westerners think about something called 'universal reason' they simply think of their system of reason. Eze as a thinker believes that thoughts should be expressed freely in a constructive way that expresses the experiences of individuals as they are. He believes that the idea that philosophy is universal is a false assumption, given, that any system of thought that satisfies systematic logic it can be accepted as philosophy. He takes this argument further, stating that regarding other ways of thought as no thought or as inferior thought, is a failure to acknowledge diversity. This as such is the reason behind the misguided conception that Africa has tradition while the West has philosophy.⁵⁷ For Eze, it becomes more unacceptable when people think that there is what can be termed 'Universal reason'. This is because, Eze realized through his readings and writings that the philosophies of those who thought they were producing the universal philosophy of all times, were flawed. In concurrence with Eze, T. Edward Damer⁵⁸ asserts that "being just and fair demands that we speak of things as we experience them happening, not talking about things in a space somewhere far from this natural world". Taking from this, it becomes clear that if philosophy is produced by individual human beings in this world, then it should not be representing something universal in nature.

⁵⁷ *ibid*

⁵⁸ T. E. Damer .2013. *Attacking Faculty Reasoning*. Clark Baxton 7th ed, p 62

Herbert Marcuse⁵⁹ highlighted in his works that “the rise of the conception of something like the ‘Universal thought’ is just a method of putting Western philosophy into dominion over all other ways of reason”. This is clearly noticeable because if Africa has no capacity to think philosophically (as David Hume and Immanuel Kant claimed) then it is not clear how their way of reason will be encompassed in that so-called ‘Universal reason’. Studying these issues with a critical mind and from a different perspective than the Western philosophers, led Eze⁶⁰ to contend that it is improper to claim that philosophy can only come from the West (by white men only) and not from Africa or anywhere else. Thus Eze’s conviction that philosophy should not just be a cluster of fantasies and fairy-tales, but the ‘Ordinary reason’ which speaks to differential and individuated histories or “historicized experiences” that are by definition never similar⁶¹ (at least in this diversified world). Eze further asserts that throughout human history there has never been a man or a woman who projected thoughts that were not tainted with the effects of time (epoch), surroundings (space), or personal individuated experiences (history or personal background)⁶². Overall, Eze is of the view that there is an African philosophy and it is a complete, fully fledged way of thought which is at the same strength as that of the West, with the only difference being the expression of different experiences⁶³. He suggests that African philosophy should be accepted as such, because if it were to change to be like that of the West, it would no longer be African; in fact it will be an insult to nature itself which exists as the embodiment of diversity⁶⁴.

In my view, I see the reasons for Eze’s thoughts as being within his love for philosophy itself. This is because he makes it clear that nature itself is diverse, and the beauty of that diversity is in coexistence⁶⁵. However, proponents and supporters of universal

⁵⁹ H Marcuse .1941. Reason and Revolution: Hegel and The Rise of Social Theory. Oxford University Press. Pp17-18

⁶⁰ Eze (supra 12).

See also Eze’s “On Reason: Rationality in a World of Cultural Conflict and Racism”. In footnote 1

⁶¹ Eze (supra 1)

⁶² Ibid

⁶³ ibid

⁶⁴ ibid

⁶⁵ Ibid (in fact that is the core of his book titled “On Reason”)

reason may think that Eze is merely reacting against Western philosophers because he is an African, or because he simply suffers from a desire to elevate the philosophy from home. In addition, Westerners themselves may be tempted to think that Eze is alone in these beliefs, and that he is just an enemy of western truth (philosophers like Hume, Kant and Hegel). Nonetheless, the reality is that Eze is not alone in this line of thought. Wiredu wrote a whole chapter in his book⁶⁶ on “how not to compare African traditional thought with Western thought”. In this writing he listed many injustices committed by Western philosophers when comparing African ways of reason with Western ways of reason, with the intention of belittling systems of reason that are different from theirs. He clearly mentions that a Westerner will be biased in time by taking traditional, pre-scientific, pre-modern African thought and comparing it with Western scientific modern thought⁶⁷. These issues show that the idea of universal reason is prone to discard and disregard other ways of thought, while fostering Western reason as the only one. In addition he clearly indicates that it is common for Western philosophers to continually elevate their status and make it appear as if they that are the best amongst all nations.

The defense of Eze’s thought (philosophy) may also be presented using the argument that it is reasonable to consider reasoning as differentially individuated than being universal. From this it is evident that Eze was and is not a reactionary at all, rather he is a lover of philosophy to the extent that he deems it better to protect it from the people who wanted to ridicule or even assassinate it. I think that African philosophers are right to rise against the forces that spread falsehood or hold the views that there is only one way to reason, that is, the Western way. To say that Africa has no philosophy or has a philosophy of a lower value is to deny the existence of Africans in this present world. If this really were to be or is the case, then philosophy will lose meaning because it will no longer be truthful in representing the realities of this present world. Eze’s thought in challenging Western philosophers is reasonable. This is so because the presence of him and his fellow African philosophers who challenge

See footnote 1

⁶⁶ K Wiredu .1980. *Philosophy and African Culture*. Cambridge University Press

⁶⁷ *ibid*

this false notion painted by Westerners serves as an enlightenment and a correction to a mistake that would have caused grave damage to philosophy as an important element of existence. Following from these perspectives, I am of the view that if I were one of the Western philosophers I would not have thought differently though, but I would have embraced the correction or enlightenment given by African philosophers about their own ways of reasoning.

1.2. African thought as Reason

This thinking that only the West has a reason that is fit to be branded philosophy is a huge mistake that would not pass without correction. It is worth mentioning here that besides Africans or African philosophers, some Westerners also realized the mistake made by their great philosophers. For example, professor James Beaty whom David Hume referred to as a “silly bigoted fellow” realized the unfairness and racial insensitivity in Hume’s writing⁶⁸. However, when he spoke out trying to correct his fellow Western philosopher he reaped insults, and the various silly thoughts Westerners regarded as universal would not have been successfully eradicated if African philosophers themselves had kept quiet about it. According to Zwane,⁶⁹ “the fact that an African becomes a philosopher (like Emmanuel Eze, Kwasi Wiredu and other African philosophers), and pose serious thoughts challenging the Western philosopher, in itself means that there is a philosophical thought going on in Africa”. Thus Emmanuel Eze’s ability to challenge the thought of Western philosophers that there was never a mind capable of producing philosophy before (they did so) or besides them (meaning thinking itself is their own creation), provide a reasonable ground for his arguments.

Furthermore, Senzo Zwane an African writer advances that “the mind of a slave is never free, so the product of his will is never been seen, whether it is of manual

⁶⁸ D Hume .1962. “Of National Characters”, in Race and Enlightenment. Pp298-299

⁶⁹ S Zwane 2013 “High Levels of Education in Africa in the Westerner’s mind”. [Internet], Mail&Guardian.

strength, verbal strength and even mental strength”⁷⁰. Zwane further articulates that if he were to accept that Africans have never produced anything, nor any thought in the times of David Hume, Immanuel Kant he would therefore propose that both sides of such kind of reasoning should be examined. Zwane in relating what he means in the above, explains that the minds of Africans were enslaved and dictated over by Westerners, and “it is not true that they naturally could not think, but it is true that their thinking capacity was tied up or even stolen and used to develop somebody else’s (whom they called Masters or Baas).”

According to Henri Bergson⁷¹ “life itself is knowledge and consciousness, for which consciousness is reason,” meaning that if Africans were alive even before whites (Westerners) set foot on the African soil, then it is clear reasoning was always present in Africa. This is because the moment a person starts living, experiences begin, history starts happening and then thinking occurs naturally. Here I try to put more emphasis on the fact that Emmanuel Eze wanted to expose the factual reality that the lack of knowledge about something does not necessarily mean the absence or non-existence of that particular thing (which the thought is about). For example, Bergson⁷² Said “if I have a thought that I was never created by God, that thought on its own does not nullify the fact that I was created, in fact it is just a denial that maybe emanating from lack of knowledge”. So, from Emmanuel Eze’s words it becomes much clear that it is fallacious to say that Africans have no thought or philosophy simply because, as Zwane puts it, “someone does not want to believe that Africans or Negroes can think (in fact do think) and produce wonderful reasoning which suits being categorized as philosophy.”

