

Decolonising Education in Postcolonial Zimbabwe: Context and the Way Forward

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Abstract

The current reflection comes against the backdrop of coloniality; a cancer presently bedevilling education in Sub-Saharan Africa in general and Zimbabwe in particular. Coloniality is the colonial logic herein construed as the dark side of Euro-North American-centric modernity. Guided by the 'postcolonial' and 'narratives of return' theories, this secondary research explicates the context of coloniality within the Zimbabwean society in general and the country's education system in particular. In the process, the paper reveals the impact of colonialism on, inter-alia, African history, power, epistemology, being, culture, religion, and heritage. It is against this background that the current reflection expounds the generic concept of decoloniality upon which it explores the possibilities of decolonising Zimbabwe's education system. Decolonial ideals include but are not limited to the philosophy of African redemption, African renaissance, Unhu/Ubuntu, heritage-based philosophy, and Africanisation - most of which repose within Gade's 'narratives of return' theory. It becomes permissible, therefore, to argue that customising Zimbabwe's education curricula in accordance with Gade's 'narratives of return' serves to effectively decolonise her education so that her paideia is in the end geared towards heritage-based creativity and innovation leading to indigenous-oriented but still globally competitive industrialisation. This penchant for decolonial ideals is, on the whole, exigent for reclaiming, restoring, repairing, rediscovering, and redefining the Afro-Zimbabwean history, power, knowledge, being, culture, religion, and heritage for posterity. It is, thus, recommended that decolonial ideals take centre stage in Zimbabwe's postcolonial education system.

Keywords: coloniality, decoloniality, decolonisation, 'narratives of return', postcolonial

Introduction and Background

The current reflection is a search for ideals or philosophies with which to decolonise education in Zimbabwe. Notwithstanding the ongoing efforts to decolonise the same, the colonial logic (coloniality) continues to permeate the Afro-Zimbabwean society in general and the country's education system in particular. Therefore, the submission that colonial legacy permeates the Zimbabwean education system even within the postcolonial dispensation is in itself a truism. The coloniality of local education is, thus, conspicuous. Despite the rhetoric to Africanise local education and have *Unhu/Ubuntu* as the home-grown philosophy guiding life in general and education in particular, Zimbabwe's postcolonial education continues to be steered by the exotic but inappropriate epistemologies grounded in individualism, neoliberalism, and habits of consumerism. Hence, relics of colonialism are evident in the hybridised graduates produced by the country's contemporary education system, graduates who exhibit signs of inauthenticity,

uprootedness, alienation, existential vacuity, mimetic philopraxis, and self-contempt (Makuvaza, 2008; Makuvaza & Shizha, 2017).

Graduates alluded to in the foregoing are fundamentally uprooted from their culture, yet they do not readily fit into the Euro-North American-centric culture, which they seem to view with a respectful and covetous eye. These hybridised *alumnae* are like bats, which are neither rodents nor birds; hence, they are dubbed ‘salads’ (Makuvaza, 2008). Regrettably, universities in Africa (Zimbabwe included), for instance, continue to produce alienated Africans that are socialised into hating the Africa that produced them and liking the Europe and America that hate them (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015). Hence, Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2015, p. 489) declares, “Schools, colleges, churches and universities in Africa are sites for the reproduction of coloniality. We so far do not have African universities. We have universities in Africa. They continue to poison African minds with Western research methodologies”. Thus, education in the formerly colonised African states (which include Zimbabwe) is a reflection of the West (Europe and North America) and a propagation of self-hate among the ex-colonised peoples. It is, therefore, lamentable that the colonial hang-over continues to shape life and education in Zimbabwe even in the postcolonial era.

