



Africa and Her Diaspora: Between Politics of Identity (ies), Otherization and Togetherness

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ABSTRACT

The present article posits the existence of conflicting relationships between born-in-Africa Africans and Diaspora Africans, two peoples that are actually one, though separated by history and geography. Leaning on historiography, sociology, psychology, Afrocentrism, and postcolonialism as theories, and axiology and panopticism as paradigms, the paper analyzes the relationship between Africa and her Diaspora, with Africa used metaphorically as 'Mother' and 'Motherland.' It also explores the *us* versus *them* dichotomy in (re)shaping self through theorizing space/place, culture, and identity (ies). It further analyzes the politicization of race and ethnicity that dialogues the 'in-group' and 'out-group' formation as it paves the way for the politics of discursive de-racialization, de-ethnicization, and de-territorialization for togetherness in a differentiated otherization and *ethos*.

Keywords: Africa, Diaspora, dichotomy, identity (ies), history, ethos, togetherness.

Citation: Saliou DIONE (2022). Africa and Her Diaspora: Between Politics of Identity (ies), Otherization and Togetherness. *International Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Studies*, 4(1), 128-134.

INTRODUCTION

The idea occurred to me that I had to write an article about the [conflicting] relationships between Africans and African-Americans following a discussion I had with an African-American taxi driver driving me from Newark Airport to Highland Park in New Jersey after a trip to San Diego in California, in the United States of America. As we were discussing he made such a jaw-dropping remark, saying that 'you, Africans, don't like us, we, African-Americans.' Africans and African-Americans have always been the racial and sexual 'other' in white supremacist societies since the time of slavery. That existing situation, stemming from the economics of slavery, has then contributed in producing normative assumptions and stereotypical mental representations of Black people everywhere in the world. In fact, the negative images used to label them have so long shaped their self-definition, their 'distant' and 'conflicting' relationship with/in Africa and America. The internalization and further the internationalization of such negative images that were reinforced by colonization have inevitably led to a negative mutual perception which, as K. Sue Jewell argues, not only "affects male-female relations, but also extends to the area of cultural conflict among members of the black community" [1]. In fact, the white supremacist ideologists have created *othering* discourses that have maintained distances and reproachful interactions between these two groups. Therefore, the inability to share the mode of power informed by history and geography, marked by *otherization* and differentiated *ethos*, compels [us] to revisit history and the nature of the interactions between Africans and people of African descent in order to redefine and reshape their self-images within the intra-cultural network of relationships. This article seeks to implement necessary and loving boundaries between them as it revisits the history of slavery and colonization, and their effects on their relationships. It is concerned with issues of culture, identity (ies), *ethos*, and migration as pretexts and paradigms. To this end, it leans on the notions of being, through different historical experiences (slavery, segregation and colonization) and of contact with other cultures through migration and education, be-coming, and search for acceptance and self-fulfillment, and be-longing, longing for and becoming in a new space/place and [a] new identity (ies).

Indeed, it is essential to consider how the renewed interest in theorizing space/place in postmodernist and feminist theory [2], embodied in such notions as panopticism, simulacra, de-territorialization, post-modern hyper-space, borderlands, and marginality force one to reevaluate such central analytic concepts in that of 'culture,' and, by extension, the idea of "cultural difference" [3]. Doing this shows how the representations of space/place, culture, and identity (ies)

¹ K. Sue Jewell (1993), *From Mammy to Miss America and Beyond: Cultural Images and the Shaping of US Social Polivy*: New York: Routledge, p. 44.

² See Anzaldúa 1987; Baudrillard 1988; Deleuze and Guattari 1987; Foucault 1982; Jameson 1984; Kaptan 1987; Martin and Mohanty 1986.

³ Akhil Gupta & James Ferguson (1997) eds., *Culture, Power, Place. Explorations in Critical Anthropology*, Durham & London, Duke University Press, p. 261.

are remarkably linked together with break-up, rupture, and disjunction images. Doing this is also looking at space and place as integral parts of the personal, local, and global dynamics. This is also about acknowledging the interdependencies as well as recognizing the overdeterminate autonomies [...] and social whole [4]. Therefore, it would be important to theorize space/place, culture and identity through the *us* versus *them* dichotomy in self (re)shaping processes, analyze the politicization of race and ethnicity by dialoguing '*in-group*' and '*out-group*' formation before paving the way for discourses on de-racialization, de-ethnicization and de-territorialization in otherization and *ethos*.