Moreover, amongst Western philosophers themselves, Bergson is noted for detailing that “it is not an account of the ultimate nature of the universe which claims to be a complete representation in knowledge of all reality”⁷³. Bergson understood that

⁷⁰ Ibid

-Zwane quoted in his article when reflecting back to the times of slavery

⁷¹ H Bergson in W Carr .1911. Henri Bergson: The Philosophy of Change. Dodge Publishing CO

⁷² ibid

⁷³ Bergson (supra 76) p 11-12

there is no person in the world (as a whole) who possesses a capability to produce a thought that would be an account (in its real and complete form) of the complete nature of the universe and all realities that exist. This also is what Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze points out in his writings, when he underscore that there is no man (in this world) who contains the universal reasoning because all human beings were or are subjective, not just most of the time but all the time. Eze further elaborates that that the best (which is the purest of thoughts) is that which exuberates from within and are presented as they are revealed to a particular individual, in a way understood by him or her⁷⁴. The original thought may sometimes be very simple and therefore not seen or even ignored. Following from this, I therefore think that this is what Henri Bergson meant when he said “its very simplicity was the only reason that had made it possible to ignore it”⁷⁵. So, in my view, Africans had a philosophy even in ancient days, that is, even before the lives of David Hume, Immanuel Kant, George Wilhelm Hegel and others, but the fact that they never imposed it upon any other nation is the reason why it was ignored by Western philosophers. In addition, the proof or the evidence that Africa has a philosophy is the fact that it has all that which is required to intrigue thought (or thinking), things like space, time and history (which is the series of events taking place over time period)⁷⁶. Thus Bergson statement that reason is such a thing that “the past is gathered into it, exists in it, is carried along it, as it presses forward into the future”⁷⁷.

Looking at the future that Bergson mentions, I am bound to believe that if there was not any kind of reason whatsoever in an African mind then there would have never been a continuance of Africans till date, because “today is yesterday’s future” as Bergson⁷⁸ says. Therefore, the fact that Africans still exist today is a valid evidence that African thought certainly exists and it bears a particular (or special) significance in the life of Africans at an equal strength that the Western reason carries in the

⁷⁴ Eze (supra 12)

-see his “On Reason”

⁷⁵ Bergson (supra 76) p 11

⁷⁶ M Mayo .2005. Global Citizens: Social movements and Challenge to globalisation. Canadian Scholar’s press Inc. pp 34- 42

⁷⁷ Bergson (supra 76) p 12

⁷⁸ Ibid

life of a Westerner. From all indication, Bergson was firm in his belief that whenever a person lives or exists, being affected by time (which means still facing the future, and bearing the experiences of the past) there is always a push to reason because the reality of reason itself always manifests in every aspect of life whether in the West or Africa. For him therefore “out of all things there is one factor that is never able to be doubted”, even in reason this factor is highly significant, and this factor is time itself; “time being one with life and reality”⁷⁹. Taking this pronouncement as true, it is therefore my submission that no thought of any world is to be deemed as the only thought or philosophy that exists to explain all things (in this universe) if indeed philosophy still speaks of truth and reality. So it is my view that whenever and wherever there is a human life there is a philosophy because I indeed take it to be absolutely true that philosophy as stated by Bergson⁸⁰ “is a transfiguration of what we live.”

1.3. Conclusion

In this chapter I illustrated that it is not a proper philosophical thinking to think that philosophy is only from the West. It is also not right to think that philosophy must be a singular universal thing. However, it should be viewed as the presentation of differentially individuated experiences according to human differences in terms of history and other factors that affect people’s lives. This chapter further showed that whenever a philosopher writes, he writes his thoughts according to his or her experiences, which are in relation to time, space, and history. This has been shown in this chapter of this thesis by referring to the writings of Hume and Kant who philosophized according to their experiences, history, and time, while thinking that they were writing universal philosophy. All in all, this chapter demonstrated that it is faulty and flawed to claim that there is only one way of reasoning, which is the Western.

⁷⁹ ibid

⁸⁰ ibid

Chapter Two

Putting the idea of Universal Reason to test

2.1. Introduction

This chapter focuses on putting the idea of universal reason to test. To be specific, the chapter assesses the reasonableness of dismissing the idea of universal reason because of the lack of knowledge about its manifest originality. Furthermore, the chapter argues that the idea of universal reason may serve as a limitation to the genuineness, truthfulness and reality of human philosophy in this world. The main aim of this chapter therefore is to state clearly the reasons why rejecting the universality of reason sounds reasonable than defending it. My point of argument then is that rejecting this idea of universal reason is equivalent to defending the life of philosophy itself.

Amongst African philosophers Eze is one of those who uprightly stood against the notion that reason should be regarded as Western while tradition is regarded as African⁸¹. In his objection to this notion he wrote a book titled “On Reason” in which he vividly argued against the idea that there is one Universal way of philosophical rationality or reasoning. In this book, Eze distinctly argues that there are many ways of rationality or reasoning and it is not good in any way to view the Western way of reasoning as superior and dominant over any other way of reasoning. It is my intention in this chapter to focus what Eze’s book seeks to argue and whether it succeeds or not. This, I accomplish by looking at how strong the arguments are for and against his views ‘On Reason’. I also highlight some shortcomings of ‘one Universal Reason’ as compared to the view of ‘relative Ordinary reason’. In this manner, I also explain my reasons for justifying that Eze’s argument is convincingly successful.

⁸¹ Eze (supra 1) Ch 1

-see also footnote 12. *Eze indicated this sense of being against looking at humans with some thought of division in all his writings of philosophy (more especially in these two)*

2.2. Ordinary reason differs from other ways of reason

At the very beginning Emmanuel Eze starts by enumerating up to six different theories of reason which he says are theories that are explicitly or implicitly different in ideals or models of rationality. He lists them as follows; “Calculative, Formal, Hermeneutical, Empiricist, Phenomenological, and Ordinary conception of rationality”⁸². In explaining these theories, Eze critically examines their functional ways and methods, thereby identifying their successes and failures. Thus, he singles out ordinary reason as the most convincing to him. Speaking about this form of reason, Eze mentions the times and situations whereby rationality becomes reflectively ambivalent to its own self, and articulates that this ambivalence is at the real centre of experience which should be welcomed, not rejected. He acknowledges that Western philosophers have absolutely refused to welcome this situation to the extent of calling it ugly names such as “clouds of darkness” (writers like Kant⁸³), gaps. He himself argues that the possible grounds of this unavailability of self-coincidence of reason with itself in experience should be welcomed as pure reason, which he refers to it as “gap, spontaneity, or autonomy of rational”. He argues that the open ended manifestation of rationality in experience raises a need to recognise the fact that there can never be an immaculate, non-dialectical conception of existence or the way it is represented.

This argument by Emmanuel Eze speaks directly to the differences that human beings have due to their environmental experiences. His argument seems true because it is naturally a fact that nature presents itself differently to different people, thus giving them different experiences in different ways according to where they live. I find the ordinary conception of rationality being consistent with the nature of the presentation (and grasping) of knowledge in a sense that we happen in life to be exposed to different experiences due to the encounters that we come across, and sometimes due to a variety of environments in which individuals find themselves. Also, I find Eze’s argument successful in pointing out that holding a view that there is only one ‘Universal’ way of rationality is problematic because it raises

⁸² *ibid*

⁸³ I Kant, 1961, “Critique of Pure Reason, Trans. Werner S. Pluhar (Indianapolis: Hackett)

many questions that warrants to establish a method that will be used to prove its superiority over any other available rationality that exists in the world. Moreover, it becomes clear that such a way of rationality can face difficulties in proving that it speaks to all differentiated experiences.

However, some may argue that Emmanuel Eze only rejects the universal reason on the basis of his discontent with the racism he encountered with the philosophy of David Hume and his fellow colleague Immanuel Kant. It is also without any debate, clear that Emmanuel Eze feels really aggrieved by the writings of the philosophers who aggressively projected their racist views, which he reacted by arguing contrarily in his own writings. I find Eze's argument in this particular book 'On Reason' going beyond words of anger or hatred of Western reason, or any other kind of reason. For me, Eze's argument is evidence that history and our imaginations put us into experiencing different ways of rationalising facts and views. My perspective here is based on the fact that it is safe to assume that if David Hume and Immanuel Kant happened had the same experience as the Negros they would have seen and thought differently, even their interpretation of natural experiences would have been different. Therefore, I take Emmanuel Eze to be reasonably convincing when he says that reasoning should be viewed as reflective to history and experience, not as the 'Universal reason'.

