

DEFENSE OF A PSYCHOANALYTIC THEORY OF AFRICAN LIBERATION

By

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Colonization has long been identified as the primary source of the problem of Africa. This identification has in turn elicited interventions from scholars exploring the nexus between colonization and African predicament. There is the Africanists advocating for a return to the golden age of pristine African values before the continent was corrupted by western influence, the modernists calling for a complete severance of African modernity from its irrational and unscientific past and the integrationists proposing a *via media* approach between Africanism and Modernism. So far, there has been limited study on how the denigration of African values by colonization has contributed to the current problem. Using documentary and method of concept analysis, this study deploys the psychological theory of racial inferiority complex to explore the impact of colonization on the problem of the African mind. The study discovered that the denigration of African values by colonization resulted in a racial inferiority complex that currently hunts the African mind. The consequence is a slavish copying of western values and the attendant identity crisis and underdevelopment that have characterized post-colonial African society. The study recommended a psychological therapy involving an educational program that would free the African mind from inferiority complex and create an environment where African values are not only put in a respectful dialogue with western values but are recognized, respected and appreciated.

Keywords: colonization, decolonization, Africa, development, freedom predicament, inferiority and superiority complex, psychological theory of African liberation

Introduction

The continuing lack of political freedom and economic development in Africa have been a source of worry Africans and lovers of Africa. This has led to interventions by scholars who formulated theories aimed at liberating the continent from the unwholesome influence of colonization including the Africanists who called for a return to African cultural values of past devoid of western influence, the modernists, canvassing for delinking Africa from its archaic past and the integrationists proposing they hybridization of Africanism and the modernism (Odimegwu and Ogugua, 2024). This study believes that the reason these proposals have not been very effective

is because they are based on a wrong diagnosis of the problem. In this context, the study undertakes a psychoanalytic diagnosis of the problem and in that contest proposed a psychological theory of African liberation as an effective approach of liberating African from the unwholesome influence of colonization.

Specifically, the paper will argue that the inferiorization that African culture suffer today is inspired not essentially by direct colonial influence, but by the African mindset, that is, the psychological effect of colonization on the African mind. This is because, colonial psychology, which addresses the connection between psychology and colonization, holds that to some extent the structural appurtenances of the society such as those that traditionally treat Africans as the inferior culture have a way of affecting the African mindset and under-cutting the African ability. It is in this regard that the paper investigates the African mind-set with a view to finding out whether it is psychologically vitiated by colonial structures. The focal point of the study therefore is that given the societal structures occasioned by colonization, the African psychology is inevitably affected by its own unfair assessment of its abilities. The study recommend a form of African psychoanalysis or African therapy to address this psychological ill. Before embarking this however, the paper will examine the origin of African inferiority complex.

History and Origin of African Inferiority Complex

The Inferiorization of African value system which resulted to the current inferiority complex that the African mind suffers did not begin with colonization. It started long before that with the denigration of the continent by renowned European scholars. Therefore, the greatest tragedy of history is not that Africans were enslaved by Europeans but that the humanity of the African was consistently questioned and denied by some of the most renowned European scholars. It was this denial of African humanity that provided the impetus and justification for the Slave Trade, colonization and other atrocities committed and still perpetuated by Europe against Africa.

Thus, in research on world civilizations, many Western philosophers and historians have elaborated that Africa has no philosophy and therefore has nothing to contribute to world civilization. This in essence implies that Africans are not human beings. Munyadrazi Mawere (2011, p. 1) notes that:

there is monumental literature by philosophers like David Hume, George W.F. Hegel, Immanuel Kant, Lucien Levy-Bruhl and Diedrich Westermann that describe Africans as 'tabula rasa', a people with no reason/rationality; hence without a history and worse still philosophy.

C. Linnaeus (1758) writing in the 18th century stated that all creatures were arranged by God in a great chain of hierarchy with human beings at the head. He further indicated that human beings have their own hierarchy of being, with the black race closest to the lowest animals. In this hierarchy, the white race occupied the highest position and as such the superior race. In other words, typical of this "racist" thinking is the characterization and categorization of societies into categories, especially into three namely, the rational, traditional and the charismatic. African societies are categorized to be primitive society; as a traditional one, which is punctuated by piety for what has always existed, typical of conservative and relatively changeless societies in which effective sentiments predominate.

