



Decolonizing african historicism: a critical path to african authentic development

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Abstract

This paper interrogates historicism in African place, which it views as aftermath of colonial history. The study revolves on historicism as the *a priori* impact of colonial history in African psyches. Historicism in this context is thus viewed as the *a priori* images of the past and psychic expression of past memories. The lingering impact of this episteme has been proven by poor human ventures and development in African place. Hence, the study assesses historicism as a psychic impression that colonial events or history is determinant of subsequent social, political, economic, cultural and technological development in Africa. The moribund development of these critical sectors in diverse African countries however underscores scholars' conclusion that colonial history still feeble the morale of the African and disposes him to attitude inimical to venture and development. What then is colonial historicism? At what point did it begin to undermine development in African continent? What is the connection between colonial memories and present moribund development in many African societies? This paper analytically investigates colonial historicism in Africa; its cradle and impact on African development, and opts for decolonization of African historicism. This is a move to Africanization of African history in a complementary and integrating, rather than in exclusive and dismissive way. The study finds that many Africans believe that the continent is still plagued by colonial history. This impression not only appears too slack and maroon to the Contemporary Africans; it seems to be the very reason behind the conspicuous complacent reliance and dependence of many African States and leaders on erstwhile colonialists for support and aid. The study notes that till African historicism is decolonized and reconstructed with positive African history, desire for development would still remain at the level of mere wishes.

Keywords: Africa, decolonization, development, historicism, underdevelopment

Introduction

As rational beings, we aptly ask questions in quest of explanations on why Africa is moribund in development compared to other continents of the world. Among the plethora of explanations to this predicament are colonial historicism and its grip on African mind. Colonial historicism emanates from colonial history; and human psyche is in such a way that it is difficult for it to be uninfluenced by past events. Because of this inevitable influence, Marava (2015) ^[21] advocates that "the concept of time plays a pivotal role in the way a society derives its values, beliefs and conceptions" (p. 87). History therefore shapes human mind in *a priori* manner, and acts as historicism that not only determines human enterprise, but shapes human further ventures. This implies that man is truly in chains by his history, which makes or mars his future. Historicism is such a product of history that when positive, functions as catalyst of societal development by psychically motivating people to venture. Yet, it can contrarily feeble peoples' morale and strive when replete with pessimism. Historicism can thus play the dual role of development or under development in a society through its domination of human mind.

These notwithstanding, it is also true that past historical events lack absolute domination of human mind and total determination of subsequent human events. This is as history can be complementarily reconstructed to ensure required historicism or positive attitude. This is possible as humans are rational beings gifted with propelling faculties and knowledge

that evoke striving. Knowledge and striving are in fact the fundamental aspects and functions of rational beings. Humans exhibit this knowledge in thinking, reflecting and willing which are psychic processes that place them on the higher grade of existence (Arua, 2007). Man, from this vintage is therefore "free to be free and not free not to be free" (Arua, 2007, p. 1). He is a being "condemned to be free" (Sartre, 1965, p. 4) ^[4]. As such, he is a being on a mission to self-actualization. And as a rational being, he lacks no ability to develop methods, systems and policies through which he improves his history and acquires a better attitude for development (Nwoko, 2006).

The unleashing of this rational potential in African place has indeed become germane towards reconstructing the historicism shaped by colonial history and education. This is more so as the attitude of most Africans stemming from their pessimistic historicism has from independence been inimical to societal development. Thus, among all the erstwhile colonies, Africa is still outstanding in moribund development based on its colonial burdens. Swimming in the ocean of pessimism which is the impact this colonial past, many Africans appear to have embraced their backwardness as the normal. This has formed ground for poor perception of Africa in the global world (Isife, 2021) ^[11].

Yet, the history of Africa is that recorded by the West in order to imbue the people with pessimism, and thus "suffocate the development of African thought" and society (Nkemnkia, 1999, p.39) ^[23]. Hence, it has as expected not promoted the

interest of the continent. Rather, it lingers as demoralizing tale and a clog in the wheel of the continent's stable development. Developed society may have eluded the African because of the adverse effects of colonial history that continues to plague the continent; this pessimistic history can be complementarily reconstructed and "Africanized" as long as the unquenchable yearning for ideal development is aflame (Keto, 2001, p. 452)^[17]. The realization of this yearning now depends on how Africans are able to relate, articulate and galvanize all the potentials at their disposal towards changing the colonial narrative and erasing the foothold of colonial historicism in African mind. This calls for decolonization of African historicism through complementary reconstruction of colonial education curriculum to reflect indigenous education that is pertinent to indigenous culture and circumscriptive to indigenous worldview and predicament. The onus of this complementary Africanization now lies with African leaders, scholars and stakeholders whom Aristotle would in this context refers as "efficient cause" - the means or that by what a thing is made (Stumpf, 1994, p. 93).