Theorizing Space/Place, Culture, and Identity (ies): *Us* vs. *Them* in Self Re (shaping) Processes

A critical analysis of history and the relationship between Africa and her Diaspora shows a dichotomy between the 'self' and the 'other' that variously characterizes the interactions between Africans and African-Americans. That is what has contributed in foregrounding the dichotomization of *us* (Africans) versus *them* (African-Americans) in an attempt to lend a voice to the reactions against the way each group looks at the other. In fact, African history, which is considered by some African thinkers to be a supporting ground, changes people's consciousness of personal and public history (the Middle Passage and colonization) which highlights three dimensional temporalities (past, present, and future) embodied in space/place, culture, and identity (ies). These elements [can] shape the individual's personality, attitudes, and behaviours. Their cross-analysis then helps to see how African-Americans and Africans see each other differently and why they might not also quite fit into each other's lifestyle and culture. Each of them faces difficulties to find balance between their needs, wishful thinking, and desires in a different environment and culture. Therefore, each of them fails to get accustomed to the customs and life of the other in a 'new' place with impossible 'metamorphosis' and accommodation.

The distinction of societies, Africa and America (the West), nations and cultures (African and American cultures), is based on a seemingly unproblematic division of space/place, on the fact that they occupy 'naturally' discontinuous spaces/places. The adoption of a premise of discontinuity forms the starting point from which one can theorize contact, difference, conflict, misunderstanding, contradiction, misinterpretation, misconception, and misrepresentation between different cultures and societies. It is also within the same premise that identity and its relations with space/place, culture, and identity (ies) should be looked at. The representation of the world as a collection of 'countries,' thus of different and varied spaces/places is conceived as an inherently fragmented space/place, divided by different colours into diverse national societies, each 'rooted' in its proper place (cf. Malkki), culture and identity. One can therefore take it for granted that each space/place embodies its own distinctive culture and identity. And whenever there is an encounter between two cultures, there is always a clash. This is reminiscent of interactions that can denote misinterpretation as influenced by the individuals' space/place and culture that have shaped the identities of Africans and people of African descent and how these identities interact with other 'identities.'

Indeed, space/place, culture, and identity (ies) have been constructed in Africa's past. That is the reason why one feels African-Americans or people of African descent belong to some spaces/places and not to others, marking the inextricable link between the two peoples. Exploring the link between these elements of differentiation deepens [our] understanding of identity (ies) formation and its role in the individual's sociological and psychological development, inner thoughts and mindsets. The combination of space/place, culture, and identity (ies) unearths why their bonds influence people's social formations, cultural practices, and political actions. This can also prompt their decisions to do or not to do, to act or not to act, to accept or not to accept. These cultural attitudes are much embodied feelings of displacement and estrangement from their communities. As a matter of fact, this is more visible among those who have experienced the consequences of Western civilization, as either descendants of former slaves brought up, educated and living in the Americas or in the Caribbean islands, and the colonized subjects who have lived or are still living its side effects in Africa or elsewhere. In addition to experiencing westernization, these people suffer from a melancholy (being) fostered by their unsuccessful attempt to 'return home' in order to be(come) in a space/place and time (be-coming) that should enable them both to 'belong' and yearn for an identity (be-longing).

Moreover, the melancholy, which not only haunts post-colonial Africa in the 1960s [5], but also post-slavery and post-civil rights America, accounts for the 'rite of passage' and rests on its exploration of the remote in what Hannerz terms "*the most other of others*" [6]. Hannerz's critical function is seen to tie in its juxtaposition of radically different ways of being (located 'elsewhere') with that of the African descent (Western culture), there is self-consciousness about how space/place can frame people's cultures and identities. This shows the various and multiple ways in which the two intertwine. It is in this same vein that social psychologist Irwin Altman and anthropologist Setha Low's [7] concept of

⁴ Vincent O. Odamtten (1994), *The Art of Ama Ata Aidoo: Polylectic and Reading against Colonialism*, Gainesville, University Press of Florida, p. 6.