This explains why the great German philosopher, Hegel (1964, p. 93) once stood on the "holy" world philosophic rostrum in Europe and solemnly foretold with European pride that the development of the heart of the history of humankind like the route of the sun rises in the East and falls in the West. But after falling in the West, it will no longer rise in the East, for the West occupies the center of the world. In this single stroke, Hegel excluded Africa from the history of world's civilization. For Hegel, Africa only hears the echoes of the majestic march of world civilization across Europe and through which the absolute spirit fulfills and realizes itself. It is from this backdrop that Hegel dismissed Africa as an irrelevant part of the world:

At this point, we leave Africa not to mention it again. For it is no historical part of the world: it has no movement or development to exhibit... what we properly understand by Africa is the Unhistorical, Underdeveloped spirit, still involved in the conditions of mere nature, which had to be presented here only as on the threshold of the world's history (p. 99).

Other highly revered western scholars added credence to this ignoble enterprise of reducing Africans to the animalistic level. Hugh Trevor Roper's (1967, p. 9) anti-intellectual stance captures this atmosphere:

It is fashionable to speak today as if European History were devalued: as if historians in the past, have paid too much attention to it, and as if nowadays; we should pay less. Undergraduates seduced as always by the changing breath of journalistic fashion, demand that they should be taught the history of black Africa. Perhaps, in the future, there will be some African history to teach. But at present there is none or very little: there is only the history of the Europeans in Africa. The rest is largely darkness, like the history of pre-European pre-Columbian America. And darkness is not a subject for history.⁹³

Levy-Bruhl (1945, p. 43) also questioned the veracity of an untutored African knowing about God. For him, the African way of thinking is non-logical and full of inner self-contradiction. He described Africans as:

...a set of primitive people who had no idea of natural explanation. As people whose dreams are real experiences lacking the mental wherewithal to distinguish between subject and object, good and bad, moral and immoral. Primitive, barbaric, irrational, un-civilized and most importantly people without capacity for critical and rational thinking- qualities that is natural to doing philosophy.

This explains why the same scholar considered Africans to be pre-logical, a-logical or anti-logical.

Following the same line of thought, David Hume (1969, p. 208), argues that Africans of black extraction have no capacity to reason and are therefore unproductive, and that Europeans are civilized while the former are not. According to Hume, nature has made some people to have higher levels of mental capacities than others. He used the Negro as an example of those who do not have mental capacity.

Another Western philosopher of German origin who has downplayed the existence of African Philosophy is Immanuel Kant. While referring to a statement made by a Negro carpenter, Kant (cited in Eze, 2003, p. 439) in his *On National Characteristics (1724)* avers, “this fellow was quite black from head to foot, a clear proof that what he said was stupid.” For Kant, blacks are inherently stupid or rather irrational.

As already noted above, at the backdrop of this denigration of Africa by European scholars and by extension, the bone of contention behind the debate on the existence and non-existence of African philosophy is the humanity of the African. The summit of this destruction of African value system was achieved at colonization where Africans are psychologically conditioned to embrace Eurocentricism and see anything African as of little or no value. Thus, the history of what eventually come to be known as the colonization of Africa started with the denigration of Africans as incapable of rational thinking by especially enlightenment scholars such as Hume, Kant and Hegel. This denigration was what eventually snowballed into the Slave Trade, colonization and the universalization of Eurocentricism. Today Eurocentricism pervades every aspect of the African life, particularly the education system where it serves as the medium of creation, validation and dissemination of knowledge. This stranglehold of Eurocentricism over African education system is responsible for the undue influence of Europe over Africa and Africa's lack of development.

Theorizing the Psychology of Inferiority Complex at the Root African Predicament

The problem of African predicament is better diagnosed and explained within the framework of the psychological theory of inferiority complex. In psychology, inferiority complex is “a consistent feeling of inadequacy, often resulting in the belief that one is in some way deficient, or inferior, to others” (APA Dictionary of Psychology, n. d.). According to the Cambridge Dictionary of Psychology (Matsumoto, 2009, p. 255) “in Adlerian psychology, a combination of an erroneous belief of an individual that they are unable to cope with some aspect of life because of a real or imagined physical or psychological deficiency, feelings of depression, and a cessation of coping efforts in that area.” Therefore, it is an:

Extremely deep-seated feeling of inferiority that can lead to pessimistic resignation and an assumed inability to overcome difficulties. Unlike a normal feeling of inferiority, which can act as an incentive for achievement, an inferiority complex is an advanced state of discouragement, often resulting in a retreat from difficulties.