Eze's arguments in his book portrays that rationality or reason as universal gives rise to a number of problems which are not only philosophical, but goes beyond philosophy to be the unsolvable quandaries of life at all times or as long as the existence of mankind itself. The first problem that Eze mentions is that of a method of producing a philosophical thought. If one takes it that there is a universal way of rationality, then there must be a method that should be universally clear and unchangeable at all times. He demonstrates that finding a method is a major problem in itself, as it leads directly to the question of who will come up with a method that will be able to take into account all the individuated life experiences of the world. I find this a difficult question to be answered because it requires that there must be a being not from this world, but of different experiences and historical

representations; a being whom all philosophers of any region, at any time, will always be able to trust. However this method of philosophising or universal rationalising becomes compounded when we face the ordinary facts that we are from racial backgrounds that are in themselves different, meaning that we are already questioning rationality differently. If my reading of Eze's writing is correct, then it is clear that if we want to universalise a particular method of rationality, then there is no other way than to have a 'thought dictator' who will claim superiority and then impose his or her method as better than any other method that exists in the universe.

Another significant fact in Eze's arguments about the method of rationalising is that the method itself should be able to stand by itself, aside from philosophy. This is in the in a sense that it must function on itself to philosophise without changing philosophy (as a consequent product). Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze makes it very clear that the method must be the means to the end, which is to produce philosophy while consequently philosophy (in itself) as a product is not tampered with or affected in any way. I find this to be a greater challenge to anyone who feels like arguing against this position, given that the position makes it clear that such a method must be immutable whether due to place, time period, or experience from history, and even by environment. In this manner I am tempted to view or think of such a method as a device that can give birth to a kind of a philosophy that will be some sort of a revelation, so to say. This is because it will not be speaking to the ordinary natural persons who have different experiences and histories, but to persons who also live in different/changing times and places. There is a major problem when philosophy no longer talks to the ordinary realities or speak of the reality as it presents itself in our ordinary experiences. In fact, this could be something which clearly is outside of philosophy. Besides the fact that I am convinced by Emmanuel Eze's refutation of the so-called 'Universal reason' I find his argument successful owing to the fact that no one has ever thought of something like a universal person with a universal experience, or a person who is out of time (timeless) and space. Hence, it is unimaginable that something like a universal method to produce universal reason will ever emerge.

The above contention, I put as a point of success in Eze's reason, and on the basis that in our ordinary human experience there has never been any person who is without race, without a thought of being in relation to space, who is not affected by the period of time, and who lives without any influence of language. In such a case we would also be obliged to accept that we are thinking of a philosophy that is not of us, the ordinary persons in this ordinary world, or that philosophical rationality does not speak to us. I take Emmanuel Eze's argument one step further to say that it is the suppression of the naturally 'ordinary reason' to even think that there exists such a thing as a 'universal reason'. Also, to think of finding a universal method of rationalising that will speak to all experiences, at all times, at all places and histories, is as far from fulfilment as it is impossible in this world. Maybe such a thing can exist in the hereafter or in heaven. All in all, I submit that Eze's argument succeeds because I myself believe that for one to think of a universal way of reason he or she must have in the first place thought of starting the whole existence afresh (in another way or version different from this natural ordinary way that we know) or the universe.

However, I understand that a person who advocates 'universal way of reason' may come to argue that since the goal is to produce philosophy, there should be only one way to do so, which should be universally accepted by all those who want to philosophise. Those who speak in this manner usually take or regard 'formal reasoning' as the one that qualifies to be regarded as a 'universal way of reason'. However, I believe and am convinced that Emmanuel Eze is just in disproving such thought of a 'formal reason' as perfect, always correct, and truthfully presenting the world. In my view, Eze is accurate when he unearths the fact that it can produce a philosophically sound argument, which at same time is not a logically valid argument, because it is lacking in terms of being a philosophically sound argument⁸⁴. For example, saying that (a) All things that eat grass are goats, (b) Professor eats grass, then conclusion comes out like (c) Since all things that eat grass are goats, and Professor also eats grass, then he is a goat. Such an argument under the method of formal

⁸⁴ Eze (supra 12) Ch 1

reason is valid, but it is not true. Reflecting on this, I turn to argue that such a person may be suffering from a lack of understanding that life in itself is multidimensional and presents itself in experientially different ways, in different places, and in different times or periods. Eze rightly shows that since we can never have a way to condense our differentially and individuated experiences into one, then speaking of one universal reason is just laziness to think beyond what is known to our own specific experience at the same time. In effect, it is a failure to welcome the diversity of the ordinary nature of reason itself.

In addition, Emmanuel Eze reveals that he has encountered failing philosophies that were presented as universal and thought to be beyond time limits. In this instance, the writings of David Hume and his contemporaries which include Emmanuel Kant, comes to mind. In fact David Hume in his essay titled *‘Of National Characters’*⁸⁵ expressed many racist thoughts, especially in his firm articulations that Negroes are naturally inferior to all other races (especially the white race). He argued his racist views aggressively to the effect of even trying to explain the colour of Negro skin, stating that their blood contains much ‘Phlogiston’. During his time, this type of thinking was clearly not found to be false, because we know today that what he called ‘phlogiston’ was later found to be Oxygen. His philosophy became blatantly and completely false, or a misrepresentation of reality because there is no blood that has more oxygen than another on the account of race. I emphasise the words ‘Naturally Inferior’ here because it is the phrase that clearly depicts the idea of Hume’s thought that his reasoning, especially the manner in which he reasoned was universal. This is in the sense of his belief that wherever you find a black person you will find a being that fails to produce a philosophical reasoning. Furthermore his usage of the word ‘naturally’ depicts that he was confident in saying that blacks are naturally limited, not only during that time but at all times. On the other hand, Immanuel Kant turned a blind eye to the ingenuity of a certain Negro poet who were producing thoughts that were never expected from a negro. Instead of applauding him and making corrections to, or even revising his misguided thoughts,

⁸⁵ D Hume (supra 18)

or welcoming the fact that he discovered that a Negro can reason, he spoke insultingly by likening the poet to a bird that can utter few words it has learnt. I regard this form reasoning as unfounded and too much of something like a 'religion', or a cult of arrogance, because it shows the lack of ability to be open to new discoveries. I say cult of arrogance because such people stick to ideas and continue holding onto it, even at the expense of arrogantly turning an ignorant eye to the live evidence right in front of their own eyes.

In this writing I argue that Eze's argument (in his book) succeeds because unless we can establish one method of rationalising that will surely come up with someone who has the (experience, history, language, race and so on) of all human beings then there can never be such a thing as (or even qualifying to be referred to as) universal reason. I vividly make this assertion because if ever in this world, we happen to speak of a universal reason without having such a being that possesses such qualities of being existent beyond space and time, then philosophy will come to nothing except being a dead discipline that will speak plain thoughts that make no sense to people in the real life or ordinary world. Furthermore, I believe that since knowledge itself is specific and experience is presented according to a particular historical background (historicised in terms of space and era), and affected by the environment, it should be satisfactory to admit that we ordinary natural human beings do not have the tools that are sufficient enough to enable philosophers to reach what can be wisely known as the 'universal method of rationalising'. It is for this reason that I argue that Eze succeeded, because it is in reality perceivable that once someone thinks of such a thing as the universal reason, there is no way such a person would do so except as a racist, self-imposing, thought dictator, and a being ignorant of the change in times—, including the unwillingness to change or to speak directly to matters of reality.

However, someone who is a critic of this objection of the 'universal reason' would argue that there can be a universally acceptable way or even, seemingly, a more appealing way of reasoning, seeing that philosophy is supposed to be philosophy (in one way) everywhere, and at all times. In this case, I simply respond (in a way I

think Emmanuel Eze himself would respond) by saying that, the fact that something is accepted does not make it the truth or truly correct. I argue thus because there are many reasons that could make something acceptable, one of them is in the case where there are no known alternatives, another is the case where it is pushed by the powerful to the powerless until they, the weak ones, have no choice but to accept it. Another case would be where it is most easily reachable to every person everywhere at any time. In my view therefore, reason does not fall into any category of such ways of compulsion to be universally accepted, and to be called 'universal reason'. Moreover, by saying that it is appealing, there seems to be a reasonable gap opened there for questions such as; who it is appealing to exactly; is it to a particular self-chosen group, race, language group, power of resource class; and on what authority or might does that being or group of beings possess or contain (in all) over the whole universe? Eze himself is a good example that the universal acceptability of something called 'universal reason' begs a question; time and (epistemologically) knowledge. In the sense that due to knowledge limitations at that time something might seem acceptable today or in this era, but, when lot of new things come and knowledge increases or unfolds to other realities then that very same thing may no longer be acceptable.