⁵ David I. Ker, (1998), *The African Novel and the Modernist Tradition*, Peter Lang Publishing, New York, p. 84.

⁶ Hannerz Ulf (1986), "Theory in Anthropology: Small Is Beautiful, the Problem of Complex Cultures." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 28(2):362-367, p. 363.

⁷ Irwin Altman & Setha Low (1992), *Place Attachment*, Springer, New York.

place attachment explores the ways in which people connect to places, and the effects of such bonds in identity development, place-making, perception, and practice. This may account for the Diaspora individual's difficulty in feeling and making Africa a home. They can also be haunted by a personality problem as a result of 'double displacement' (slavery and return) and status of double consciousness [8] (African and African-American/Western cultures). This describes the internal conflict these subjects may experience as people belonging to a 'subordinate group' in an oppressive society, whose [unequal] structure always reminds them of their past.

The split personality is syndromic and traumatic as they try to cope, consciously or unconsciously, with their double identity as Africans and African descendant/African-Americans. But the latter's African-American/Caribbean identities have taken precedence over their original African one. Being moulded by 'their' Western culture, some of them stand ignorant of all that has something to do with Africa. Their cultural psychology has been then determined by the physical space/place of the Western environment in which they were born, grew up, and lived/live. This is evidenced by environmental and social psychologists Harold M. Proshansky, Abbe L. Fabian, and Robert Kaminoff [9] who state that space/place identity is a sub-structure of a person's self-identity, and consists of knowledge and feelings developed through everyday physical space experiences. This ranges from macro to micro: from cultures clash, with people of African descent representing (an) other culture(s), to the biographical impact, represented by the individual.

Therefore, an analysis of the two groups' personalities expresses a sense of space/place identity derived from the multiple ways in which this identity functions to provide a feeling of belonging, construct meaning, foster attachments/detachments, and mediate changing attitudes and behaviours. It is space/place identities that inform about people's experiences and mindsets vis-à-vis other spaces/places and other people from other spaces/places too. Consequently, the search for the 'self' is internal since it is more linked to the mind, the psyche than it seems to be. This is found among many Blacks who are slave descendants and have made the Americas or the Caribbean Islands their [new] home. Then, the struggle for identity is more pressing within the 'self' than within other social circumstances. The new generation of Blacks may not be that aware about and have knowledge of the past, the Middle Passage. As such, this can denote inner sufferings as they long for a place to belong to and who to be and become in this quest for the 'self' in a country where they are economically, socially, and politically marginalized, thus making them 'invisible selves.' They may remain lost, which is an expression of the psychological essence of their 'self' in their search for their real roots and self.

Indeed, the reference to space/place makes memories cohere in complex ways and the experiences people of African descent have gone through cause the sense of space/place and the politics of space/place, culture, and identity to dramatically intertwine. The expression of 'self' then becomes very poignant in identity (ies) formation and the discourse of the 'self' that is associated with what it means to be an African. This situation of dis-ease makes some people of African descent suffer from *in-between-ness* insofar as they are torn apart between two ways of life, two mindsets, two cultures, and two 'selves.' As a consequence, their mindsets forcibly relate to the space/place where they have grown up and evolved or are evolving, and their journey into 'cultural slavery' expresses their *two-ness* and *in-between-ness* statuses.

Politicization of Race and Ethnicity: Dialoguing 'In-group' and 'Out-group' Formation

A critical analysis of history suggests that dichotomy between the 'self' and the 'other' variously characterizes the relationship between Africans and people of African descent. It is then within the context of politicization of race and ethnicity, 'in-group' and 'out-group' formation, otherwise herein referred to as *otherization*, that there is need to dialogue the various types and levels of differentiated identity expressions. This should help to consolidate widespread faith in African identity (ies), *ethos*, and citizenship(s) that take into account new identity formations. As an attempt to lend a voice to reactions against the conflicting situation between the two groups, it is important to put into the on-going critical conversation the differentiated *otherization* of Black people along the line of *us* (Africans) versus *them* (African-Americans).