The point in the above submission is that inferiority complex casts doubts on one's abilities and hence can push one to self-rejection or in extreme cases to some sort of self-hatred. Normally, this can be caused by a number of factors but especially when an individual or a people are subjected to denigration and abusive situations that make them to lose confidence in themselves, their values

and their abilities. According to Ewen (2014), it “usually occurs when the feelings of inferiority are intensified in the individual through some adverse events including discouragement or failure.” In other words, those who are at risk for developing the complex include people who: show signs of low self-esteem or self-worth or have low status in their peer group. They may also display symptoms similar to depression. Children reared in households where the parents are perceived as having overbearing expectations may also develop an inferiority complex.

The term “inferiority complex” was coined in the 1920s by French psychologist Alfred Adler, a one-time follower of Sigmund Freud who became disenchanted with Freud’s emphasis on the influence of unconscious factors as motivators in human behavior. Therefore, Adler’s school of individual psychology created a chasm in the field of psychology, which had been dominated by Freud’s psychoanalysis. While Freud focused only on the internal processes - mainly sexual conflicts - that affect a person’s psychology, Adler was adamant that to fully understand a person, a psychologist must also consider other internal factors as well as external factors. This is why he named his school of psychology individual; the word is intended to evoke a meaning of indivisibility, derived from the Latin *individuum* (Mosak, Maniacchi & Maniacchi, 1999, p. 6). Thus, while Adler subscribed to the Freudian notion that underlying motivations play a part in directing personality, he introduced the notion of individual psychology in an effort to give equal importance to the role of conscious factors in determining behavior.

Adler theorized that every individual is born with an innate sense of being inferior to others and to expectations, which progress through each of four stages:

- Birth results in the presence of an inferiority complex
- Compensation is driven by the aggression drive
- Overcompensation results in the creation of a superiority complex
- Eventually, the adult patterns of life are created through compensation efforts

Birth Results in the Presence of an Inferiority Complex

Adler’s Individual Psychology theory states that an inferiority complex is the natural-born

psychological state of all people. It begins in infancy and continues throughout everyone's life. Inferiority complexes are the innermost motivator behind a person's behaviors, thoughts, feelings, and actions. Adler believed that people want to prove that they are superior to others. This is a result of their inherent feelings of inferiority. The drive to refute one's inferiority-laden self-esteem is referred to by Adler as the aggression drive. White (1917, p. 168) captures Adler's position on this in a telling manner:

Adler thought that the basic psychological element of neurosis was a sense of inferiority and that individuals suffering with the symptoms of this phenomenon spent their lives trying to overcome the feelings without ever being in touch with reality.

Compensation for Weaknesses

According to Adler, all infants have a feeling of inferiority and inadequacy immediately as they begin to experience the world. These early experiences, such as the need to gain the parents' attention, shape the child's unconscious, fictive goals. They give the child a need to strive towards rectifying that inferiority - a need to compensate for weakness by developing other strengths (Adler, 2013b). There are several outcomes that can occur in a child's quest for compensation. First, if the child receives adequate nurturing and care, the child can accept his challenges, and learn that they can be overcome with hard work. Thus, the child develops "normally" and develops the "courage to be imperfect" (Lazarsfeld, 1966, pp. 163-165).

Overcompensation

However, sometimes, the process of compensation goes awry. One way in which this happens is that the feelings of inferiority become too intense, and the child begins to feel as though he has no control over his surroundings. He will strive very strenuously for compensation, to the point that compensation is no longer satisfactory. This culminates in a state of overcompensation, where the child's focus on meeting his goal is exaggerated and becomes pathological. For example, Adler (1917, p. 22) uses the ancient Greek figure Demosthenes, who had a terrible stutter but ended up becoming the "greatest orator in Greece." Here, Demosthenes started off with inferiority due to his stutter, and overcompensated by not just overcoming his stutter, but taking up a profession that would normally be impossible for a stutterer. Overcompensation can lead to the development of

an inferiority complex, which Adler defines as the lack of self-esteem where the person is unable to rectify his feelings of inferiority. According to Adler (2013a, p. 74), the hallmark of an inferiority complex is that “persons are always striving to find a situation in which they excel.” This drive is due to their overwhelming feelings of inferiority.