Conceptual clarifications

The outstanding concepts in this treatise are decolonization, historicism and development. Decolonization is a process of deconstructing colonial ideologies, thoughts and approaches that hinder development in former colonies. Decolonization could also be the addressing of the imbalance in power dynamics and dismantling of structures that perpetuate colonial *status quo*. From this vantage, decolonization involves valuing and revitalizing indigenous cultural knowledge and approaches while weeding out settler biases and assumptions that have impacted on the indigenous ways of life of a people. Decolonization thus has to do with preservation of indigenous culture of a people which stand as the crust of their identity. Decolonization is indeed a consistent process that has become germane in formerly colonized as colonial way of life or culture excludes other cultures and creates spaces that disrespect and dishonour such cultures. Decolonization therefore gears towards actualizing cultural, psychological and economic freedom for the indigenous people.

Along this lane, decolonization also refers to reversal of the ongoing colonialism visible in colonial mentalities that pervade erstwhile colonial societies. It is a process demanding indigenous framework and making of indigenous lands, sovereignty and ways of thinking the centre of existence. Decolonization thus opens up a new vista of human awareness and consciousness towards actualizing human freedom (Wigny, 1961)^[35]. In this way, decolonization remains a process that re-evaluates the relationship of indigenous people with their lands, heritage, culture, and how this relationship has been made nonsense of by the unjust activities of the colonizers.

Historicism on the other hand is the episteme accumulated through human experiences in the environment. Historicism is thus a psychic phenomenon, a belief or an attitude accumulated through experiences of past events and "expressed through memory" (Onebunne & Kanu, 2022, p. 118)^[29]. As such, historicism is a mental impression projecting the knowledge that social, cultural, political, economic and technological events in every human society are determined by past events in such a place. Historicism is therefore an attitude replete with

past or unfolded events and their effects. It stems from historical events and lives those historical events. Because these events are fresh in the mind, their effects come to bear in human ventures. This makes historicism a psychic attitude filled with the notion that effect of unfolded events are unlimited. In contemporary Africa however, historicism stemming from colonial history is laden with pessimism, hence it is derailing African development.

Development is however a consistent growth in all aspects of human society. As such, Todaro (1980)^[33] elaborates that it is a continuous growth of social, economic, political and other societal systems, improvement in societal incomes and output, radical and positive changes in societal institutions, popular attitudes, social, administrative and security structures as well as customs and beliefs. Development thus connotes an increasing change from one social level to another. It as well connotes material abundance, increasing political stability, physical security and economic improvement in the society (Krinsky, 2007; Ndianefo, 2011)^[18,22]. Based on these, Rodney (1990)^[32] views development as increment in human skill and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self discipline, responsibility and material well being.

Away from these understanding, Izunwa and Ehujuo (2011)^[14] describe development as "a process of change in which the exploitation of resources, the direction of investment, the orientation of technological development, and institutional change are made consistent with the future as well as present needs" (p. 6). Thus, development consists in advancing the society to meet her present needs and ensure the ability of the future generation to meet their own needs. In contemporary time, development is explained as consistent quality of institutions in a state, the growing right attitude of the leadership and the citizenry, and increasing quality of human life in a particular place. Development as well signals the level of modernity attained by a society through secular means.

Distortion of african historicism

It is a truism that "every society or culture has peculiar ways of knowledge acquisition which most often evolve in the attempt to solve societal problems" (Kanu and Ejikemeuwa, 2020, p. v)^[15]. Thus Isife (2021)^[11] affirms that every progressive society possesses this peculiar body of knowledge through which their material and immaterial universe are interpreted and structured. Like in every other clime therefore, societal evolution and development in Africa has in pre-colonial era predicated on this peculiar knowledge (Ezeugwu, 2012)^[9]. Prior to distortion of African historicism, the continent was replete with this feature which generally induced development. The distortion of this feature which underscored optimistic historicism began with the western exploration of the continent which gave room to slavery, partitioning, conquest and eventual colonization of the continent at the dawn of 1900. Since this feature was domiciled in indigenous cultures, colonial distortion of African historicism appeared to have happened more in the area of indigenous cultures.