The dialogues of a synchronic and diachronic nature present some levels and categories of *otherization* and *ethos*, which pits *us* against *them* as products of a dichotomized relationship. Etymologically studies indicate that *ethos* is derived from a Greek word that designates "*accustomed place*" [10], as in a school where horses are schooled. Originally, the meaning was not associated with morality. Aristotle widened the word to refer to the persuasion ability, the starting point of which is personal character used to describe the guiding beliefs or ideals that particularize a

⁸ W. E. B Du Bois (1994), *The Souls of Black Folk*. New York, Avenel, NJ: Gramercy Books.

⁹ See Harold M. Proshansky, Abbe L. Fabian, and Robert Kaminoff, (1983), "Place-Identity, Physical World Socialization of the Self," *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, Vol 3, 57-83.

¹⁰ Proscurion Jr., *Der Begriff Ethos bei Homer*. (2014) pp. 162–63.

community, a nation, or an ideology. *Ethos* forms the root of *ethikos* to mean “moral, showing moral character” [11] In modern usage, the term denotes the disposition, character, or fundamental values particular to a specific person, people, corporation, culture, or movement whereas in sociology it refers to the fundamental spirit of a culture; the underlying sentiment that informs the beliefs, customs, or practices of a group or society, dominant assumption of people or period. In that regard, many of the newly transplanted Africans, though held in bondage, never gave up the dream that one day they would return to their homeland. In literature, Olaudah Equiano and Phillis Wheatley, two of the earliest writers in African-American letters, with their contrasting images of, and attitudes to the Continent which they remembered as home, stand as the pioneers of a remote period of Black Americans who had sought to redefine their relationships to Africa and Africans. From then on, there has been a need to highlight and scrutinize the devastating stereotypes, clichés, perceptions, and assumptions that Africans have, or are believed to have, about African-Americans and vice versa.

In fact, compounding the home problem is the ‘indifference’ of a large number of Africans towards the legacy of slavery, which is a constant reminder to African-Americans of their ‘subordinate’ status in a predominantly white society which remains essentially ‘racist’ even long after the unacceptable institution of slavery was abolished. Africans are often accused of not having [enough] memories of the practice as much as African-Americans do. Whereas the legacy of slavery is an integral part of the daily life of the Black community in America, in Africa people still think of the daughter or wife who went to the market or to the well to fetch water and never came back; the father or husband who went to the field and never came back; the son who went to the pastureland and never came back. Therefore, there is no doubt whatsoever that the trauma of slavery is acutely felt on both sides. Unfortunately, many people of African descent think that Africans feel they have nothing to do with their culture and are even ignorant of it. This shows how the history of slavery is a divisive issue between these two groups. And this divisiveness becomes more visible in a context of soul-searching on the causes and consequences of the trade.

Therefore, a negative ‘otherization’ between the two entities is obvious. The idea was mainly carried in the past by white supremacist ideologies that sought to pit Africans against their African-American brothers and sisters by falsifying the true history of the mercantile practice of slavery and then by endeavoring hard to convince the latter that they are different from the former in every respect. The descendants of slaves are portrayed in the history books and in the White establishment rhetoric as ‘products’ sold by Africans. That situation then emerged as a longstanding manifestation of political polarization, ethnicization, (de)territorialization, and spatialization of their relationships, and the convergence of all their other forms. Based on a negative ‘otherization,’ abound stereotypical and assumptional relationships that have highly impacted the interactions between Africans and Diaspora Africans. As two groups having grown up in two different spaces/places, their situational identities show that myth and reality, as aspects of ethnicity and relationship determinants, complement the analysis of *otherization*. The purpose foregrounds forms of cultural, social, economic, and political ideals that are complex and contextual. Most significant is the critique of *otherization* and differentiation that leads to conflict, hatred, thus ending up in *us* versus *them* dichotomy. The ethnic group, no more than ‘race’ or any other ‘non-reality’ invented for the purposes, has never been a true basic relational reality in the pre-capitalist African worlds. As such, the *us* and *them* dichotomy alongside the relationships between Africans and people of African descent has been most pronounced as a divisive tool between the two groups. With their ethnocentrism spirit, white supremacist ideologists have succeeded in putting them in a situation of conflict and dis-ease.

