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Article

Moments Of Dislocation: Reflections on the Colonial Vestiges Embedded in African Higher Education

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Abstract

Africans have exhibited tremendous resilience, coping abilities, and strategies to survive in multiple spaces globally despite the tensions and challenges associated with the Euro-colonial enterprise. However, the charge to liberate the African mind remains unabated and requires the unpacking of the complexities of the colonial schema, to advance African agency. The colonial is alive and a lack of scrutiny frustrates an understanding of its nuances and the guises in which it manifests, causing the colonised to perpetuate its plans in ignorance. The article presents selected areas where Africans have been de-centred in consciousness. Termed "moments of dislocation," these areas are historical, linguistic, inferiorisation of the African being, and journey to the West. Although these themes may not be exhaustive, they offer a path to instigate or sustain conversations about the insidious effects of the colonial, and potentially inculcated into discourses and praxis towards mental liberation. Identifying these disorders contributes to the comprehension of coloniality of knowledge, schooling, power, and being. Through critical African education, these concepts would receive unremitting scrutiny for African agency.

Keywords: higher education; decolonisation; colonial education; critical African education; African culture

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Introduction

The centrality of culture in framing humanity and human endeavours is indispensable. Socialisation, through its multiple agents and forms, remains the vehicle to transmit and sustain culture. In a much broader and deeper sense, this socialisation process is what we call education. And it is in furtherance of the indispensability of culture to humanity and also meaningful education that scholars endorse culture and cultural perspectives to shape any worthy system of education (see Dei 2009; Mbiti 2015; Sesanti 2019; Tamale, 2020). According to Mbiti (2015, 7–8):

> The word culture covers many things, such as the way people live, behave and act, and their physical as well as their intellectual achievements. Culture shows itself in art and literature, dance, music and drama, in the styles of building houses and of people's clothing, in social organizations and political systems, in religion, ethics, morals and philosophy, in the customs and institutions of the people, in their values and laws, and in their economic life.

Mbiti's extensive and meticulous conceptualisation illustrates the profound scope of culture in human activities. Culture is fundamental to all forms of education because it is the ideology that informs a person's humanity and employs tools like literature, music, dance, and clothing, among others, to perpetuate itself. It is with this mindset that African scholars must continue the multilayered analysis of the hegemonic cultural aspirations of European colonialism in Africa.

European colonialism in Africa created a binary between African and European cultures, and hierarchised them (Nkrumah 1963). To the colonists, African culture was unworthy, hence the civilising mission. The condescending dispositions towards African culture upset the humanity of Africans, treating adherents of the culture with contempt. Natives socialised in the domineering culture tend to denigrate their own culture because of privilege and power. While culture and identity are sites of postmodernist discourses and scrutiny, highlighting the fluidity embedded in such conceptions, there appears to be a prevailing cultural insufficiency, nervousness, and cynicism among Africans. The damage to Africa's past and the ignorance of the totality of African history fuels the outlook that African cultural worldviews are insignificant, thus the urge for abandonment.

Awakening African cultural consciousness in education is crucial to the nurture of an African identity and economic and technological advancements. I argue for the rescue of the best of Africa's antiquity in relation to contemporary realities because of the sustained negative stereotypes and perceptions of Africans. Totally abandoning the past threatens the future because of its influence in shaping human endeavours. For Africans, dislocated by European and Arabian imaginations and constructs, it becomes important for a renaissance in African cultural worldviews for pride and agency.

While the schooled ("educated") African is critiqued for lacking African agency in almost all facets of life (Amuzu 2019, 2021; Nketsia 2013), they should escape blame because they lack appropriate socialisation. To embrace Europe is still seen as "modernity," while embodying Africa is backward or "traditional." Even when things African are embraced, it must satisfy a certain European standard or be cleansed in "Euro-sanctity." For instance, Ghanaians commonly perform two marriage ceremonies/rites; first, the traditional rites before proceeding to the church for blessings, as if the former is not sacred. Ghanaians tend to forget that a great deal of human symbolisms and representations are fundamentally traditional, be it clothes, technologies, or outlooks on life. In the intelligentsia, it is common to find debates and discussions on the theme "Tradition versus Modernity." While the issues of modernity (see Gyekye 1997; Wallerstein 1995) and the postmodern (see Bertens 2003; Wallerstein 1995) have received deserved attention, these conversations seem not to attract critical interrogation in the African academe. Indeed, what is "modern" (as also suggested in notions of the postmodern) will continually be conceptually abstract, expansive, and plural. Yesterday's modern is today's ancient and today's modern, tomorrow's ancient. Also, the fact that the pyramids of Giza continue to baffle contemporary science does not make them modern. Apart from novel inventions/phenomena, the modern is essentially improving traditional ways to suit present and future needs. Simply put, it is the traditional that is enhanced or modernised. The quest for modernity should not instigate the abandonment of worthy traditions/culture or the haste to replace them without meaningful consideration of "cultural politics." The aspiration should seek to improve African traditions and culture to meet present-day needs.