Culture is a way of being of a people as it comprises peculiar values and norms that make people live in a particular way. Kekes (1980)^[16] views culture as fount of human ideals for solving problems. Essential to people's self conception, integral personhood, problem solving and development, education and religion have also been part and parcel of culture

(Odimegwu, 2008) ^[24]. Within pre-colonial African culture therefore is traditional education which is the worst recipient of the force of colonialism as agent of crisis. Onebunne and Kanu (2022) ^[29] testify that “Africa was and has existed with vagaries of human enterprise like indigenous or traditional education and all forms of enterprising merchandise before the advent of Whiteman and his cohorts started to partition and plunder Africa” (pp. 112 & 113). This indigenous and vocational education once prepared young minds for societal responsibilities and different works of life via their age grades and initiation ceremonies into different phases of life. Agreeing with this, Mara (1998) ^[20] avers that though there were few theoretical abstractions, the African traditional education objectively inculcated a sense of social responsibility of the community to the individual members, who were becoming contributing members of the society. This traditional education also geared towards bringing about an optimistic and relatively permanent change in human attitude within the society.

With its utility base visible in its functionality and productivity, African traditional education propelled its recipients towards competence and performance within and outside their societies. This made African traditional education a practical means of inculcating knowledge, skills and gaining the expected empowerment. Induced from the positive past therefore, African attitude or mode of thought formed the historicism that was major determinant of the how African society was progressing in pre-colonial period. Sadly, it is to this indigenous education; its elements and systems that underscored African societal evolution and autochthonous development that colonialism dealt a shattering blow.

Prior to this psychic blow, pre-colonial African history induced historicism that propelled members of different African societies into activities and ventures that align to the norms, values, purpose and development of their societies. It prepared the people for social responsibilities. This indigenous induced historicism was truly the catalyst behind the indigenous accumulated science and technology; knowledge, skills, crafts, attitude and societal organization that over the pre-colonial years fostered human wellbeing and societal development.

Against this indigenous mental and practical evolution therefore came colonial education which brought a lasting distortion in African psyche. The pessimistic and slack objective of colonial education was indeed earlier reflected in the British Lord Macaulay’s minutes on colonial education which bothered on “to train at least a class of persons Indian (or African) in blood but English in opinion, morals and intellect” (Ezeani 2013, p. 22) ^[8]. French colonists applied similar theoretical education towards recreating persons who are Africans in blood, but French in opinion, morals and intellect. Elaborating on this, Eberechukwu (2018) ^[7] enunciates that the colonists brought:

1882 Education ordinance which was later replaced with 1887 Education ordinance, 1916 Education Ordinance, 1920-1922 Phelps-Stokes Commission on Education in Africa (which first Commission to consider Africa in their decisions), 1925 Memorandum on Education in British Colonial Territories and the consequent 1926 Education Act and ERJ Hussey’s 1930 Education reorganization with official opening of Yaba Higher College in 1934. The Elliot Commission of 1943 (June) and Asquith Commission of 1943

(August) promoted higher learning in colonial regions especially in Nigeria with University College Ibadan (pp. 128-145).

Uba, (2018) ^[34] explains that the development of education system in former colonies like Nigeria which “started with 8-6-2-3 system of education unto 6-5-2-3 system of education through 6-3-3-4 system of education and presently 9-3-4 system of education” all derived from colonial policies and philosophy of education (pp. 194-205).

One of the most enduring instrument of distortion of African historicism is however the conducting of education with western languages. Every culture is bound up with its language which expresses, communicates, sustains and preserves its achievements and development trajectory. Since language is the heart and soul of indigenous development, repudiating African languages amounted to rejection of all the features driven by them. Educating Africans in foreign language then became implanting in them the heart, soul and contents of the culture that foreign language drives. Yet, the inability of Africans to identify in, from, and with foreign culture whose elements are at variance and in conflict with their nature and culture have created schizophrenic and crises-laden personhood out of Africans. Thus, the whole education scenario in Africa is not only a dependent education based on western colonial philosophy but a crises laden process as Africans have not and cannot blend in the bastardizing western cultures and languages whose elements conflict with African indigenous natures and cultures.