Therefore, much of the tension exists because both groups do not sit down together at the same cathartic table and talk about their uncomfortable relationships. From then on, the ethnocentric nature becomes an expression of ignorance insofar as they often think that their history is taught to everyone else. The black Americans also, for their part, have taken for granted the same assumptional and stereotypical attitudes towards Africans and Africa in such a way that many of them do not know the difference, and do not care either. Many of them also know nothing about Africa, apart from what they have heard and what is said about it, and especially by white outsiders. Hegel’s racist representation of Africa as an ‘epistemic void’ and as a ‘jungle,’ thus perpetrating hegemonic European historical discourses about their Motherland, should be questioned to spare them from adopting a Eurocentric popular view of Africa and Africans in view of the asymmetrical nature of some African societies. This should also help to scientifically debunk the one-dimensional image of Africa as a continent of poverty, epidemics, dictatorship, corruption, and evils of all forms, as shown in western media, and referred to as the ‘Africa of the western media’, which is different from the Africa the Africans live in and are proud of.

Otherization and *Ethos*: Discourses on De-racialization, De-ethnicization and De-territorialization

In the relationships between Africans and people of African descent, there is a need to “control the image” [12] to paraphrase Charles Johnson, whose idea has been strengthened by Mary Helen Washington who states that “we must also begin to realize that we have the power to choose which images we will celebrate. We have myth and image-makers of

¹¹ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book 2 (1103a17).

¹² Charles Johnson (1988), *Being and Race: Black Writing Since 1970*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, p. 11.

our own who have done their job well" [13]. The dynamic and relational nature expresses a process of endless re-description of the relationship between Africa and her Diaspora as a way of allowing any interactive possibility with and response to each other, as an expression of identity and a cultural dialogue the two sides should plead for. This constitutes a reminder of the pasty cooperation that once existed between some diasporic and continental Pan-Africanist leaders and intellectuals like William Edward Burghardt DuBois, Marcus Mosiah Garvey, Edward Wilmot Blyden, Booker Taliaferro Washington, Kwame Nkrumah, Wole Soyinka, Nugi wa Thiong'o, Leopold Sedar Senghor, Aime Cesaire, among others. It is this type of bond that everyone should, consciously or not, enshrine in their daily life. Indeed, Africans and people of African descent should be prompted by a feeling of optimism and togetherness despite the inertia and blame on both sides of the Atlantic. This is one of the ways towards breaking territories and pushing back boundaries, and going beyond differentiated *otherization* and ethos.

Before the independences in Africa, different people with different spaces/places and cultures were forced to live together to form the Pan-Africanist ideology, muffing and standing thus against ideologies that *otherized* differentiation. In the same perspective, Gupta and Ferguson challenge the notion that each country embodies its own distinctive culture and society. They argue that the notion of culture being "*discrete, object-like phenomena occupying discrete space*" [14], there is a need to embrace this space/place, culture, and identity-related ideology by advancing cultural difference through connection. They relate the idea to the context in which senses of locality and community have become 'obsolete' to many, particularly to people who move from one place to another, who are identifiable as spots on the map to find connection and contiguity of different cultures.

To this end, discourses of reconciliation, togetherness, and of 'dialogical' approach to language, communication, and cognition combine theoretical and epistemological assumptions about the communication and cognition that should prevail between Africans and people of African descent. Even if each group has expressed different opinions about each other's existential and relational situations, it is from this position that changes of mindsets will operate. With interactionalism whose communication and cognition have involved interactions with other, even though emotional and community-psyche-oriented, Africans and people of African descent need to head towards conciliation, reconciliation and togetherness. Despite all the discrepancies and misunderstanding between them, their interactions forcibly involve interdependency that cannot be reduced to cause-effect relations. Therefore, the basic constituents of the discourse behind conciliation, reconciliation and togetherness, informed by *contextualism*, should be based on interactions, rather than on speeches or utterances of words as a form of communicative constructionism that serves to convey a 'positive' message. Built up on Berger and Luckmann's theory of *social construction of reality* [15], the principle urges both sides of the Atlantic to get rid of the social and cultural constructions that have been conceived from their [own] imaginations.