Eze suggests that it is safer to keep things as ordinary and natural as they are. Ways of reasoning should be kept as diverse as they ordinarily are, and this in my view is the only way to allow philosophy to flourish, or even evolve because it is consistent with the realities of the real world without changing it to something else. To make an example that will prove that reason has something to do with the time or era in which it is produced, I can simply refer to the fact that we now speak of living in the era of postcolonial, post-racial, or modern and so on. Therefore it is clear that the thoughts during previous times of slavery, racial era, colonial or pre-colonial era would never be the same, or even follow the same trend as the current thought⁸⁶. In fact I think Emmanuel Eze would not hesitate to say that even if the reason of that time and events of those times would be presented to us now, we would have

⁸⁶ E. C Eze (in his book "On Reason")
-See footnote 1

our own understanding and interpretations of them, otherwise we would make up some assumptions. But the fact remains that we cannot reason in the same way as a person of that time who has the experience of that time would reason. Another evident example that can easily be seen is that of the racist and colonial philosophy of David Hume and Immanuel Kant. At that time it was reasonable to think like that, having the same experience as they had, but nowadays those kinds of thoughts have expired, in fact, the very essence of that reason has been exposed as a first hand falsehood.

In addition, Eze probes further by considering the issue of the language in which a person thinks or projects his or her thoughts as an element that contributes to the way of philosophising or presenting ones way of reasoning. This happens to be noticeable where some philosophers project their views in a certain way and are understood better by certain people or are understood differently, and interpreted in ways that are contradictory due to the way the language is used. However, I understand that this may be viewed as a minor issue by some people, particularly those during colonisation and slavery, who had an upper hand in accessing tools that enabled them to project their thoughts clearly as they wanted and intended them to be. I find Emmanuel Eze as being on point when he speaks of language as a part of existence, because language evidently plays a vital role in the way people produce and present their thoughts; it can produce some originality of meaning especially when we are concerned with genuineness of thought. Eze gives an example of other philosophers like Kafka⁸⁷ who classically produced their philosophical work in a foreign or colonial settlers' language. Thus he argues that they sometimes encounter difficulties to the extent that they are forced to bend the language in a way that it adopts either some vocabulary or tune which will help their expressions to fit their home tongue.

I must admit that in most cases, and for most people, it seems to be a long process to translate their thoughts before projecting them, while if one was to think in his home language it would be easy to express all the thoughts without fear or even

⁸⁷ Deleuze and Gattari, Kafka, and Chinua Achebe, "Language and The Destiny of Man", in *hopes and impediments: Selected essays* [New York: Doubleday], 1999: 127- 137

distortion of presentation within oneself. To be forthright, I am one of those who believe that language is more than just words, it has a deeper meaning than what we may read in papers. For example each and every language has its own way of speaking and presenting, and this may be clearly seen if one translates from one language to another. In the process of such translation, the original expressions or the depth of the feelings and spirit is lost, and sometimes even the interest that it had in its original form is also lost. Having said this, I believe that the underlying fact is that language itself contains tools to guide a person's thoughts or thoughts presentation in a certain way, and it is a sure fact that when one expresses their thoughts in a foreign tongue then he/she follows the rules of that particular language. This happens to the extent that a person's words may even lose gravity while the other is still thinking of how to say it. Once this is understood, it becomes clear why the philosophers whom Emmanuel Eze talks about ended up breaking rules of the language in attempts to project their views. and by so doing, they tried to shy away from language limitations. In my view, they had no choice. However, if they really wanted to produce their own thoughts from their own experiences, they had to break language boundaries, which means not everything in their reason would have been expressed because of the such language barrier. . So, if language itself does not permit universality then it becomes very hard to envisage the universal reason, as Wa Thiango'o spoke of decolonising the mind⁸⁸. Following from these, I argue that having these truth before us is evidence enough to prove the success of Eze's argument.

However, it is perceivable that defenders of this idea of universal reason may raise the issue of globalisation. A person may say globalisation is the idea of shrinking the world into a small universal village, in which things happening on one side of the world can quickly be known throughout the universe within minutes⁸⁹. Well, in my reasoning, I would maintain that if someone at any point in time argued for the possibility of the existence of the idea of universal reason as being more satisfactory over the position for which I argue, then I would contend that the particular person in

⁸⁸ Ngugi Wa Thiango'o "Decolonising the Mind". (check ref. 44 in Eze's "On Reason")

⁸⁹ Smit J. (2013) "Globalisation is becoming a big issue in the modern world news. Daily Sun, p4

question clearly misunderstands my concern. I believe that there is a complete difference between the overspread of knowledge or information, and the reasoning in experience and historicised reality. The difference is that information can be spread and be globalised or universalised but experience is always specific and cannot be universal in any way because experience is lived and therefore it goes deeper and beyond being near us. Experience for me is a kind of life within us. Moreover, the globalisation of information does not mean a similar way of understanding and presenting information. Besides, information can be digested in different ways to mean different things.

2.3. Reasons for rejecting the idea of universal reason

There are serious things that cannot be ignored when dealing with special and thought demanding topics. According to Bankowski and MaClean, in “any writing or study of a particular subject it is always wrong to take things at a higher level without looking at the root foundations.”⁹⁰ I think they were right because things could easily be admitted or rejected unfairly if they are not properly addressed at their basic level. So, even the idea of universal reason needs to be rightly investigated from its basic roots, because there are factors that it must be grounded on, if ever it were to exist in this natural world. So, taking into account Western philosophers perception that Negroes cannot reason, is a view which on its own makes it difficult to reach a conclusion that there will ever exist something called or worthy to be termed universal reason. This claim is based on the fact that if one pays sufficient attention to the claims of Western philosophers then it is very clear that the branding of their thought as ‘universal reason’ would be a disregard to those nations like Negroes/Africans and others who were declared not white enough to have the ability to produce philosophy.

The idea of universal reason needs some factors to have preceded it. The first among them is that there needs primarily to be in existence some entity that fits the

⁹⁰ Z Bankowski and J MaClean .2006. The Universal and the Particular in Legal Reasoning. Ashgate publishers Ltd. P 57

description of ‘a universal person’ with a universal mind. By universal mind, I am referring to the universal experiences and thoughts that encompass the whole of this world at all times, till eternity. In this context, eternity means that such a being must in his reasoning encompass all historicized experiences of the world in all times (past, present, and the future)⁹¹. It is clear then that such a being must have never lived as an individual because if he/ she/ they have ever existed in a form of individuated thinking entities, then it is not clear how their particular historicised reason will transform into being universal.

Another challenge is, if that kind of reasoning – universal reason – will be produced by particular persons who possess individuated and historicised experiences, then it seems that there must be a judge to rate those thoughts for their universal worthiness. This further means that the judge or judges has to be a being, whose knowledge and experience encompass the whole world beyond space, time, and history; or to make matters less problematic, they must have a universal special element to measure the universal worthiness of all thoughts that are being produced and claimed to be universal⁹². Also, if one considers this idea carefully, it becomes clear that the problem gets more deeper because it does not get any clearer how such a universal person comes about. It also becomes a problem when we think about universal reason measuring element or sort of machine. I also submit that even if a special machine for testing thoughts could be designed, there still can be inaccuracies made by someone (or individuals) from somewhere, who is affected by time, space, and history, which are the individualised and historicised experiences. Taking these into consideration, it becomes even more clear that the idea of universal reason sounds more futile and totally unsatisfactory to be reasonably accepted.