According to Nketsia (2013), African culture remains visible despite Arab and European attacks. This visibility does not radiate into national governance, education, leadership, and economics because "highly educated" is trapped in a binary of devotions and realities: the bait of "Euro modernity" branded by individualism or African cultural expectations that eschew values of individualism. Similarly, Kasongo (2010, 314) argues, "One could infer that when Westernisation was imported to African countries, the hidden side of modernism was materialist interests. Civilisation was just another concept of domination: imposition of incoming new culture over traditional cultural values." Obanya (2011, xxv), sharing his view on cultural relevance and the symbiotic relationship it has with any worthwhile process of education, observes:

> In all other parts of the world, the educated is usually the cultured; in Africa, the educated is the de-cultured. Educational reforms undertaken in the continent since the 1960s have not strictly addressed these fundamental issues. Instead, reforms have simply tinkered with curricula, school calendar and the mere proliferation of institutions.

In support, Tangwa (2011) notes that ideas such as ethics, education, and culture are allied concepts in traditional African education. So "it goes without saying that culture is central for any system of education, and inevitably so" (102). Culture therefore

structures and embodies modes of judgment. Culture functions to construct social organisations, conception of the material and immaterial world, and perception of "Self" in relation to others. Despite the strong supposition for African higher education to be shaped by African culture, no culture is static and I do not assume the indefinite preservation of the authenticity of African culture. African culture will continue to receive influences, but its foundations must remain. Worthy aspects must be kept and enhanced, while undesirable aspects must be extinguished because, ultimately, cultural destruction bequeaths ignorance and inappropriate behaviour.

The impact of European colonialism in Africa is multidimensional, bequeathing many systems and structures rooted in its schema. The lack of agency reflects in performing basic functions like naming children, where European (supposedly Christian) and Arabian (supposedly Islamic) names are revered. I join the many scholars who have argued that the African has been dislocated from their cultural centricity (see Ake 2012; Mbiti 2015; Nketsia 2013; Nwokeocha 2014). I call the occurrence of these anomalies "moments of dislocation" and this article categorises these moments. Although these dislocations are vast and it is virtually impossible to capture their full diversities and complexities, the article concentrates on the following dislocations: historical, linguistic, journey to the West, and inferiorisation of the African being—suggesting ways to improve these anomalies. Overall, the article argues that colonialism hoodwinked Africans; however, the relics of the colonial system, especially its agents of socialisation, make Africans co-authors in their mental enslavement. I discuss these moments of dislocation in connection with the call for African universities to re-examine their activities to make education meaningful.

The Moments of Dislocation

I acknowledge the tensions of contemporary life in Africa with all its historical and contemporary difficulties and the tremendous resilience, coping abilities, and strategies Africans have employed to live in different spaces across the globe. However, the charge to liberate the African mind requires advocates to help to deconstruct the complexities embedded in the colonial schema. There is a need to segregate items, phenomena, ideas, and concepts among others and present them as specific elements worthy of interrogation to advance African agency. These moments of dislocation should guide, alert, and refresh the memory of educators and education stakeholders of the potential themes to inculcate in discourses and praxis towards mental liberation. I will now discuss the background leading to the moments of dislocation, their prevailing effect(s), and measures to redress them to promote African agency in education.