Classifications of Inferiority Feelings

Classical Adlerian psychology makes a distinction between primary and secondary inferiority feelings. Primary inferiority is the “original and normal feeling” of inferiority maintained by an infant. This feeling is productive, as it provides motivation for the child to develop. Secondary inferiority, on the other hand, is the inferiority feeling in the adult results when the child develops an exaggerated feeling of inferiority. These feelings in the adult are what is harmful, and they comprise the inferiority complex (Adler, 2013a, p. 82).

Superiority Complex

Some children develop an outward complex as overcompensation for their deep feelings of inferiority. It appears that they believe that they are superior to all other people. This is called a superiority complex. Superiority complexes are not signals of the absence of inferiority complex. Rather, they could be evidence that a person's inferiority complex is so threatening that they feel the need to assert themselves to reassure themselves. As such, superiority complex occurs when a person has the need to prove that he is superior to others. Adler provides an example of a child with a superiority complex, who is “impertinent, arrogant and pugnacious” (p. 97). When this child is treated through psychotherapy, it is revealed that the child behaves in this impatient manner because he feels inferior. Adler claims that superiority complexes are born out of inferiority complexes; they are “one of the ways which a person with an inferiority complex may use a method of escape from his difficulties” (p. 100).

How Parenting Styles Affect Personality Development

Adler’s individual psychology illustrates the importance of parents to children. Parenting styles can help children deal with their deep feelings of inferiority. They also affect the personality

development of children. According to Adler, the two major parenting styles that affect the upbringing of children are pampering and neglectful. A pampering parent gives children all the attention and items they desire. They assure their child that they are important without needing to accomplish anything. A neglectful parent does not give the child any attention at all. They expect their children to do things on their own. The idea behind neglectful parenting is that children will learn to become, independent.

Both of these parenting styles affect all of a child's personality. Pampering parents do not allow their children to do anything. All encouragement, attention, and resources are given to this child. Therefore, the inferiority complex of the child is made much worse. They attribute all of their successes to external support mechanisms and resources. The child is therefore unsure of their own abilities to resolve issues or reach their goals. Neglectful parents, on the other hand, provide no support for their children. The inferiority complex becomes worse in a different way. Not only does the child still feel that they are inferior, but they are also fearful and mistrustful of their parents and others. Adler believed that the best parenting style was a balance between pampering and neglectful. Children should be provided with opportunities and protection in some instances. However, they should not be protected from everything. They should be allowed to make mistakes and get hurt from time to time (New World Encyclopedia, n. d.).

The concept of inferiority as a motivational force for children is not unique to Adler. One of Adler's students, Anthony Bruck, cautioned that labeling children as aggressive, or otherwise antisocial is only superficial. He believed that the desire for significance and feelings of inferiority are causal factors. Feelings of inferiority hurt children and make them aggressive. On the other hand, he believed that inferiority feelings can be very useful in education. This is particularly important from the viewpoint of the teacher, as the interest of children in their education springs from their feeling of inferiority, provided it remains within tolerable limits. He pointed out two significant reasons that thwart a child's interest in learning: One is an excessive feeling of inferiority which leads to despair and feelings of hopelessness at achieving mastery. The other, the usual consequence of the former, is the development of a striving no longer towards security and equality, but towards power and superiority (New World Encyclopedia, n. d.).

Erik Erikson described the fourth stage of psychosocial development as the task of inferiority vs. industry. He discovered that for the child at this stage it is essential to discover pleasure in being productive and to experience success. In school, a child is challenged to learn academic skills, new socializing skills with peers, as well as develop physical abilities through games and sports. Difficulty in any of these areas can lead to a sense of inferiority, failure, and incompetence. With an adult's support, however, the child can develop a sense of competence. If the adults in a child's life do not support the child, feelings of inferiority are likely to develop which in turn lead the child to invest less and so to further failure (New World Encyclopedia, n. d.).