Another serious factor that needs to be ignored in this discussion is the fact that “reason should be truthful and more real to the human beings of this world”⁹³. But

⁹¹ Dictionary.com

⁹² P. J Davis and R HERSH .1986. Descartes’ dream: The world according to mathematics. The Harvest press

⁹³ G Santayana .1906. The Life of Reason: Or The phase of Human Progress. Archibald Constable & CO. Ltd

if philosophers start to focus on such things as universalising their thought, then there is a growing fear that philosophy will no longer be truthful to individuated lives. This means that the universal reason, to the particular, and ordinary persons will be absolutely useless or even irrelevant because truths that directly resonate with them will not be revealed. The focal point here is that “the universe itself can be viewed by different people in different perspectives”, meaning that even if one person emerges somewhere with a credible thought qualifying it to be regarded as universal thought, it is most likely to face many challenges⁹⁴. In addition, philosophers themselves rarely agree on anything. Therefore, it is explicitly clear that any thoughts on the acceptance of the idea of universal reason as a significant possibility is unnecessary and not promising to yield any profit⁹⁵. Further, it is a significant recognition that human beings are unique (in a sense that any person is unique from one another) and limited in their capabilities⁹⁶. Having acknowledged fact therefore leads every thinker to the recognition that trying to unify all kinds of thoughts into one singular kind of reason called ‘universal reason’ is just an unnecessary effort to destroy the potency of philosophy or reason itself. It is then difficult to imagine one kind of reason being taken to mean the whole world, anywhere, at all times, and encompassing all sorts of human experiences. At the same time it is problematic trying to imagine a kind of reason in this world of particularly individuated and historicised experiences that does not (at all) speak to those differentially particularised experiences, but only claims to be a universal reason. According to Bergson,⁹⁷ “for any kind of reason or philosophy to have value, or support life and existence, it should speak truthfully to the real conditions that humans face as naturally particular individuals”. If someone takes these words seriously it becomes quite evident that reason is naturally differentiated, and if any person from any part of the world attempts to unify it or rise above its variations

⁹⁴ B Jewsiewicki .2000. History of a Nation and its Reason. In A.D Needhan (ed) Using the Reason in your own History and Thought. St Martin’s Press p 91

⁹⁵ P Van Inwagen .2009. [Online], available from <commons.pacificu.ed/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1081&context>

⁹⁶ Ibid

⁹⁷ Bergson (supra 76)

then that certain being would be eliminating philosophy or reason itself in this natural world.

2.4. Conclusion

In this chapter, I attempted to present my position on Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze's argument about reason. I argued against the idea of universal reason, while in the process suggesting that there are many ways of reason. I did so by critically examining the satisfactoriness or the success of this position, considering reason to be rationally specific in terms of place, and time, and (historicised) experience. While I posited arguments that could be made in favour of universal reason, I also established that they do not defeat the strength of Eze's argument against the very idea of a universal reason. Given the strength and confidence of Eze's argument against the possibility of the universal reason, I proceeded to elucidating that there will never be such a thing as a 'universal reason' because it is unimaginable that mankind will ever condense and be one in all aspects. If such an occurrence should happen, it would enable mankind to come up with one universal method of philosophical reasoning as a bridge to embrace this form of reasoning. Therefore, my point of contention in this chapter was that Eze succeeded in this position (of many ways of reason) not simply because it is appealing to me, but also because it is representing of the ordinary truth as it is in the real world of experience. However, some people may have differing views from Eze's and mine, which speaks for the idea of universal reason. So in the next chapter, I look at the different perspectives.

Chapter Three

The challenges posed to counter Eze's disclaimer of Universal Reason

3.1. Introduction

This chapter specifically discusses various challenges that may be posed to counter Eze's repudiation of Universal reason. It brings to the fore those arguments that can be presented by the supporters of the idea of universal reason and shows how they can be overcome. While this chapter deals with some crucial challenges that can be tabled against Eze's dismissal of Universal reason, the idea of the Ordinary reason is also critiqued. The aim of critiquing ordinary reason is to show that it is the better and more reasonable option than universal reason. At the end of this chapter, I vividly contend that the arguments and perspectives for ordinary reason thrives over that of universal reason.

3.2. Universality as argued in political terms

People in different parts of the world have experienced democracy and what they call globalisation in this modern world. That experience makes them think that universal reason has the potential of coming into existence and acceptability. By definition, democracy is the ability of people to be open about what they like, what they are, who they want to rule over them, and what they want to be known about them and so forth⁹⁸. Zwane⁹⁹ gives a political definition of this term to mean that citizens of a particular state now have a list of rights which includes the right to have a government that is chosen or elected by the majority in their own freewill. The concept of democracy has made many citizens in many different states of the world want to exercise their freedom. It has as well led them towards chances of getting

⁹⁸ M Mayo. 2005. *Global Citizens: Social Movements and the Challenge of Globalization*. Canadian Scholars' Press Inc. pp 34-42

⁹⁹ S Zwane (supra 73)

together and pursuing one goal called “Human Rights and Freedom”¹⁰⁰. From the concept of democracy, developed the process called ‘globalisation’, which Mayo¹⁰¹ has explains to mean “the process whereby the whole world gets to function as one global village, to pursue one particular goal, whether politically or economically”. However some defenders of universal reason may argue that if the world with different cultures, traditions, backgrounds and so on, can all be incorporated in that concept or process of globalisation then why it is hard to see that in the same way, thought can be universalised. Democracy indeed has become global nowadays and the concept of globalisation has become universally popular. Therefore, a person raising this view may not be regarded as totally off-topic on this issue of universalisation of thought, though there are things that such a person could be missing.

Taking from the definition of universal reason as provided by Eze¹⁰² to mean the system of reason that goes beyond time, era, race, space, and history, it becomes clear that the use of the concept is specific and not to be compared with other concepts. This is because globalisation is a process that is exercised within a specific time and democracy itself is differentially practised in different places according to the change of times¹⁰³. Those who think reason can be universal are missing something very important, which is that nature itself is made of differences. Samir Amin¹⁰⁴ in his writings postulate that “globalisation of interests differ from time to time; in different places there is need to globalise political strategies, while in other places there is need to globalise economics because of changing times and history”. From this, it is apparent that globalisation does not in itself mean becoming one thing (singularity), but it means the coming together of many things in the world, and it is not aloof from the effect of time, place, and history. The same applies with reasoning, it is always

¹⁰⁰ J Painter .2008. Counter hegemonic news: A case study of Aljazeera. [Online], available from <reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk>

¹⁰¹ Mayo (supra 105)

¹⁰² Eze (supra 1)

¹⁰³ J.N Pieterse. 2001. Unpacking globalization. In P. Hamel, H Lustigerthaler, J.N Pieterse and S. Roseneil (eds). Globalization and Social Movements. Palgrave Publishers Ltd. P 22- 23

¹⁰⁴ S Amin .1980. The theory of Imperialism and the Contemporary Crisis. Class and Nation, Historically and in Current Crisis. Monthly Review Press. Pp 225 -228

affected by time, space, and history, meaning that it will always be differentiated in the same way democracy and globalisation mean different things in different places, in different times, and in relation to a particular history. Given this, I suggest that since globalisation and democracy mean different things in different places according to time and history, but still remain the same democracy or globalisation, implies that there must be nothing difficult with accepting that there are different ways of thought influenced by time, space, and history, and all qualify to be under one term 'reason'. Globalisation may be interpreted to mean the accommodation of all differentiated cultures and practices for the benefit of all mankind. The same applies to democracy which voices out all individuals' historicised experiences and desires, and does not universally unified things like the idea of universal reason.

Another point to be taken into account by those who argue for the idea of the universal reason under this line of argument is that democracy and globalisation have created a number of challenges in this world. Democracy itself has come with the problem of leadership in some parts of the world, especially in non-Western countries, and the reason is that it was pushed by Westerners with certain self-interests for their own advantage¹⁰⁵. The fact of it being pushed to all people as the acclaimed universal system, caused many clashes in different places, because in nature this modern democracy is more Western so much so that it even causes political instability in governments of some places¹⁰⁶. My argument in this thesis is that the idea of universal reason will not be acceptable anywhere at any time in philosophy that is produced by intellectually honest people because it is more likely to cause more problems than it can solve. Gamal Abdullah¹⁰⁷ argues that "globalisation and democracy that does not speak to people's individuated cultural differences and particular experiences, is just a form of a diplomatic exclusion of others". These words highlight the fact that the kind of reasoning that accounts for universal persons are apart from those of natural persons who have individuated and historicised

¹⁰⁵ M Mayo (supra 103)

¹⁰⁶ A Gamal. 2014. The Issues with democracy of the West. [Internet], Aljazeera. (No date). Available from <www.aljazeera.com/topics/regions/middleeast.html>

¹⁰⁷ ibid

experiences. Adding to this, I argue that inventing things that lack feasibility in relation to the ordinary persons of this world must not be taken seriously. Hence, the idea of universal reason lacks feasibility because a universal person has never existed and it is not clear how it shall accommodate the natural, individuated and historicised experiences of the ordinary human beings in this world.