How then does the African perceive and interpret these significant experiences and interactions that now culminate in colonial historicism in the African life and world? The response has been visible in the exacerbation of colonial historicism by many African nationalists, pristine and present scholars. Trained in western colonial shaped institutions and education curriculum therefore, most of these stakeholder’s ruffle what remains of autochthonous Africa in an oversight manner. Some in the political class even view themselves as colonial replacements; hence they deepen the poor legacies of colonialism in indigenous peoples’ psyche colonial styled governance. As such, African historicism has not been better; hence it projects the belief that colonial events have to affect African subsequent existence. This state calls for a paradigm shift that can only be effective with the decolonization of African historicism, reconstruction and transformation of African education curriculum and training systems toward knowledge, skill acquisition and innovation required to nurture African core values, creativity, competency and development.

Colonial historicism in african psyche

Though it emerges from history, historicism is a psychic phenomenon that impacts on human memory. This impact depends on the way history is recorded. As such, a positive history engenders a better historicism that stands as catalyst of onward development. A negative history builds slack in a people’s mind and weakens their development. This is as negative historicism sieges the mind, dampens the will and weakens human strive to venture. Worth noting however is that it is at the level of historicism that history plays a fundamental (damaging or making) role in human thoughts, activities and development (Ufearoh, 2022). This role thus makes historicism the “handmaid” of human life, human living and development

(Onebunne & Kanu, 2022: 118) ^[29]. If successful living is therefore expected in African place; history has to be consciously decolonized and reconstructed towards giving credence to the future. This act is what Iroegbu (1994) ^[13] expressed as being historicized. According to him:

to be historicized is to take into account constructively and reconstructively, the lessons of the past, on it to build the present and from the present to galvanize a good future. It is to realize that the particular makes the global relevant, and that the global makes the particular fully meaningful (p. 33).

Being the aggressors, it is obvious that the colonists were quite aware of the potent of negative history, and consciously undertook a deliberate policy on African cultural and historical annihilation in a relentless manner. It is as well obvious that the colonists consciously wrote African stories the way it favored them. This is especially with the intention of long term African mental and physical conquest. This lasting conquest explains why African educational system was alienated from her culture and problems, and replaced with colonial curriculum consciously meant to make Africans sustain a poor morale and low opinion of themselves, their capacities and potentials. As expected, such history couched with lies has continued to plague African minds and development to the present time. Osuagwu (1999) ^[30], Onebunne and Kanu (2022) ^[29] attest that African philosophical movement even started out of frustration by such many lies compiled by the colonists and European scholars as African history. These were exacerbated by biased stories of many African scholars who have been severely alienated through western influenced education in Eurocentric institutions in Africa, Europe and America. These biased histories are filled with bitter and ugly experiences of slavery, colonialism and African helplessness before the white people. The adverse effects of this distorted history in African context have shown that man by nature is a historical being. He remains at the centre of history and his history affects his existence and ongoing work for self-actualization.

Impact of colonialism on african historicism

Peoples' knowledge of their dark history often becomes a hindrance to their progress and growth. In African context, such historicism stemming from colonialism had adversely impacted the psyche of indigenous people and battered their identity and mental wholeness. Since contents of development are first mental ideas, colonial legacies instilled in African psyche have continued to plague all forms of African mental organization. It should be fundamentally noted that what colonialism shattered in African psyche is not just intrinsically personal but communal. Thus, it shattered the ties among Africans as a community, the interiority of the being of the Africans and the internal equilibrium of their personhood that derived from their once stable and communally appreciated cultural values and traditional education. In the knowledge of this, Odimegwu (2008) ^[24] maintains that colonialism impacted African personhood with crises and rendered it "schizophrenic" (p.63). These colonial legacies or history further create phobia that engenders psychic imbalance and perplexity in many Africans. As such, the African victims had become prone to slack disorder and live more like maroons. In the light of this, it is no longer hidden that colonialism thwarted African mind leaving it with historicism that hampers common development.

In post-colonial Africa, this historicism is the background of slack and low pragmatic attitude exhibited by many indigenous people.