Racial or Cultural Inferiority Complex

In recent years, a number of scholars have theorized that the inferiority complex can also exist at a wider level, affecting entire cultures. In such cases, known as “cultural cringe,” people of a particular nation or race such as the black race, suffer a sense of embarrassment caused by feeling that their national culture is inferior to others. While controversial as a sociological theory, the term has entered into popular parlance, particularly in countries with history of slavery and colonization. In recent times, some African scholars and scholars of other minority groups such as feminists, are using the concept to explain the impact of colonization or overall domination on the culture of the marginalized (Adler, 2013b).

Adler (2013b), believed that the desire of groups to escape or compensate for their crushing sense of inferiority is a contributing factor to national hatreds, class struggle, and even war. He attributed such a sense of inferiority to the individuals in crowds clamoring for war as a solution to perceived threats to their security, and the still larger crowds that have accepted war as a solution. Adler concluded that his principles of individual psychology could also be applied to groups, rallying the latent forces for good, as it had for individuals. If used on a larger scale, he postulated, this approach could be developed into a powerful instrument to rid nations and groups of their destructive collective inferiority complexes, just as it had cured individuals from their sense of inferiority.

Treatment of Inferiority Complex

The primary indication of mental health in Adlerian psychotherapy is the person's feeling of community and connectedness with all of life. Attempts to compensate for an exaggerated inferiority feeling by a fictional final goal of superiority over others is a major hindrance to development of a feeling of community. This sense of unity provides the real key to the individual's genuine feeling of security and happiness. When adequately developed, it leads to a feeling of equality, an attitude of cooperative interdependence, and a desire to contribute. Consequently, the central goal of Adlerian psychotherapy is to strengthen this feeling of community.

The therapeutic process is simultaneously focused on three aspects of change. First, the painful, exaggerated feelings of inferiority are reduced to a level that can be used to promote growth, development, and a healthy striving for significance. Second, the patient's destructive striving for superiority over others, manifested in a compensatory lifestyle, must be released. The third aspect is the fostering of equality and feeling of community. Underlying this approach is a firm belief in the creative power of the individual to freely make choices and correct them when given sufficient information—an extremely optimistic view of human nature and our ability to change. The treatment can be schematized in the following three steps:

1. To reduce the inferiority complex of exaggerated feelings of inferiority to a normal and helpful size, where the patient strives for significance but is not overridden;
2. To reduce and banish the superiority complex of constant striving for superiority over others; and
3. To promote feelings of community and equality (Adler, 2013b, p. 102).

Explaining African Predicament through the Theory of Inferiority Complex

There are about five fundamental points made by the Adlerian psychological theory of inferiority complex that are important for formulating a theory of African liberation:

- That feeling of inferiority is innate in every human being, irrespective of race

- That inferiority complex or superiority complex is the neurotic or acute form of the normal feeling of inferiority
- That inferiority complex affects people both as individuals and collectives or groups
- That inferiority complex is reversible
- And that inferiority complex has two possible consequences:

Therefore, there are a number of consequences of inferiority complex: (a) It either pushes people and individuals to assert themselves and in so doing achieve greatness as in the case of Demosthenes, the great Greek orator who moved from being a stutter to become one of the greatest orator in history or (b) it makes people to see themselves as failures, give up on themselves and stop trying to achieve any form of success. Guy Hutt (2007) has done some extensive researches on this second possible outcome of inferiority complex. In his findings, he maintained that when an inferiority complex is in full effect, it may impact the performance of an individual as well as impact an individual's self-esteem. Unconscious psychological and emotional processes can inhibit a student's ability to receive and understand new information in addition to an excessive guardedness that results from an inability to accept or understand one's own subconscious feelings of inferiority. In his PhD dissertation, Guy Hutt explains that in students who display difficulty with Mathematics classes, the subject can become associated with a psychological inferiority complex, low motivation and self-efficacy, poor self-directed learning strategies, and feelings of being unsafe or anxious.