3.2.1 The challenge of mathematics as universal

Another challenge that may be brought forth against the dismissal of the universal reason is that some of the best known philosophers were also the best mathematician who produced universal mathematics¹⁰⁸. So if mathematics has been invented by individual philosophers who lived in a particular era, a particular geographical space, having experienced things in their historical backgrounds, then it should not be unthinkable that they can successfully devise some kind of reasoning that will have that innate universality. Indeed it is a universally creditable truth that some of the best mathematicians were philosophers, and some of the best philosophers were also mathematicians, and mathematics is undoubtedly a universal subject. Mathematics contains universal rules that apply always beyond time limits, beyond space limits, and even regardless of who one is or what experiences one has. However, according to Davis and Hersh,¹⁰⁹ “the point to highlight concerning mathematics and calculations is that they are rigid, and mathematics speaks to constant variables or solid empirical facts which are just the way they are, and they dictate on anyone to see them in one dimension”. Vico¹¹⁰ mentions that “it is never the case in any world that $1+1=3$ regardless of who does the calculations. However, it is known that whenever we deal with mathematics and apply the rules, we end up in one conclusion”. In this study, I acknowledge that this challenge is quite creditable,

¹⁰⁸ P. J Davis and R Hersh (supra 99)

¹⁰⁹ Ibid

¹¹⁰ Vico (1668- 1744) *Classici Italiani*, Tomaseo Editore tonnese. 1930. Courtesy of Brown University Library.

See footnote 112

although it still shows some grey areas as far as the idea of universal reason is concerned.

This argument of mathematics being universal sounds quite creditable, but if one looks carefully, there is more to it than it appears. Firstly, mathematics deals with or represents empirical facts. Therefore, I put forward that it does not speak to all facts (especially those kind of things that include experiences of individuals' histories and so forth)¹¹¹. This is because "mathematics has got its rules that were formulated to apply everywhere in the same way to get similar results, otherwise it changes to be something else, or another kind of mathematics" as Vico¹¹² puts it. In saying this I attempt to put forward that subjects like physical sciences and mathematics have rules that were put in place to be used. It is right for those empirical subjects to have such rules and be treated (everywhere) in that manner because they are not concerned with the human's particular and individually historicised experiences like thought does. In addition, I think that Horkheimer¹¹³ was accurate when he said "never change what works and seek that which you do not know, because in pursuit of what you hope for you may destroy the functional present one". I take these words seriously because they acknowledge the fact that all over the years reason has been used, it always existed as the projection of individually historicised experiences in this ordinary world, subject to time, place, and history. To be honest, it must be clearly stated that putting rules in philosophical reasoning like in mathematics may be destructive than being constructive. This is because people will no longer be able to express their ordinary experiences in exactly the same way they would do if they were untrammelled with a list of rules and regulations. According to Mayo,¹¹⁴ "when something is like mathematics, calculus, Algebra, or Geometry, it is regulated to produce desired outcomes, and there is no freedom or debate about that". To me this sounds more of a truthful statement because even in mathematics, one cannot apply [any] rules of Geometry in Algebra or Calculus

¹¹¹ P. J Davis and R Hersh (supra 99)

¹¹² Vico (supra 114)

¹¹³ M Horkheimer .1947. Eclipse of Reason. Oxford University press. P 69

¹¹⁴ Mayo (supra 103)

(and other kinds of maths). However, there are specific laws to be complied with in every sphere, and those laws always determine the outcome.

Furthermore, physical sciences and mathematics are not much like philosophy because they speak of empirical things that have particular (empirical) ways to be viewed and known¹¹⁵. This point leads the argument back to the ‘truthfulness and liberty in thought’ issue, because everyone from any part of the world should be able to produce their thought truthfully and ordinarily as it emerges from them. Likewise, everyone should be completely able to do produce their thought truthfully and ordinarily without fear of being limited by so-called ‘rules of universal reason’. I think it should be clear that ordinary beings will always benefit from ordinary things that speak directly to them. This is because rules and regulations that have never proved to be necessary over the history of human nature will simply bring radically destructive and unnecessary problems accompanied by difficulties in thought itself. Moreover, when Emmanuel Eze writes about reason¹¹⁶ he talks about something that is part and parcel of mankind, something that emanates from the inside. Having it regulated by universality rules that are built from the outside will surely count as a forceful dictatorship to abandon that naturalness of being of a particular individual with ordinary and historicised experiences. At least for mathematics it is clear that some beings or individuals saw some of the world’s presentations in one singular form. This is because the world’s presentations were empirical and formulated laws that limit even the ability to consider those things otherwise. This I would call dictatorship by those who were there at the time of invention or discovery. However for philosophy and reasoning at large, people viewed and presented as individually different with different views about this ordinary world due to their particularly historicised experiences. As such, this brings about the fear of thought imperialism when people talk about this concept of universal reason.

Another challenge that a person may raise is that if all people are rational beings then it must also come to mind that they can reason or use their rationality until

¹¹⁵ P. J Davis and R Hersh (supra 99)

¹¹⁶ Eze (supra 1)

they reach the bottom as one reason, which then would be the ‘universal reason’. Wiredu¹¹⁷ stated that “humans are all rational and if they put all their energy of thought together they can be very productive in a deep sense because at the end, they are one in being the citizens of this universe”. The fact that all existing human beings are thinking ‘dwellers’ of this universe sounds good to the effect that other minds can be tempted to think that even in thought all people view and experience things the same. I think there is nothing completely wrong in thinking and hoping that people will one day reach oneness when they have reached that “bottom of reason” as Wiredu¹¹⁸ says, even though there are issues with such kind of thinking. The first issue is how long shall philosophers work to reach at that bottom of reason and how much time do they have available to play around looking for something that has never worked? The second issue is about who will make the declaration to say thinkers have reached the ‘bottom of reason’, given that it is not at all clear why abandoning the ordinary reason would sound better in the ordinary minds of the ordinary people, while they do not abandon their nature of being ordinary (affected by issues of time, space, and history). I think therefore that it should be troubling and be a matter of concern how that kind of reasoning would look, and in what condition the person who will be responsible for the successful production of such reason will be. How shall that particular philosopher connect himself with a kind of reasoning that is above all human experience. I think that such an idea as the idea of universal reason sounds more like an attempt to take a bigger step towards the assassination of ordinary human reason in this ordinary world.

Another way that a person may look at this argument for the rejection of universal reason is to firstly look at the facts about human beings that exist in the world. Theodore and Hudson¹¹⁹ stated that “among the qualities of human beings that live

¹¹⁷ K Wiredu. 1997. Democracy and Consensus in African Traditional Politics: A Plea for a Non-party Polity. In E.C Eze (ed). Postcolonial African Philosophy: A Critical Reader (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University, p 303

¹¹⁸ Wiredu (Supra 20)

¹¹⁹ G.M Theodore and H.H Hudson .1960. “Abuse of Reason”. Religion within the limits of reason alone by E. Kant. Harper & Raw Publishers

in this world is the fact that they are limited in terms of time [era that in which they live], environmental factors and history attached to that”. When I consider carefully that all humans are rational beings it does not follow that they have to rationalise in one way and then produce what will be known as ‘universal reason’, it simply means that they all have been endowed with the capability and ability to reason. Above all, I assert that reason has always been used as an ordinary reason and it has been usefully functional in terms of resonating with the people in this world. I think the idea of the production of universal reason should not be acceptable to any thinker who just faces the facts and admits that the world or the universe presents itself to the human mind in different ways according to difference in time (epoch), place, and individually historicised experiences. This is because the very existence of that idea is to undermine all those factors involved in reason. The whole idea of universal reason stems from the fact that some people think that they are limitless or can rise above natural limits. While they have no capability to do so, then the whole idea of universalising thought is just a vain and exaggerated appreciation of the fact that humans can invent wonderful things. According to Reign,¹²⁰ “too much of anything is a problem”. This means that even too much of ambitions, dreams and visions can also be detrimental rather than progressive, and the idea of universal reason upon non-Universal individuals in the ordinary world is just too much hope and overestimation of human capability.