Historical Dislocation

Historical dislocation is arguably the most devastating discontinuity that can be inflicted on the consciousness of any individual or nation. European colonialism and Western education carved a new Africa, African, and African history devoid of any antiquity. In fact, it was and is still common to hear "educated" Africans say with pride that "African

history started with the European discovery of Africa." These "educated" persons proudly denigrate their essence and being because they do not know better. History, according to Clarke (1994, 44), "Is a clock that people use to tell their political time of day. It is also a compass that people use to find themselves on the map of human geography." However, that Africa is still grappling to develop contemporary systems, ideologies, and governance structures, among others, reflects the disconnection with its past because "History tells a people where they have been and what they have been … where they are and what they are. Most importantly, history tells a people where they still must go and what they still must be" (Clarke 1994, 44).

Reiterating the importance of historical knowledge to any people, Chang (2006, 447) quotes Marcus Garvey as saying that "a people without the knowledge of their past history, origin and culture is like a tree without roots." Similarly, Achebe (2012, i), writing on Biafra and the Nigerian civil war (1967–1970), cites the Igbo proverb that "a man who does not know where the rain began to beat him cannot say where he dried his body." In line with Africa's peculiar circumstances, Achebe (2012, i) states:

> The rain that beat Africa began four to five hundred years ago, from the "discovery" of Africa by Europe, through the transatlantic slave trade, to the Berlin Conference of 1885. That controversial gathering of the world's leading European powers precipitated what we now call the Scramble for Africa, which created new boundaries that did violence to Africa's ancient societies and resulted in tension-prone modern states. It took place without African consultation or representation, to say the least.

The perspectives of Clarke, Achebe, and Garvey exemplify the importance of history. In Africa, Eurocentric considerations significantly shape the structure, content, and aims of education. Tokenistic considerations are granted to African worldviews, particularly its ancient history—it is either hidden, attributed to non-Africans, or viewed from anti-African perspectives. Despite these visible machinations in scholarship, African literature, artefacts, and objects of historical significance rest in museums across Europe and North America. However, in designing a system that hails Europe and scorns Africa, Europe tied its emergence into global affairs with a distorted origin of Africa's history, concealing or distorting what existed prior. Regrettably, Africans still hold on to the myth of the "discovery of Africa." Hoskins (1992, 250) therefore indicts Eurocentric scholars of "500 years of distortion, falsification, and misrepresentation of the historical truth, with the sole purpose to ossify, defend, and perpetuate the Big Lie of European supremacy, invincibility, and originality co-terminus with the Big Lie of African inferiority and nothingness." Since the Eurocentric agenda was to clothe Africa as needing "civilisation," Clarke (1970, 3–4) insists:

> Civilization did not start in European countries and the rest of the world did not wait in darkness for the Europeans to bring the light. … Western historians have not been willing to admit that there is an African history to be written about and that this history predates the emergence of Europe by thousands of years. ... It is too often forgotten that, when the Europeans emerged and began to extend themselves into the broader world of

> Africa and Asia during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, they went on to colonize most of mankind. Later, they would colonize world scholarship, mainly to show or imply that Europeans were the only creators of what could be called a civilization. In order to accomplish this, the Europeans had to forget, or pretend to forget, all they previously knew about Africa.

Asante (1996, 22) also shares his concerns:

> Not that the overthrow of the Latin-based model of education by the Greek-based one was not anticipated by the colleges and universities of the 19th century, but the enthroning of Greece at the head of every discipline in the West carried within it certain dangerous seeds of European hegemony that eventually would demand a response from non-Europeans. Almost in every quarter of the academy and from every continent have come those responses.

Asante (1996) disputes the imposition of Eurocentrism as a universal way of knowing and the solitary root for educating. I concur with Asante that there is nothing wrong so long as Eurocentric views form the basis of European history and knowing. Asante, quoted in Turner (2002), faults the structure of African Studies in American and Western universities; it is limited in scope and denigrates Africa and Africans. Asante says Europe has removed Africa from its "position" and subjectivity, losing agency. At the moment, Africa is "only on the periphery of Europe. We could only become sane if we understood that we were agents in the world—not spectators, but participants in history, and actors in history" (Turner 2002, 717–18).

History, undoubtedly, is an important tool for African transformation. African scholarship must interrogate the past to understand its dynamics and perceive history subjectively. African history should not only elicit the tragedies and recollection of misrepresentations. The past is always alive, hence the need to dislocate Africans historically to make Africa's past unattractive. Europe then becomes a saviour, and the prevailing Western tastes, perspectives, lifestyles, and preferences reflect this redemption.