This theory will therefore help to explain that the long history of African denigration, exploitation and subjugation, which reached their summits in the slave trade and colonization, resulted in the loss of self-esteem and the attendant inferiority complex by Africans. However, as it is often argued, Africa is not the only continent that experienced both slave trade and colonization, while others such as China and India have moved on why is Africa still living under the burden of her past experiences? The theory also explains this. Different people react differently to existential feeling of inferiority. There are those it propels to pursue and achieve greatness and there are others it makes to lose confidence and give up on themselves and their abilities completely. The later was what happened to Africans and that is why they are finding difficult to free themselves from the undue influence of colonialism. The theory also explains why Africans behave the way they do

today towards western culture. Here instead of their inferiority complex driving them to assert their own values and cultural heritage, it pushes them to abandon their own values and to run after Western values thinking that in doing so they will recover their self-esteem and receive approval. However, this particular move is what opens the Pandora box of all the crises the continent is going through today, including underdevelopment, identity crises, political turmoil, etc.

Most importantly, the theory shows that inferiority complex can be treated and why the methods adopted in treating it so far have failed. As seen at the introduction, the method applied in treating African inferiority complex so far, whether it is Afrocentricism, Eurocentricism or the integrative method consist in one form of superiority complex or the other and that is why none of these applications has worked. As shall be seen shortly and as Adler explained, treating inferiority complex centers around healing the mind by freeing it from all forms of complexes and then promoting and integrating the feelings of community and equality.

Psychology of the African Mind

To begin with, related to the concept of decolonizing and African predicament is what authors have come to call decolonization of the African mind. For instance, Marcelo Dascal (2021, p. 2) in his *Colonizing and Decolonizing of Minds* elucidates that:

Whereas the most visible forms of political colonialism have for the most part disappeared from the planet by the end of the millennium, several of its consequences remain with us. Criticism of colonialism, accordingly, has shifted its focus to its more subtle and lasting manifestations. Prominent among these are the varieties of what came to be known as the ‘colonization of the mind’. This is one of the forms of ‘epistemic violence’ that it is certainly the task of philosophers to contribute to identify and struggle against. ‘Postcolonial’ thinkers have undertaken not only to analyze this phenomenon, but also to devise strategies for effectively combating and hopefully eradicating colonialism’s most damaging aspect – the taking possession and control of its victims’ minds.

Therefore, there is need to make clarification on the meaning of the decolonization of the mind as this will help to clarify why previous attempts at African liberation have failed and then propose and justify the psychological proposal as a more suitable solution.

Marcelo Dascal explained that the metaphor “colonization of the mind” highlights the following characteristics of the phenomenon:

- (a) the intervention of an external source – the ‘colonizer’ – in the mental sphere of a subject or group of subjects – the ‘colonized’;
- (b) this intervention affects central aspects of the mind’s structure, mode of operation, and contents;
- (c) its effects are long-lasting and not easily removable;
- (d) there is a marked asymmetry of power between the parties involved;
- (e) the parties can be aware or unaware of their role of colonizer or colonized; and
- (f) both can participate in the process voluntarily or involuntarily (p. 2).

These characteristics are shared by a variety of processes of mind colonization, regardless of whether they occur in socio-political situations that are literally categorized as “colonial.” Consider education, for instance. The Brazilian educator Paulo Freire (2004, p. 72) has analyzed a typically mind-colonizing educational paradigm, which he suggestively dubbed the “banking” model. In this paradigm, a commodity (knowledge) is “deposited by those who have it (the teachers) in the minds of those (the pupils) who don’t have it; the task of both is basically passive: the former’s, to transmit and the latter’s to absorb ‘knowledge.’⁷⁶ The ‘banking’ model displays the characteristic *epistemic* nature of mind colonization: What grants the colonizer (in this case the teacher) the right to intervene in the pupil’s mind, thereby colonizing it, is the fact that the former possesses and the latter lacks *knowledge*. This is a commodity that everybody is presumed to desire by virtue of its epistemic properties, namely *truth* and *universality*, whence its *applicability* and *utility* derive.

Notice that in most of these cases those who perform the colonizing are either not aware of the nature of their action or of the epistemic and other damaging consequences of their action. Quite on the contrary, they believe they are helping the colonized, by providing them with better beliefs and patterns of action that improve their ability to cope successfully with the environment. Furthermore, they are also unaware of the fact that for the most part their minds have themselves been colonized by others, whose agents they become by attributing to them the same epistemic authority they rely upon vis-à-vis those they colonize.