Some supporters of universal reason may argue that dismissing the idea of universal reason emanates from the phobia against the invention of new things. Gamal¹²¹ argued that “normally when people see or hear about a new thing that they have never heard of before, they react commonly with criticisms due to fear”. Fear as a feeling should be respected and be controlled, but sometimes it is reasonable to verify before claiming that someone speaks things due to the mere feeling of fear that is within him or her. Notwithstanding this line of argument, I still put forth my views that maybe if it was just a fear of new inventions that I suffer from, I would

¹²⁰ Reign .2015. Quotes About God S Love (208 Quotes)- Godreads [Online], available from <www.godreads.com/quotes/tag/god-s-love>

¹²¹ Gamal (supra 111)

not have gone so far with spelling out the facts that the universe has many representations to different individuals situated in different parts of the world, in different time periods, and no natural individual can encompass them all at one time and forever.

Furthermore, I refute the believe in miracles and supernatural matters in this study, because thinking of a miracle would equal thinking of something like the universal reason which demands the breaking (or at least bending) of the laws of nature, if not transforming the world and nature itself. Descartes¹²² explained a miracle as the breaking or violation of the laws of nature in order to produce that which has more extraordinary or supernatural explanation that brings more misery than what is ordinary or normally known and understood. In this real life, it is reasonably scary to put trust in miracles and extraordinary fantasies that may happen and be beneficial or that may not happen. In this case, the successful happening of universal reason and adding to the progress of philosophy would be very much a misery. At the same time, the thinking that embracing the idea of universal reason will harm nothing in this world, sounds more like hoping for a serious miserable miracle. The imploration in this study is to be more realistic and use what works for the people in this world other than hoping for things that seem to have no capability to occur in this world.

3.2.2 Discrediting the universal reason as a miracle

Some hopeful defenders of universal reason may argue that the idea of universal reason should be embraced or be accepted as some sort of development in reasoning. Since everything develops from being small to become bigger and great, it should not be hard to accept that thought also develops now to become universal, and no longer limited as it always has been¹²³. This way of viewing the idea of universal reason however is most likely to come from people who are too optimistic, the saints who always see a progressive possibility even in an open hell of destruction,

¹²² Descartes Meditation 1, from the Treatise

¹²³ Gamal (supra 111)

because if universal reason is the development in philosophical reason, it should be improving it (reason) and resonating with human beings that live in this world and their experiences. It is flawed to think that something that seems to have no connection with this world and to the people of this world is development which should be welcomed and celebrated. So I see it reasonable to dismiss any idea which hopes from something unknown and does not even promise to have any relation with the minds that reason in this world. Rejecting the idea of universal reason as a development in human reasoning is reasonable because development is a thing or a process that drives refinement or improvement.¹²⁴ In terms of reason it should be a way of thought that will improve or come with some kind of refinement to human beings that exist in this world. However, the moment it lacks characteristics of speaking to individuals in this world, it becomes something else, then to view it as progressive is defective. It must be stated that the idea of universal reason is an unnecessary despise, an underestimating of the nature of human reason itself, meaning to view it as a development in reason means the existence of some deficiency in human thought.

Within the above reasoning, some people may ask why are we (people who dismiss Universal reason) so pessimistic towards the idea. This question is most likely to come from those who see this idea of universalising the thought as a development of philosophy. It is naturally expected that once a person sees such a thing as a development, then my argument and presentation to the contrary that it is not to be accepted will sound pessimistic indeed. However, I would like clearly state that being pessimistic would have applied, or someone would creditably accuse us of being pessimistic if what we say in dismissing this idea were accusations or comments of dislike that have no basis in reasoning. So far, I think it has been made clear in this study that there is no pessimism at all in dismissing this idea of universal reason. Also, it is worth saying that hopes, ambitions, visions and dreams should have some limits, people should not hope for too much than what can reasonably come through. To think and hope that there will be something like universal reason

¹²⁴ S Amin (supra 109)

that will be accepted and be useful in this world, is the direct abuse of hope and in turn it promises no good results for the life of philosophy itself. So, rejecting this idea of universal reason in philosophy is not being pessimistic at all, it is simply an understanding of the world more clearly. It is also a way of placing all the unnecessary visions of optimistic ideas coming from all the unreasonable fantasies. Besides, it is within the purpose of this research to highlight the fact that anything that does not seem to fit in with the natural conditions of this world, must be strongly rejected until it resonates with this world. This is because in having such things bothering our minds, we could end up missing real things that are important to the nature in this world. All in all, it not pessimism to state that things that do not benefit any human in this world should be rejected, in fact I see that as a true form of optimism towards new inventions.

3.3. The ordinary reason as a solution

It is my view that ordinary reason is more sound than all other systems of reason, especially more sound and positive than the idea of universal reason in this world. In this world it is more reasonable to be honest and not trust in miracles and revelations even in instances where there is no need to do so¹²⁵. Also, it is the same for those who trust too much in supernatural intervention, which for me is self-abuse because sometimes it can be viewed as an unnecessary abuse of belief faculty. In terms of reason, expecting that there will never be something fit and acceptable to be branded ‘a universal reason’ seems just like expecting a divine intervention to take place. It is written that only God existed eternally and possesses the knowledge of all things, and that is the one who all-sees and who is all-present, the one who possesses the capability of not being affected by time and place or history¹²⁶. But even then, when I speak of the eternity of God, I do not mean he or she is timeless, I simply mean he or she is ever-living or ever-existing. Saying that

¹²⁵ Eze (supra 1)

¹²⁶ Qur’an, Surah Al Baqarah

See also the Holy Bible, Exodus, and Descartes also in His 3rd Meditation on Philosophy

he has no difference between yesterday, today, and tomorrow¹²⁷ it becomes clear how defective it would be to accept the universal reason which would be timeless, while the world is never time blind. In fact, even in the divine books,¹²⁸ God has presented his existence in different times, to different people in many different ways, not in one universal way. So even if someone would invoke God in the invention of universal reason it seems that he could not be helped at all, therefore trusting in the miraculous supernatural powers does not also help in running away from ordinary reason to the universal reason. Furthermore, thinking that reason should be one and not affected by these factors (time, space, and history) is just an emotional unrest of hating diversity and truthfulness, it is accompanied by evil desires to corrupt that which is pure, clean and natural in thought.

However, a humanitarian person may come and say that sticking to the idea of ordinary reason makes people see themselves as different to others on the grounds that they live in different places, at different times, and have other historicised experiences¹²⁹. A person arguing in this line of thought may be quite creditable, but if we take it further and think of it more, it becomes clear as a matter of sacrifice, in a sense that such argument diplomatically tells us to divorce truthfulness of reality due to the pursuit of humanitarian oneness (in this case universality). Jewsiewicki¹³⁰ said “variety is a spice of life with meaning and reality”, and in my view, this means that diversity in life, in fact, in existence even beyond the life in this world is what gives meaning to the presence of beings. This means that even in thought, it is normal to have differentiated thoughts and experiences that will be different in their expressions. Eze makes it clear that diversity is not a bad thing at all, and should be welcomed, and rather than being viewed as an objectionable thing in life, it must be viewed as the identity of how things are¹³¹. Additionally, he contends that most [if not always] people know things in this world by knowing their opposites. For example, white would have no meaning if black was not

¹²⁷ Ibid

¹²⁸ Ibid (refer to Torah, Veda, and The Baghavat Gita)

¹²⁹ Gamal (supra 111)

¹³⁰ Jewsiewicki (supra 101)

¹³¹ Eze (supra 1)

known, and even in the world of spirits heaven would have never been known (let alone being appreciated) if hell was not known, in fact the whole nature of existence would be boring to the depth of height. It is understandable that some people amongst the human species will never be satisfied, they will always want to add or eliminate something. However, I think that such enthusiasm should be controlled and be kept within limits because it may cause more unnecessary destruction. The enthusiasm of wanting to leave the ordinary reason and bother about something likely to be known as the universal reason is improper and defective to the extent that it may be more destructive to the reasoning itself.