Inferiorisation of the African Being

The disparaging historical narratives about Africa inferiorised Africa and Africans in the world's consciousness. To dominate and subjugate a people, it is crucial to make them imbibe and internalise a sense of inferiority. From the thirteenth century onwards, Europeans employed pseudo-scientific narratives to advance a course to despise Africans and justify their enslavement and subsequent colonisation. The Arabs had earlier (circa eighth century) employed similar means to enslave Africans (Azumah 2014). The colonial school emerged with a trope of "enlightenment," yet subtly engineered a subliminal promotion of a sense of inferiority. Whether intentionally or coincidentally, the word "black," which is associated with Africans, has virtually no positives in its usage in the English language, the adopted lingua franca of many African countries.

The desire and schema to confer inferiority on "blackness" is reflected in the thoughts and deeds of many European leaders and scholars. For instance, in 1937 the former British prime minister, Winston Churchill, stated:

> I do not admit for instance, that a great wrong has been done to the Red Indians of America or the black people of Australia. I do not admit that a wrong has been done to these people by the fact that a stronger race, a higher-grade race, a more worldly wise race to put it that way, has come in and taken their place. (Hayden 2015)

A prominent European scholar, Hegel, maligned Africans, equating them to animals and further claiming that Africa lacked history. This thought puts into perspective the treatment meted out to Africans in the West. Hegel is quoted as saying:

> The Negro, as already observed, exhibits the natural man in his completely wild and untamed state. We must put aside all thought of reverence and morality—all that we call feeling—if we would rightly comprehend him; there is nothing harmonious with humanity to be found in this type of character. (Georg 1956, 93)

Abdi (2011, 85) also quotes Hegel:

> Africa is not interesting from the point of view of its own history … because Africa is in a state of barbarism and savagery which is preventing him from being an integral part of civilization. Africa, as far back as history goes, has remained closed and without links with the rest of the world. It is the country of gold which closed in on itself, the country of infancy, beyond the daylight of conscious history, wrapped in the blackness of night.

Casely-Hayford (2012) further argues that there was an agenda to destroy, dismiss, and discredit ancient African achievements. Europeans fiercely disputed African feats in Great Zimbabwe, West Africa, Bunyoro, Buganda, and Benin. Even the movie, *The Gods of Egypt* (Iwanyk and Proyas 2016) cast "Whites" for lead roles—contrary to the African [Black] ethnic make-up of ancient Egypt in that era. The systems to sustain this agenda persist, however subtle they may appear. In scholarship, the origins of various academic disciplines are on either a Graeco-Roman pedestal or placed somewhere in Europe. However, Asante (2009) mentions Thales, Pythagoras, Democritus, Plato, Solon, Lycurgus, Anaxagoras, Herodotus, Homer, Eudoxus, and other early Greek scholars as studying in Africa. According to the Greek historian, Diodorus Siculus, Kemit (Egypt) was "visited by Orpheus and the poet Homer in the earliest times and in later times by many others, such as Pythagoras of Samos and Solon the lawgiver" (n.d., 239). Diodorus says that Greeks admired Egyptian achievements "and for that reason those men who have won the greatest repute in intellectual things have been eager to visit Egypt in order to acquaint themselves with its laws and institutions, which they considered to be worthy of note" (239). In Book VII of *Laws* (Jowett 1925), Plato expressed disgust about education in Hellenes (Greek) compared with Kemit. He proclaims, "O my dear Cleinias, I, like yourself, have late in life heard with amazement

of our ignorance in these matters; to me we appear to be more like pigs than men, and I am quite ashamed, not only of myself, but of all Hellenes" (337).

Some scholars have questioned the ethnicity (Africanness) of Kemit, including Professors Shinne (Canada), Mokhtar (contemporary Egypt), and Abdallah (contemporary Sudan). According to them, Africans did not construct that civilisation (Van-Sertima 1989). Therefore, at the UNESCO conference on "The Peopling of Ancient Egypt" in 1974, Diop (1978) employed a blend of linguistics, culture, and science to establish the commonality between the ancient Egyptians and the rest of the African continent, emphasising that the civilisation was built by Africans (Black people). Diop scientifically examined skeletal remains and cleansed skin pigmentation of mummified bodies to establish his case. Obenga (2004) also showed linguistic and philosophical commonalities between ancient Egyptians and other Africans. The UNESCO conference concluded that, although a "preparatory working paper sent out by UNESCO gave particulars of what was desired, not all participants had prepared communications comparable with the painstakingly researched contributions of Professors Cheikh Anta Diop and Obenga" (Diop 1978, 102). Bernal (1991, 2006) also showed the influence of Africa and Asia on early European civilisation.