Even if the discursive de-racialization, de-ethnicization, and de-territorialization embodies a 'togetherness' plea, it is based on interpersonal interactions, involving interactions with the world, albeit not always with other human beings, one has also to assume that the world is *here* (Africa) and *there* (USA/the West) to be appropriated and understood. The *hereness* and *thereness* to be combined into *oneness* or *togetherness*, as a philosophical interactionism, should antecede any particular or general act of cognition, despite human beings' ability to also construct and deconstruct, in and through language, act, and action, and communication (silence or voice), *out-there-ness* [16].

Indeed, people from the two sides of the Atlantic need to integrate other realities as a site of ritual psychic healing and out-of-bodies travel as a way of transgressing chaos and contacting the highest sacred authority that goes beyond Freud's and Jung's psychological approaches. This is evidenced by Barbara Tedlock who warns that "[...] we must remember that some cultures are much more interested in and sophisticated about alternative or altered states of consciousness [...] Western analysis of altered states would seem primitive to people who have been living with and actively developing these types of consciousness for centuries" [17]. Barbara Tedlock's reference to the notion of 'double personality' or 'double identity,' as a mixture of the 'former self' and the 'new self,' and clash of cultures, is very illustrative of the possibility of negotiation of any 'split of personality.' When two different cultures meet, there is likely to be a clash when one tries to dominate the other or when one looks at the other as being 'inferior,' or 'superior' or when there exists a process that requires adaptability and acceptability. In this case, individuals are urged to embark on a psychological essence of the 'self' in the midst of their search for their roots.

¹³ Mary Helen Washington (1971), "Their Fiction Becomes Our Reality: Black Women Images Makers," *Black World*, 23. 10, pp. 10-18.

¹⁴ Gupta, Akhil & James Ferguson. "Beyond Culture: Space, Identity and the Politics of Difference," in *Cultural Anthropology* 7, No. 1 (1992): 6-23, p. 7.

¹⁵ Peter Berger & Thomas Luckmann (1966), *The Social Construction of Reality*, New York, NY: Free Press.

¹⁶ Jonathan Potter (1996), *Representing Reality. Discourse, Rhetoric and Social Construction*, London, Sage Publication.

¹⁷ Barbara Tedlock (1987), "Dreaming and Dream Research." *Dreaming: Antropological and Pshychological Interpretations*. Ed. Barbara Tedlock. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 1-30, p. 20.

However, the humanistic-based approach sees differentiation and *otherization* from a positive perspective. It conceives them as opportunities to engage dialogue and negotiation so as to achieve harmony and *whole-ness* between Africa and her Diaspora. In line with the theory of family systems developed by Murray Bowen [18] which identifies instinctual life forces, differentiation, and togetherness through dialogue implies here an assertion of *our* own thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and decisions. Indeed, conciliation, reconciliation, and ‘togetherness’ make Africans and people of African descent develop their identity (ies) in their relationships. They thus seek to balance differentiation and ‘togetherness,’ a psychological strategy that should enable them to be, as theorized by Bowen, a ‘T’ who is distinct and separate from others, while also being a ‘we’ who is connected with others [19]. This emphasizes the need for undifferentiated people to engage in *triangling* where they talk about other people or other things as a way to avoid a personal one-to-one level [20]. Triangles involve three spaces/places (Africa, America, and Europe) and three temporalities (past, present, and future) in a context where two parts seek to balance their relationships with one another. So, the real effectiveness of relational strategies depends on a specific conjunction, the ideal of which is defined by a correlation that transcends history, time, culture, race, ethnicity, identity and space/place that have articulated the marginalized differentiation directed against Africans and people of African descent instead of building and enhancing harmony in diversity.

Moreover, Africans and African-Americans’ history indicates that blackness and Africanness have become products of forced identities which cleave at various points of social weakness easily wedged apart when the history of slavery is raised. Though traumatic and disheartening, the spirit of ‘togetherness’ gives way to opportunity, builds up an all-inclusive African identity and *ethos*, and rethinks the strategy towards a differentiated and diverse dialogue-based and harmonious relationship between Africans and people of African descent so as to shape what can be termed an ‘all-inclusive African *ethos*.’ The move is evidenced by Samuel Esema when he argues that “unless the past is clearly understood and the undoing of the pre- and post-colonialism are appropriately addressed, the foundation of the continent’s stability and the capacity of the political, social, and economic independence shall always be a major concern” [21].