Colonialism did not only sever the African person from early development trajectory, it ridiculed and disconnected African persons with their autochthonous cultures; traditions, values, norms, education, knowledge, skills, and their fundamental constituents on which they defined and realized themselves. Now, Africans no longer find in their cultures the stable and ideal foundation of an integral personhood and how to be lively and practicable. Thus, colonialism instilled in African psyche a slack historicism that now impacts negatively on societal responsibilities and development. With the human autochthonous attitude in the continent jeopardized, Africans became estranged from their environment, themselves and systems that once inculcated appropriate attitudes, values, knowledge, skills and knowledge economy that underscored their pristine societal evolution and development. This alienation mystified the Africans, instilled in them a "false self-consciousness" and "fabricated inauthentic self" (Isife, 2021, p. 12) ^[12]. With indoctrinated colonial mind, everything black has now become viewed as evil. In this direction, a good number of Africans adapt to western lifestyle and adopt "western-styled education, knowledge and culture" as marks of learnedness and civility, to the repudiation of that which is African (Ezeani, 2013, 23) ^[8]. Thus, Africans embraced inferiority complex before the westerners and started losing their sense of worth.

One of the outstanding negative impacts of colonialism in Africa is therefore the "de-Africanization of Africa-a process which dispossessed the people of their culture, values, languages and human dignity" (Ezeani, 2013, 25) ^[8]. In this direction, many African States exist like a maroon depending on erstwhile colonists for assistance. This is as colonial distortion came with bias and imagined tales meant to distort the psyche of the African and render him susceptible to western control. Through colonial education which still subsists in the continent, this conscious distortion has kept the African in dilemma, slack and maroon.

The mental plague constituted by colonial historicism even displays in African leaders' consideration of themselves as colonial replacements as well as the general African adaptation of western lifestyle to the repudiation of that which is Africa (Onah, 2006) ^[28]. In this direction, the continent is even given to quest for western styled "scientific and technological development, with attendant hype on sciences and corollary downplay of arts and humanities" (Ufearoh, 2022: 16). It is based on this attitude that there exists in almost every part of Africa cases of unrivaled vicious onslaught on agents of renewal, change or decolonization of the continent.

Unable to harness itself, most Africans now assume inferiority complex before the West. Thus, *ndi ocha akarika anyi* (the West is stronger/better than us), *bekee bu agabara* (Westerners are wise), etc., are all African expressions depicting their inferiority complex before the white people (Oguejiofor, 2009, p. 1) ^[26]. This same inferiority complex occasioned by colonial historicism is also why African leaders ran to the West and Middle East for support and aid. On this same reason, African diplomats and leaders honour incessant invitations from Western and Arab countries to the clear disadvantages of their countries.

With prevailing colonial education as instrument of lasting control, Africa is indeed in chain of history driven by colonial education. This chain reflects in many African countries still paying uncompromised socio-economic and political allegiance to the erstwhile colonists (Onebunne & Kanu, 2022)^[29]. Thus, former colonists like France still decide critical issues in many African States and even “control the leadership, printing and currency operations of Senegal; and up to 13 other African countries to her advantage” (Chinweuba, 2019, p. 13)^[6]. In this regard, Al Jazeera network on 10th February 2019 reported former Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte blaming France for the incessant African migration through the Mediterranean Sea to their shores because of its grip on African states that had led to hardship that forces Africans to leave their countries. Similarly, British influence is still felt in Nigeria as most of the political quagmires and decisions in the country are orchestrated and decided in Britain (Onebunne & Kanu, 2022, 116)^[29]. These theoretically build into Africans a slack attitude towards effective practical life and ventures.

Decolonization of african historicism towards authentic african development

The impact of colonialism in the psyche of indigenous people is so adverse that average Africans believe that development in the continent is still plagued by past colonial events. Truly, colonial legacies injurious to Africans still subsist in education, political, economic and technological sectors of diverse African countries weighing down the African mind and societal development. With these legacies still standing as foundation of African society, colonial historicism has been high, derailing African mind and society from development. This is why development in African place does not only call for decolonization of societal structures but decolonization of historicism which revolves on decolonization of African mind and experiences. Decolonization of historicism thus stems from the need for true freedom, cultural and psychic independence from extraneous influence that are ordinarily inimical to African development. This process, according Keto, is the hallmark of epistemological breakthrough in African history, and a call anchoring on “Africanization” of African history (p. 452). This call can be understood as a movement from Eurocentric approach to African centered (Afrocentric) paradigm. Yet, the epistemology of African history now ought to be not just de-colonial and dismissive but integratively holistic, complementary and conversational in approach in order to be in tune with the changing human environment.