Asante (2007) consequently argued that unearthing Kemit threatened the foundations of Eurocentrism. To accept Kemit as "Black" automatically meant that "Geometry, mathematics, politics, sculpture, art, astronomy, medicine, and the names of gods owe their existence to the Black people" (56). He contended further that glorifying and imposing European histories on non-Europeans conferred notions of inferiority on non-Europeans, especially Africans, given that Europeans put African at the bottom of their human ladder. Eurocentric education coerces African students to concede as "heroes and heroines individuals who defamed her people during their lifetime is being actually decentered, marginalized, and made a non-person, one whose aim in life might be some day to 'shed her blackness' as a badge of inferiority" (Asante 2007, 80). Asante says the doctrine that shapes American academe

> Seems to rest upon the belief that the European culture is the world's only source of rational thought. Every sequence of courses in the disciplines seems to assume that whites created the foundations of all knowledge on the basis of European values. And there is rarely anything in the structure of the curriculum to challenge that assumption. (2007, 22)

Alternative narratives have become necessary to entrust the requisite episteme needed to liberate the minds of both the colonised and coloniser. European expansionism has associated Africans with signs and symbolisms contemptuous of Africa and Africans, shattering self-confidence and instigating the desire to shed "Africanness." However, Downing (2013, 139), citing Marcus Garvey, writes that "if you have no confidence in self, you are twice defeated in the race of life. With confidence, you have won even before you have started." A sense of inferiority diminishes human potential and when this inferiorised people are forced into systems that perpetuate low socio-economic

conditions, this belief is reinforced. Over time, they act and think according to their subjugated realities because they lack self-value, self-worth, and self-esteem. As Biko (1978, 68) articulates, "The most potent weapon in the hands of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed." Asante (2007, 56) therefore says "the first step to liberation comes with being liberated in the mind." Despite the dehumanisation of Africans, studying about Africa's antiquity would lead to the realisation

> That this race of Black men, today our slave and the object of our scorn, is the very race to which we owe our arts, sciences, and even the use of speech! Just imagine, finally, that it is in the midst of people who call themselves the greatest friends of liberty and humanity that one has approved the most barbarous slavery, and questioned whether Black men have the same kind of intelligence as whites! (Volney 1787, 83)

Linguistic Dislocation

Closely linked with historical amnesia is linguistic dislocation. The pre-eminence of language to humanity is extremely profound, such that its loss or neglect has dire consequences for the individual and society. While this section will attempt to cover the important issues concerning linguistic dislocation, it definitely cannot cover the extensive scope of this anomaly. Language grants identity and connects people to a culture and lifestyle. A language's significance in capturing the mind of people made it fundamental to the European colonial project.

> When a colonising force occupies a nation, the replacement of the local language with that of the colonisers is instrumental in disempowering the denizens of the occupied territory. If integral aspects of cultural identity and sense of purpose are embedded in language, then that may be altered by replacing local words with imported ones that reflect concepts useful to the invader. (Katz 2015, 559)

It does not come as a surprise that European languages are privileged despite their disempowering tendencies to African consciousness. Whereas some Africans boast of their inability to speak African languages, other pretend not to speak them because of the fortification of European languages as tongues of nobility. According to Higgs (2012, 28–39):

> It is argued by protagonists of an African Renaissance in education, that the norm for educational achievement and success for African children and students is that of Western European capitalist elitist culture, where the English language is sacralized, and the internalization of bourgeois European values is seen as the index of progress.