As a consequence, conciliation, reconciliation, and togetherness should be implemented first individually (with one’s own self) and collectively (with other selves) to impact on the general level of differentiation. Murray Bowen’s triangle building block of the emotional system, in which Africans and Diaspora Africans experience anxiety, serves to stabilize their relationships and binds the anxiety between the two groups. This will construct the spiritual and psychological bridge that should enable them to go beyond territories and push boundaries. In his novel on the invasion of Igboland by the British colonizer, Chinua Achebe raises the same issue and elaborates on how we can fight when our own brothers have turned against us: “the White man is very clever. He came quietly and peaceably with his religion. We were amused at his foolishness and allowed him to stay. Now he has won our brothers, and our clans no longer act like one. He has put a knife on the things that held us together and we have fallen apart” [22]. And there is no shade of doubt that Achebe’s insightful assessment of the dismantling interference of the Whiteman in Igbo affairs could be very helpful in entangling the [conflicting] situation that prevails between Africa and her Diaspora.

CONCLUSION

The people of African descent who live in the Western world are more likely to naturally embrace Western culture. This often creates a mark of differentiation between them and their brothers and sisters living in Africa. On the differences over slavery, continental Africans have not experienced the post-slavery syndrome and its effects in the same way a lot of African-Americans have. This article having given precedence to a multi-form analysis over a monolithic one, it has looked at the politics of historiography as a new source of evidence and methodology that leans on afrocentric, psychological, and sociological approaches in order to display the relationships between Africans and people of African descent. It has tried to capture and understand how the movements, memory flows, and dynamics of behavioural and attitudinal changes operate. It has further analyzed how to go beyond the oppositional discourse (s) of conflictual relationships engendered by Western intellectuals’ falsification of history on the one hand, and the lack of communication and misunderstanding between Africans and people of African descent on the other hand. The article has also highlighted the link between space/place, culture, and identity (ies); which has helped to assume that a shared complexion does not equal a shared culture and identity, nor does it automatically lead to one-ness, togetherness,

¹⁸ Bowen, Murray (1974), “*Toward the Differentiation of Self in One’s Family of origin.*” Family Therapy in Clinical Practice (reprint ed.), Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield (published 2004), pp. 529–547.

¹⁹ Bowen, Murray (1974), “*Toward the Differentiation of Self in One’s Family of origin.*” Family Therapy in Clinical Practice, *op. cit.*, pp. 529–547.

²⁰ *Idem.*

²¹ Emma Etuk (2008), *Never Again : Africa’s Last Stand, Universe*, New York, Bloomington, Shanghai.

²² Chinua Achebe (1994), *Things Fall Apart*, Anchor Books, New York.

brotherhood, and friendship, as Kofi Glover states it with a tint of exaggeration though: “*whether we like it or not, Africans and African-Americans have two different and very distant cultures*” [23].

The paper has also explored how Africans and people of African descent should endeavor to set up spaces for peace, dialogue, conciliation, reconciliation, and togetherness initiatives to better deal with the crisis which has roots in age-old historical *otherization*. The possibility of positively harnessing the differentiation and *otherization* so as to nurture more harmonized relationships between the two groups has been scrutinized. Additionally, it has questioned how to articulate a ‘*Black ethos*’ or an ‘*all-inclusive African ethos*’ that cherishes an African identity as it analyzes identity as a multifaceted phenomenon just as conciliation, reconciliation, and togetherness are a multifaceted process of transformation to be addressed from various dimensions and approaches. The paper has opened up room for dialogue regarding ‘complementary differentiation,’ through which initiatives, encompassing communication, understanding, and acceptance of others as one’s *alter egos*. This should permit to collectively build a ‘holistic Black/African *ethos*’ that is representative of the multifaceted, multi-varied, multi-lingual, and multi-ethnic identities, personalities, and cultures which Africa and her Diaspora are endowed with. One of the tragedies of post-slavery and neo-colonialism is that Africans continue to look at western-tailored history with such externally-oriented (dis)empowerment and capacities that they become ignorant of their own history.

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