It should be understood that philosophy is interesting as a love of wisdom¹³² because it shows different faces of reason or thought with respect to the difference in time, geographic space, and historicised experiences and so on. In this way, it keeps itself lovely and lively to those who are interested in obtaining the understanding of natural beings with their identities. If taken at that level of understanding, it sounds more reasonable to welcome thought as differentiated as it is, and never try to forge it into one singularity that seems to mean nothing to the existing nature of beings in this world. In this given, I attempt to suggest that the coming into existence of something called universal reason (let alone that there is no hope that such kind of a thing will ever come to existence and manifest in this world while this world is still as natural as it is) will be the entrance of boredom in studying reason or philosophy. In fact it will inflict boredom of a higher degree because it will not be speaking the truth about this world that people exist and live in, and at the same time people will be needing ways of reason that speak to them at a particular time, area or place, and expressing their individuated historicised experiences. In most cases if not all, people have an interest in things that resonate with them or that speak directly to their standards of existence and nature. Ordinary reason speaks directly to human beings and the nature of their existence in this world, and without some unnecessary compromise that universal reason seems to ask for, or even demand. Also, in speaking of developmental invention, it is worth saying that

¹³² Socrates in Santayana (supra 100)

universal reason will not [in any way] be a developmental invention at all to natural humans in this known and occupied universe. Instead, universal reason would be a complication to the already uneasy world, given that even the language of it would most probably not be the language of this natural world.

3.4. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have discussed the challenges that may be given by those who find the idea of universal reason an acceptable improvement to world philosophy. I also endeavoured to illustrate that seeing the idea of universal reason as harmless as other concepts used in politics, such as globalisation and democracy, will never help because even those concepts accommodate some diversity within them. The basic reason for the argument in this chapter was to reveal that the idea of universal reason looks more like hoping for a miracle which will not even be related to the life of human beings in this world. This chapter built upon this argument and defended the idea of ordinary reason which speaks to the differentially individuated and historicised experiences of diverse human beings in this natural world. In all, this chapter of the thesis made a case in arguing that ordinary reason is better because it presents reasoning as it is experienced by a particular person in whatever way it is, without any unnecessary limitations.

4. Conclusion

In this dissertation, although I argued that it is bias to say Africa has no philosophy, I did not explain what African philosophy is. Talking about the definition of African philosophy would have derailed the focus of this work, as the study was meant to focus only on the conception of reason universally. More so, talking about African philosophy or any specific philosophy would deviated this study from its point of focus and added unnecessary length to this research. Likewise, I avoided being biased in this work by presenting arguments for both the defence of universal reason and the defence of ordinary reason.

This study discussed the issues raised by the idea of universal reason in this natural world, by bringing to fore the fact that universal reason has been used as a reason or a way of thought that extends beyond the naturally preserved constants which are; time (epoch), space or place, and history of the natural people. This concept of universal reasoning as propounded by some philosophers of Western origin, seemed to have been based on their thought and system of reason or philosophy that the general sense of being is always the same everywhere, at all times, and without any effect of history or particular experiences that had effect on individuals. In the introduction of this study, a narrative of the writings of some western philosophers like David Hume and Emmanuel Kant was examined. These philosophers produced a philosophy full of racist views that sought to ridicule other nations (especially the Negroes) to the extent of reducing them to the level of animals with no natural capability to produce philosophy or any system of thought. In this work I have clarified that these philosophers were not just mere racist but they seriously thought, understood and projected their ideas or views consciously. When they were trying to convince the world that their thoughts are forever (as they were/ are) as long as the nature of this world exists, and that their kind of thinking brought a lot of hindrances and objections when the idea of universalising the thought came up.

Accusing the Negroes of having no system of thought or philosophy and then suggesting that there must be a universal thought, simply reads as “accept our

Western system of reason as permanently dominant, forget about yourselves". This argued against the views of these Western philosophers, stating that the whole idea of universal reason is unacceptable because it seems like a wave of thought imperialism by the West. The study also showed that there was too much racial prejudice manifested in the works of ancient Western philosophers to the extent that they even ridiculed those who challenged them. While this study did not particularly aim to elevate one reason over another, it however sought to preclude the introducing Western thought imperialism and a kind of reasoning that does not hold or bear relevance to this ordinary world. In this light, the study asserted that any thought produced by a human in this world is ordinary in the sense that it is affected by factors like time, place, individual history and experience. This follows from the words of Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze who explained reasoning as a kind of disposition that speaks to the individuated and historicised experiences, which he called ordinary reason¹³³. Ordinary reason itself seems to be the kind of reasoning that has been used all along in this world, given that all philosophers, including Hume and Kant, were great philosophers of their time and their thoughts were affected by their era (time), place (where they lived/ West), and history (which includes their individual experiences, perceptions, and so on which influenced their views).

Generally, the arguments presented in this study were motivated by the conflict in philosophy, a conflict that exists around the issue of universal reason and its acceptability. The idea of universalising thought sounds or sounded good so much so that some philosophers see nothing wrong with it, while others like Eze, perceive it to be the worst nightmare ever to exist in this world. Both sides seem to have reasons which attracted my attention. I came to notice that reasons for supporting Eze's ordinary reason looks more solid than the reasons for the invention of 'Universal reason'. One of the aims in undertaking this critical work was to explain and clarify that reason as a human activity mean nothing when it does not relate to human beings. From this, it becomes evident that thought must have a direct relation with the one who produces it. Once this point is established, another evident fact to

¹³³ Eze (supra 1)

reckon with is that since all natural human beings in this natural world are affected by time, space, and history, their system of reason must therefore encompass those things. Moreover, once thought is taken to a level beyond natural human beings (subject to time, space, and history), it is no longer suitable to be welcomed by them in this world because that kind of reason itself cannot be from this world. Therefore, it is best if such reason is used in the place where it came from, by those who consider themselves universal. Besides, producing the so-called universal reason needs a being that is omniscient (all-knowing), omnipresent (present everywhere all the time), and eternal (everlasting as in being timeless)¹³⁴, and surely such a being would not be a human.

Within this piece of writing, the belief in miracles was discredited together with the view of universal reason as a development in thought. Discrediting miracles, dreams, visions and all things of such nature was presented based on the fact that they need lot of faith in the extraordinary, while people live and exist in the ordinary natural world¹³⁵. The idea of universal reason seems to be based on miraculous and supernatural hopes, and it is considerably supernatural to think that there will be a universal thought (untouched by the effects of time, space, and history) while produced by natural people who are directly affected by the natural factors. It even becomes more unbelievable to think that such kind of reason will make sense and be accepted or appreciated by the human beings in this world. In view of this, the first question that came to mind as I presented my arguments in this study was; who shall produce such universal reason; in what state of mind will he/ she be while doing it, and how shall it be understandable to the people of this natural world? In effect, if any person may honestly ponder over such basic questions it would become very easy to see that there exist quite much beyond the word 'universal reason', it is not just a decorative word, it means something deeper which will never be possibly established in this world. Also other issues that seemed convincing about the idea

¹³⁴ Eze (supra 1)

Also refer to religious texts in footnote 130

¹³⁵ K Parker Jr .2013. The Naughty LSAT Study guide: Not-So-Boring Analytic Reasoning practice problems.

of universal reason have been reviewed and critically dealt with in this piece of writing. But most significant to the arguments of this project, is the fact that it started by spelling out that all humans are naturally the same and equal before nature and existence, and the same applies to their thoughts no matter where they are, who they are, and at what time they live.

Furthermore, the study presented and defended Emmanuel Eze's view that universal reason is a reasonably objectionable idea. Taking everything into account, this study cross-examined the views from both sides, as it pertains to universal reason and ordinary reason. In discussing the ordinary reason, this study compared and critically analysed it as a kind of reason which is within time (era), space (place in this world), and history of humans in this natural world. Thus I presented the ordinary reason to be more sensible to relate with and understand in the context of this world. In view of this kind of reason, I also pointed out that amazingly, people in this world have all along been exercising ordinary reason/thought; no one has ever been engaged in something that has the form of what is portrayed by this idea of universal reason; and there has been nothing philosophically wrong with it. In line with this argument, Eze also pointed out that nature itself is beautified by variation to the extent that diversity should be embraced, and not repelled because even the knowledge of things is acquired through the knowledge of what they are not¹³⁶. So the point of departure for this study was to ensure the realisation that nature presents different versions of itself in different people differently, according to time, space, and history. This makes universal reason to be nothing but a dream, disturbance and ultimate confusion of the natural human mind in this natural world. I appeal to other philosophers who are interested in the question of rationality, thought, and universality to make inquiry on the issue of what makes ordinary reason not convincing beside its counterpart Western so-called universal reason.

¹³⁶ Eze (supra 1)

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