In order for any of these sources of authority to become, in turn, an effective vehicle of mind colonization, it must, in addition, obtain the support of power structures capable, by a variety of means, of transmuting epistemic authority into *social* authority and so to ensure its enforcement.

These means range from semiotic displays of authority, through overrating some sources of epistemic authority and devaluating others, up to appealing to overt and covert forms of discrimination, making use of socio-economic rewarding or punishment, and sheer violent coercion.

Nevertheless, however powerful the pressure of its means, social authority alone, without an epistemic authority counterpart, isn't sufficient, for it cannot per se generate the authority necessary for succeeding in the colonization *of minds*. Success in this endeavor cannot be achieved by coercion and fear alone, for it consists in inducing a set of beliefs in the colonized mind via some sort of inferential, persuasive process – a process that is cognitive in nature. Its basic constituent is the implicit acceptance by the colonized of a 'rule of inference' that automatically grants superiority to the colonizer's epistemic warrants or reasons when they clash with those of the colonized. By virtue of this rule, when comparing the colonizer's and his own grounds for holding a specific belief, the colonized will usually tend to prefer the former's reasons and consequently adopt the colonizer's belief. In other words, colonization *of the mind* is achieved when the colonized adopts the colonizer's epistemic principle of "invidious comparison" (Dascal, 2003, 120). This means his implicit acceptance of the colonizer's asymmetric distinction between a 'primitive' mind – that of the colonized – and a 'superior' or 'civilized' one – that of the colonizer. It is this acceptance that establishes a sort of implicit agreement between colonized and colonizer which justifies the recurring inference by both to the effect that, in any matter involving cognitive abilities, the former's performance must be presumed to be inferior to the latter.

The consequence of this is that the colonized tries to become like the colonizer. The first attempt of the colonized is to change his condition by changing his skin (p. 129). And this changing of skin consists mainly in a change of mind, i.e., in the adoption of the forms of thinking and behaving of the colonizer, in the hope that this will carry with it the corresponding privileges (p. 131). Hotep (2008, p. 36) who is aware of the powerful role of characteristically mental factors in the unfolding of colonial drama describes the 'absoluteness' of the colonized situation as a loss of his traditions and culture, a loss of self, a loss of authenticity, unity and belonging. Such that, even "at the height of his revolt – he points out – the colonized still bears the traces and lessons of prolonged cohabitation. ...The colonized fights in the name of the very values of the colonizer, uses his techniques of thought and his methods of combat" (p. 43). Furthermore – and more importantly

from the point of view of mind colonization – he ends up inheriting from the colonizer the dichotomous form of thinking that serves as the grounding of racism and xenophobia of all sorts (p. 60)

This is why according to Hotep “The central objective in decolonizing the African mind is to overthrow the authority which alien traditions exercise over the African” (p. 61). This demands the dismantling of white supremacist beliefs, and the structures which uphold them, in every area of African life”. Hotep in his own discussion targets the “psychology of African liberation” and, accordingly, he dubs the ensemble of techniques developed by Europeans with the purpose of creating the ‘authority’ capable of subordinating the African mind, a “method of psychological manipulation.” Yet, the obstacle to liberation he identifies and seeks to overthrow is roughly the same as ‘epistemic authority’, and its philosophical underpinnings. According to him, the method was designed to gain control of the African mind through “disconnecting Africans from their heritage and culture”, which would achieve the colonizers ‘purposes “because people who are cut off from their heritage and culture are more easily manipulated and controlled” (p. 61).

This process of ‘deculturalization’, alias ‘seasoning’ (in American slaveholders jargon) and ‘brainwashing’ (in today’s vernacular), comprises three main steps: feel ashamed of yourself, admire and respect the whites, and be rewarded with more indoctrination if successful in the former steps. In Black America, the main instrument, though not the only one, of deculturalization is ‘mis-education’, responsible for “destructive effects on the Black mind by schools that use a pedagogy and curriculum that deliberately omits, distorts or trivializes the role of African people in and their seminal contributions to world history and culture.” Regardless of what seems to be an excessive emphasis on the intentionally designed, not to say conspiratorial nature of the process, it no doubt yielded in America and elsewhere a prime example of mind colonization in the form of a selective set of mental contents and attitudes, which were adopted by Blacks and clearly valued European history, culture and thinking as superior to their African counterparts.