But how can historicism in Africa be decolonized? How might African history be decolonized? How too can African masses be mobilized as effective agents of decolonization of African historicism? By these questions, what is intended and expected is how to remove the imprint of colonial history and interpretation of history and effect a replacement of what African philosophy of history would be. This replacement has to absorb the unfolding events and their corresponding feats prior to colonialism, the dogged exercises to overthrow colonialism and how such continued doggedness portends a better history and historicism for Africa. Driving Africa towards a better present through the past history therefore, recounting the history of colonialism has to be balanced with account of pre-colonial history. This is important as such account induces a historicism on which the present generation

can rise above the perplexing pessimistic history brandished by the West and erstwhile colonists. From this vintage then, it means that studying and imbibing history from other paradigms are less important. The need at this moment is thus an African past that effectively provides an opportunity to unearth the African way of life in all facets, for use in the present and for planning the future progress. Therefore, instead of Africa paying greater attention to its history as written by the Europeans, it should maximize its cultural knowledge towards re-evaluating events and taking informed decisions based on that.

Along this lane, Fanon opts for authentic education of African masses through making the totality of the continent a reality to the African person. Fanon by this advocates the making of history of Africa part of the personal experience of the African (Fanon, 2001: 161). This means that the history of the continent prior and during colonialism remains crucial in instilling in Africans the understanding that their race did it before and can continue the pace. Fanon’s insistence on holistic education of African persons from African perspective is however the first step in decolonizing historicism plaguing the continent. This will advance the rejection of unfavorable colonial legacies injurious to African development and creation of room for excavation and awakening of traditional legacies and experiences that are central in African development. Fanon’s position indeed amounts to thinking in African place and space while bringing in the contemporary African lived experiences to the fore. This calls for a review of diverse African education curriculum and transformation of academic institutions in African place to ensure development of new and positive “attitudes” in Africans (Adesida & Oteh, 2007, p. 14)^[2].

In decolonizing African historicism, Fanon again advocates for education in “civic responsibility”; through dissemination of ideas and creation of enabling environment for masses’ participation in political activities (Isife, 2020: 269)^[10]. The importance of this education still anchors on its capacity of making the past and present real to the Africans. In this exercise, the past unearths pristine way of life in all facets, for use in the present and for planning the future development. Indeed, peoples’ knowledge of their history has a way of aiding their progress when priority is purposefully placed on events expected to induce favorable kind of historicism in the people. Marava (2015)^[21] shares this view adding that “the concept of time plays a pivotal role in the way a society derives its values, beliefs and conceptions” (p. 87). This becomes a pointer to the potential of African history in advancing its self discovery and true worth. It is thus on this note that African history should not be the account of the colonists. For this account will not reflect periods of African true “historical and cultural experiences” that stand as the story of Africa potential historicism (Fayemi, 2017:298). Neither is it plausible for Africans to use Western categories in making sense of their situations and development. All these boil down to the great need for decolonization of African history, and then historicism. This decolonization is also in congruence with the basic foundation of history--history; which has to do with one telling one’s own story. It is as well justified by the truth that the West cannot tell African story better than Africans.

Decolonizing African historicism then demands a conscious bracketing of the present history of the continent. This is towards delineating and sifting it of colonial derailing items

and rechanneling it to African developmental advantage. Thus, instead of Africa paying greater attention to its colonial history as recorded by the West which underlies its slack attitude, the continent should maximize her cultural knowledge towards re-evaluating colonial events and taking informed decisions that guarantees effective ventures. All these are tenable through education with curriculum underlined by indigenous cultures, values, problems and aspirations. This means that “African development simply rests more on well defined mapped-out Africanized curriculums and a functional African Philosophy of Education that is African” (Onebunne & Kanu, 2022: 118) [29].

In the task of decolonizing African historicism however, Africans must bear in mind that indigenous emancipation will not be done by the Western imperialists who created the situation that warranted it. More so, the genuine intentions of these neo-colonists and imperialists cannot be guaranteed since they cannot ordinarily pave African psychological liberation which might pose socio-political and economic disadvantage to them. This doubt has been supported by diverse attempts of these Western neo-colonists to decolonize Africa which turned to tighten their grip on the continent. One of such attempts is the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) couched with national liberation visions for Africa targeted at the year 2020. Others are financial aids from World Bank (WB) and International Monetary Fund (IMF). These projects have plunged African countries into debts, made them vulnerable to control by western countries whose interests these international organizations also serve and subsequently undermined the continent’s chance and strive for optimistic historicism.