Ngara (2007, 8) blames the African elite for the perpetuation of the colonial status-quo as they "tend to marginalize indigenous cultures" and "some people measure success in life by the distance one moves away from one's indigenous culture." The use of foreign languages as the main medium of instruction in schools contributes to Africa's underdevelopment because it hampers meaningful participation in learning. However, Bronteng, Berson, and Berson (2019) found that many Ghanaian parents were sceptical

about the policy that requires the use of mother-tongues in the early years of schooling. Apart from the privilege, status, and hegemonic attributes of the English language, the hesitancy could be because "The elite's children attend local elite schools or go to schools abroad and come back as *the flight been to* or *Made in USA*" (Ngara 2007, 8). Commenting on the power dynamics associated with the English language, former Ghanaian president, Jerry John Rawlings, observed that Ghanaians have "adopted the language of the West without its integrity. We have used the English language as a symbol of authority and power but not as a symbol of respect and integrity" (Myjoyonline 2016). The dysfunctional effects and the limitations of European languages on Africans are multifaceted. They facilitate easy brainwashing and inhibit the essence of African cultural, economic, social, and spiritual being. According to Amegago (2000), English limits expressions in African performing arts because it struggles to reveal philosophical ideas, losing much in translation, thus stifling creativity. Nwokeocha (2014) postulated that the demarcations in Africa and the imposition of foreign languages frustrates and stalls the integration of Africans as it is easier to relate to the coloniser than other Africans.

Despite the imperative to promote African local languages to develop them, the English language cannot be neglected because of its dominance across the globe. However, Africans should not privilege these foreign languages over local ones. Considering Africa's multi-ethnic demography, African countries could nurture different community-based lingua francas. For African integration, other jurisdictions can follow the East African region by institutionalising Swahili.

"Journey to the West"

Although the West portrays Africa as "the problem" and Africans as "a social problem" (Hewitt, n.d., 4), the nature of African education drives Africans to constantly embark on a "journey to the West"—this is the state of the "educated" consciousness (Nsameng 2004; Nukunya 2003). They are always running away from Africa's Euro-constructed "primitive" past and "troubled" present. Ake (2012) sees Western social science as imperialistic because of its regular binary categorisation of things as "good" and "bad"—the good being Western and the bad linked with non-Western (especially Africa/Black). In this scope of analysis, development translates into westernisation and pursuing development becomes a desire to mimic the West. This notion of development "encourages dependence and inculcates a sense of inferiority in the people of developing countries" (Ake 2012, 11). Africans accommodating that narrative are "admitting their own inferiority and the superiority of the West. Their drive for development becomes a manifestation of their belief in their own inferiority and reinforces this belief" (Ake 2012, 11). Such pursuits "involves looking up to the West since it occupies the superior and enviable position of having attained the 'good' state of being" (Ake 2012, 11).

Kashoki (1982) accordingly contends that, despite the increase in African scholars, truly African scholarship is rare. According to Hoskins (1992, 250), the nature of African education makes it difficult for Africans to "extricate themselves from this vicious,

divisive, and deleterious Eurocentric psychological dependency complex." As a result, the highly schooled African knows more about Europe than their own society (Nukunya 2003). They are ignorant of "how their villages or traditional areas were governed but were expected to know the workings of the British Parliament, the American War of Independence and the British conquest of India" (Nukunya 2003, 141). Nukunya (2003, 114) states that Eurocentric education makes the African admire "ballroom dancing" but perceives that "traditional dancing was for illiterates." Furthermore, Nukunya (2003) writes that the "educated" "must put on European attire when going to work. Even outside the workplace he must dress up in a manner befitting his status, in suit, shirts and trousers, shoes and if necessary a hat to match" (141). Sometimes, "educated" Africans Europeanise or anglicise their names to "celebrate" their "emancipation." As witnessed in the motion picture, *Heritage Africa*, an "educated" Ghanaian colonial administrator had to change his name from Kwesi Atta Abusomefi to Quincy Arthur Bosomfield to show his liberation (Europeanisation) (Ansah 1988). This journey, unfortunately, remains the focus of schooling in Africa. Ngara (2007, 8) thus argues that "African politicians merely pay lip service to the indigenization rhetoric but, in reality, they lack political will to effect the desired change in Africa."

Dupes or Catalysts?

According to Rodney (2009), colonialism and colonial higher education plunged Africa into underdevelopment. Ake (2012) shares Rodney's sentiment, saying that colonialism and everything it came with was to develop the colonising power. Colonialism sucked Africa into a system of exploitation that it is still grappling to extricate itself from, and according to Woddis (1967), the colonial venture was robbery.

Some scholars have viewed colonialism as valuable to Africans. Western education transferred advanced technologies, healthcare amenities, and advanced systems of transport to the colonies. For instance, Frankema and van Waaijenburg (2005), Moradi (2009), and Austin, Baten, and Moradi (2012) contend that colonialism helped African colonies economically and the consequent relationship with former colonists has been worthwhile to African countries.