It is the results of this process and the threat of its continuation that Hotep purports to combat. He summarizes his strategy succinctly and clearly: “In the American context, decolonizing the African mind means reversing the seasoning process”, and with some more detail: “Reversing the seasoning process is a constructive way to frame a psycho-educational approach for cleansing African minds of European or Arab cultural infestation” (Kanu, 2014, p. 90). Consequently, the

impact Eurocentricism has had on the African mind is not the type that can be reversed by changing one form of value system with another or a combination of values. Rather, it is a kind of psychological construction that requires a psychological deconstruction; a psychoanalytic diagnosis and therapeutic that will while not calling for the enthronement of Afrocentricism or expulsion of Eurocentricism recommends the overthrow of the overbearing influence Eurocentricism has come to have over the African mind.

Instead of conclusion: An Advocacy for a Psychological theory of African Liberation

Established in the preceding section is that African predicament is caused and sustained by a process that is purely psychological. Therefore, to reverse a process that comes about through this means, carrying a gun is not sufficient. It requires dealing with the consciousness and the psyche, because the process is internalized and routinized. This situation is aptly captured by an Indian psychologist Ashis Nandy (2009), who posits that colonialism operates like an intimate enemy; it sits within you, like a parasite. He suggests that perhaps something that starts in people's minds must end in their minds in the first instance. In other words, if you remove colonialism physically without removing it psychologically, it will not disappear.

Consequently, as part of the repertoire of their contentions, advocates of African liberation should focus their effort on the African mind to seek adjustment to the psychology of African identity. Currently, it has been amply demonstrated that there is nothing inferior with the African identity and that whatever the Westerners can do, the Africans can even do better. All over the world, Africans now engage in occupations previously reserved for their colonizers. Africans are formerly seen by European as cowards and unintelligent, but in the United States, for example, Africans have attained the highest level of both military and intellectual prowess, but the psychology of African identity has continued to affect their performance, especially for those in Africa who see themselves as second fiddle to the Westerners. Thus, it is not only a question of colonial structures hampering the productivity of Africans; rather, to a large extent, it is the knowledge of being African, unconsciously carried over from colonization!

The paper further recommends, following Adler's theory of individual personality and other psychologists of marginalized groups such as Horney (1967) and Crawford and Unger (2000),

what has been called the psychoanalysis of the marginalized or therapy for the marginalized to address this demeaning self-assessment of Africans. Adler and some psychologists for the culturally marginalized hold that an Adlerian type of therapy is required to correct certain unhealthy mental states that affect the culturally or socially marginalized like Africans, women, etc. in the society.¹⁰⁴ One of such is the black cognition/awareness and inferiority complex that go with the societal associations of certain stereotypes such as the crudeness, lack of rationality, creativity, unrefined and inferiority of Africans. Healing the African of this condition would place them on the pedestal to freely express their abilities, and it is only then that they can be fairly said to be decolonized.

Achieving this process will require especially major changes in the African education system since the African school system is the institution with the highest form of knowledge production, knowledge dissemination and knowledge consumption. Therefore, there is the need to introduce into the education system right from the early stage a course that deals with therapy on inferiority complex. As children develop in their education more courses are to be developed in the curriculum to ensure that the overarching epistemic authority of Eurocentricism is undermined.

This process should go alongside a massive introduction of African values and sciences into African education system. Particularly, the study of African indigenous languages should be encouraged and the way traditional Africans deal with problems that arise in their society should be studied and implemented. However, it has to be underlined that the essence of this is not to banish European sciences and values from African education system but first of all, to deal with the inferiority complex that currently envelops the African mind and secondly, to give the African child the opportunity to master and compare the European system alongside the African system. Lastly, education is not the only area where inferiorization of African culture has occurred, African religion, legal system, system parenting, etc., are also gradually fading away due to European influence. There should be conscious efforts to reverse these processes as means of dealing with the African predicament. Therefore, the psychological theory of African liberation recommended in this study is a call to dethrone the unwholesome authority Eurocentricism has come to wield over the African mind in order to make room for epistemological plurality and intercultural dialogue based on equality and mutual respect.

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