Reconstruction of african history to shape african historicism

The normal understanding is that history should depict facts of history and not probe the characters and motives of *dramatis personae* of history (Ufearoh, 2022). With this knowledge, Carr (1990) [5] advocates that the role of the historian is “simply to show how it really was” (p. 8). This traditionally makes history writing “a call for strict adherence to the canon of objectivity ascetically divested of any judgmental, moral or personal input” (p. 24). Yet, the quest for objective history that would reconstruct African psyche, offer didactic value, function or propel historicism that would be relevant for human successful venture in the continent calls for probe of colonial history. This is more so as contents of African history remains an exaggerated colonial piece about the helplessness of Africans and the responsive actions of the West to this helpless situation. In this history, African feats prior to the advent of colonialism and its eventual truncation were rarely mentioned. The criticism and search for didactic value and function of history was for long embraced in human societies even prior to the period of enlightenment (encyclopedia.com). The need for reconstruction of history in African place indeed bothers more on the rationale that moral sensitivity and human positive motivation in the continent are now qualities needed to strengthen the worth of history. Mandelbaum in Ufearoh (2022) affirms the need for this philosophy of history in the continent in order “to satisfy the need to come to a reckoning with the philosopher-historian’s own times, to justify or condemn social or political life by setting it off against background of the recorded past” (p. 24). This then means that

through sensitive and critical reconstruction of history, African past will effectively illuminate the present and then foster development.

One of the greatest undoing of African people is the neglect of their history in which their identity as a people is captured. This has had a serious adverse effect on the continent as it left it bleeding on all sides. That the world stage is globalized is not enough reason why Africa cannot be truly Africa in her existence and management of affairs in her diverse countries.

Problems of decolonizing african historicism

The greatest problem facing decolonization of African historicism is the inherited structures at diverse African independence. At the point of these independences, already made but poorly structured systems were presented to the Africans (Akinola, 1994) [31]. Most of them were even in reminiscence of colonial history meant to undermine African psychic emancipation. Such structures are visible in politics, governance, education, and many other sectors of African society. With this heritage, pristine and present Africans considered themselves as colonial replacements; hence the general priority appears to rest on not building a stable society but on what one can get from the common treasury (Onah, 2006) [28]. Thus, the way and manner Africa is being run today is just a display of the colonial way of thinking. This slack state of Africa is however exacerbated by globalization which is still a western ideology and construct couched to further entrap the already mentally weakened Africans. Yet, living in a globalized world does not negate the need to think in a traditional way if that would bring the greatest good to the greatest number of people. Hindering autochthonous way of thinking is now the African education system which is colonially inclined. This makes African road to freedom bleaker as no nation develops beyond the quality of her educational system.

Conclusion

This study focused on decolonization of African historicism. The paper x-rays the ontological and epistemological foundations of African historicism and undevelopment. Here one finds a relational ontology; the colonial history, its weakening of African psyche, and projection in Africans a historicism that accounts for African historical undevelopment. This study is thus a complementary de-colonial excursus for African freedom, exercise of will and complementary decolonization of African historicism. The paper affirms that the problem of Africa is psychic owing to the colonial history infused in African mind through persistent colonial legacies. Colonial paradigm however promotes loss of identity (customs and tradition), personal meaning, sense of community and freedom (Ogugua, 2006) [27].

To curb the historicism emanating from this history, there is great need to complementarily reconstruct African history towards instilling the kind of historicism that will move people out of present slack and maroon state. Historicism is therefore a position of the mind shaped by past events. This psychic position has tremendous influence in the development of peoples’ social, political, economic and cultural systems. The complementary reconstruction of African history for a better historicism requires bringing back African rich and once flourishing history and heritage, not excluding values in other

cultures to project the kind of historicism needed to propel the attitude of the present African generation towards development. This is modern day decolonization of historicism anchoring on reconstruction of historical factors that limit human capacity, aptitude and African proficiency of making sense of their worth and existence in their own place and space. It then means that decolonizing African historicism is now of utmost importance as it deconstructs colonial experiences and thoughts that has become a wide pool of human concern in African place. If Africa would still develop beyond the contemporary obstructive shackles and chains of colonialism and Western World which has resulted in the vicious circle of underdevelopment, she needs her own Philosophy of Education that is pertinent to her culture, circumscriptive of her worldview, and very typical of her age-long academic quagmire as well as her educational problematiqués. African development simply rests more on well-defined mapped-out Africanized curriculums and a functional African Philosophy of Education that is African, but not totally exclusive of advantageous values from other climes.

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