It is worth mentioning that Africa had established political and governance systems and achieved technological advancement that would have made Africa progress creditably without enslavement and colonialism. Instead, the colonial scheme established powerful agents of socialisation in Africa to sustain its enterprise. The effects of white supremacy and the psychological dependency of the colonially educated African is reflected in their insistence on colonists replicating European universities in Africa (see Lulat 2003). While their disposition could be borne out of scepticism considering that Europeans questioned Africans' intellectual capacity, Mbabuike (2001, 328) states that

> What we are currently witnessing in Africa is the metamorphosis of culture propelled by education and new ideas. The outcome so far is a slowly developing cultural hybrid, which is neither purely African nor predominantly Western. But the tragic irony in this

> evolution is that the educational propulsion has significantly steered Africa in a retrogressive and authoritarian cultural direction.

The complicity of Africans in European expansionism has often been exaggerated. Certainly, some insiders were complicit in these activities because the royal and commoner, for instance, experienced colonialism differently. However, I contend that the reason people are quick to point at African complicity is a product of the disrespect exhibited towards the African being—simply, it is easy to blame Africa and Africans without consequences. Indeed, similar arguments are not proffered to other people who suffered other forms of destruction. Europe duped Africa and designed systems of socialisation that make Africans catalysts in creating and sustaining conditions that lead to undignified lives. The critical question is whether Africans are conscious or unconscious catalysts.

Way Forward

According to Tamale (2020, 1), it is only with "an in-depth appreciation of the history of colonization and all its supporting discourses … that there can be a successful extrication from the bondage of colonization and domination." To repel coloniality—"invisible power structure that sustains colonial relations of exploitation and domination long after the end of direct colonialism" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2012 cited in Tamale 2020, xiii)—and its manifestation in knowledge, being, and power in Africa necessitates a higher education project: critical African education (CAE). I conceive CAE as a reflective process where Africans make critical efforts to nurture knowledge, skills, and attitudes beyond Euro-Asian thoughts, forms, ideals, and categorisations. It must endeavour to expose dominant hegemonies that silence the humanity of other people and their ways of knowing, striving to detach from such hegemonies.

The CAE project must first instigate a confrontation and disruption of notions of epistemic hierarchies, ahistorical paradigms, implicit assumption of irrationality of the "Other" and of Eurocentric knowledge as universal. Despite the transformations in higher education, the clannish Eurocentric colonial philosophical foundations, privileges, content, and practices remain sturdy. CAE must extend beyond tokenistic tinkering of curricula without dealing with issues of philosophy, structures of privilege, and practices. As Higgs put it,

> This implies that, all educational curricula in Africa should have Africa as their focus, and as a result be indigenous-grounded and orientated. Failure to do so, it is argued, will mean that education becomes alien, oppressive and irrelevant, as is seen to be the case with the legacy of colonial and neo-colonial education systems in Africa. (Higgs 2012, 39)

The project ought to stress a political position of Afrocentricity and African consciousness. The discourse must push the understanding that contemporary African ways of being are largely products of colonial violence (Fanon 2004). They continue to

determine the values Africans employ to shape interactions at individual, societal, state, and inter-state levels. Education thus becomes central to exposing and striving to dismantle the asymmetrical power relations that were created based on uncritically accepted dominant narratives, assumptions that are reinforced through schooling and reiterated consciously or unconsciously. Importantly, teachers, scholars, and all stakeholders in education must frequently rethink education and employ methodologies that address the contextual biases against Africa. To this end, Africa's classical civilisations and local knowledge (often disregarded) could pivot the analysis to map the histories and understanding of the ethos of Euro-colonial education and its multiple disordering predispositions. These should define the emphasis and countenance of CAE because the colonial single narrative about Africa and white privilege has resulted in structural legacies that disempower Africans, thus the need for counter-narratives.

The second emphasis of the CAE project must consciously heed to and amplify the silenced and neglected African voices and narrative—Spivak's (1988) subaltern. Grosfoguel (2007, 213) contends that subaltern epistemic perspectives are "knowledge coming from below that produces a critical perspective of hegemonic knowledge in the power relations involved." Academics must consider collaborating with other like-minded scholars whose ideas they could draft in the quest to dismantle colonial framings. Educational content and research must confront these dominant voices, explore local knowledge systems, and privilege subdued voices and local realities in ways that beneficiaries of schooling would find their realities meaningful and worthy of embrace. Educational policy initiatives should stipulate the centring of local culture and African worldviews in teaching and research; these could be tied to funding (if any). All students, irrespective of their programme of study, must be made to take compulsory courses in ancient African history and achievements to disabuse their minds of the worship of powerful hegemonies.

Additionally, Euro-colonial education offers lots of promises, but inconsequential solutions to the African cultural crises it bequeaths. CAE, by situating African discourses in a meaningful context and framework, would likely steer learners to decipher the machinations that engineered present circumstances and conditions. In that case, being African will not be a badge of opprobrium to be cleansed through the acquisition of European values; rather, a people needing renaissance in multiple ways. This is important to help learners chart a path to self-determination and upholding their identities because the school operates in a largely culturally de-centred site with constricted structures. Attracting palpable criticisms must not prevent the pursuit to liberate succeeding generations, because an African consciousness might instigate the need for a struggle that offers optimism and the possibility of a better future. Universities must become sites for relevant cultural and political consciousness and resistance to nurture a "new African."

A project of this nature must develop into a movement to achieve its fullest potential and impact. The depth of the task ahead is reflected in Tamale's (2020, 3) claim that, currently, "perhaps with the exception of South Africa, Africa's geopolitical and conceptual awareness about issues of decolonization and decoloniality remains very low." Although debates about intellectual and cultural hegemony are not new to Africa, the dominant Eurocentric narratives have possibly sedated a significant part of the continent to think that the colonial is past and dead. A reminder to African scholars in the critical space to lead the conscientisation charge is needed. Another bottleneck is the structural and institutional challenges that frustrate and stall the development of such radical positions in the academe. Nevertheless, academics must leverage the "little power" they wield to start these thoughts in their classrooms, seminars, and other sites. Periodic conferences would also be beneficial, as it is these spots of action that are likely to aggregate into a movement.

While I acknowledge the funding challenges in this pursuit, this is where African politicians must play a role in providing funds for such initiatives. CAE could potentially reform African higher education radically and uphold African cultural awareness through its activities.

Concluding Remarks

In *Things Fall Apart*, Achebe (2008, 141) summarises how colonialism dislocates the African. The following conversation should suffice:

> What has happened to that piece of land in dispute? Okonkwo asked.
> Obierika: The white man's court has decided that it should belong to Nnama's family, who had given much money to the white man's messengers and interpreter.
> Okonkwo: Does the white man understand our custom about land?
> Obierika: How can he when he does not even speak our tongue? But he says that our customs are bad, and our own brothers who have taken up his religion also say that our customs are bad. How do you think 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 clan can no longer act like one. He has put a knife on the things that held us together and we have fallen apart.

The colonial mindset continues to disorder the African mind. Resisting the coloniality of knowledge, and of being, requires a radical transformation of African education. This requires a complex journey to apprehend the essence of the colonial enterprise through a systematic extrication of the colonial tracks in its broadest and minutest sense to lay bare how various strands influence people, their societies, and the world. It is in this regard that the article examines how European expansionism dislocates Africans through a Eurocentric cultural imposition process designed to erase African consciousness. The task is for educators and all other stakeholders in education to

remain conscious of and challenge hegemonic Eurocentric standpoints and constructs that are hostile to Africans.

The pursuit and mainstreaming of an African intellectual stance that provides frameworks to transform educational practice, theory, and research in Africa becomes critical. This article has considered schemes engineered to deny African thoughts, ideas, and agency. Positioned on the margins of dominant narratives, they present adverse implications for African educational theory, research, and practice. The activism to decolonise African education to include relevant methodologies and paradigms to chart a different course to offer future possibilities for meaningful education must not cease. Critical African scholarship must contest, de-construct, and re-construct the unfavourable imageries of Africa and Africans, not ignorantly regurgitating the falsities. Institutions of higher learning must depart from the colonially engineered function to uphold Eurocentric hegemonic power and domination. Scholars must interrogate Africa's antiquity to bring to the fore alternative perspectives that boost Africa's competitive edge. The quest to empower African learners must begin with emancipatory knowledge that offers them identity and cultural pride and work to liberate them from ways of thinking that function to oppress them.

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