Problem Postulation

The itching point of this reflection is the uprootedness, alienation, existential vacuity, mimetic philopraxis, and self-contempt that seem to be evident and conspicuous in graduates from postcolonial Zimbabwe’s institutions of learning. To substantiate the above, Makuvaza (as cited in Wuta, 2020) reports that most Afro-Zimbabwean youths manifest inauthentic and mimetic existence in the way they dress, their music and dance styles, preferred lifestyle and contempt of the mother tongue. This is also reflected in how they walk and talk, hairstyles which demonstrate contempt and regret over their natural kinky hair and reading of foreign, especially Western novels, and so forth. This reflection, therefore, seeks to ruminate on how to address this lamentable status quo, which, when left to continue unchecked, can possibly bring about a cultural vacuum that can only be filled with confusion, loss of identity, disregard of the Afro-Zimbabwean heritage, and a total annihilation of Afro-Zimbabwean power, epistemology, being, worldview, and culture.

Theoretical Underpinnings

This reflection is informed by the postcolonial theory, which attempts to explain the struggle for ethnic, cultural, and political autonomy. Exponents of the postcolonial theory include Antonio Gramsci, Gayatri Spivak, and Homi Bhabha, who construe the said theory as a notion that attempts to disrupt the dominant discourse of colonial power (dcac.du.ac.in>Metrial, as cited in Wuta, 2023). Thus, the postcolonial theory is endowed

with a strong change agenda. Hence, “it is a fundamental aspect of the postcolonial theoretic project to destabilise the ‘truths’ born out of colonialism and to open a space in the academic world for alternative voices and perspectives to be heard” (dcac.du.ac.in>Metrial, as cited in Wuta, 2023, p. 112). Therefore, the postcolonial theory is wary of the ‘coloniality’ of power, knowledge, and being, *id est*, the colonial logic which it seeks to explain and destabilise within education in the formerly colonised societies of Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) in general and Zimbabwe in particular.

The current reflection is also guided by Gade’s ‘narratives of return’ theory, which also challenges the coloniality of power, knowledge, and being, and hence the ‘narratives of return’ are a reaction to the colonial logic. “The major statement behind ‘narratives of return’ is a desire or yearning to ‘return’ to the past for possible solutions to challenges and problems associated with the postcolonial dispensation” (Makuvaza, 2017, p. 351). Gade’s theory of ‘narratives of return’ is, thus, consistent with the decolonisation of Zimbabwe’s education system in pursuit of the decolonial agenda, which has since gained currency and momentum within the postcolonial dispensation.

Research Methodology

This paper is documentary analysis or secondary research; a qualitative research design in which the researcher systematically examines existing documents or literature to extract meaningful data relevant to the driving concerns of the inquiry. According to Bowen (2009), documentary analysis is an efficient method which is less time-consuming and cost-effective as it requires data selection instead of data collection, documentary analysis is available (since many documents are in the public domain), unobtrusive (does not draw undue attention), and non-reactive (unaffected by the research process). It is for these reasons that documentary analysis was preferred as the research design of this reflective piece. It is in the form of discourse analysis, which, according to Mhlanga and Shumba (2013), is the process of interpreting the powerful meanings underpinning a text enabling the researcher to distil valuable insights from research data. The paper, therefore, is a reflection on other people’s literary works that include primary and secondary sources (journal articles, book chapters, and handbooks) that speak to the decolonisation of education in Zimbabwe. Sources of literature considered herein include Zimbabwean education commissions like the Nziramasanga Commission Report of 1999 and reflections on specific theories related to coloniality, postcoloniality, and decoloniality in the Sub-Saharan context.

Findings: Coloniality in Generic

The current reflection is best understood from the perspective of ‘coloniality’ – the colonial logic ushered into SSA in general and Zimbabwe in particular through a type of colonisation called settler colonialism. According to Mazrui (as cited in Ndlovu-Gatsheni,

2015), settler colonialism ushered Africa into the Euro-North American-centric modernity whose dark side is 'coloniality'. Settler colonialism, thus, occasioned the existing and ongoing asymmetrical power relations (in the formerly colonised regions) configured into a matrix dubbed the 'continuity of coloniality'.

According to Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2015), coloniality is premised on the three units of analysis, *id est*, coloniality of 'power', 'knowledge', and 'being' - the triad of coloniality. The coloniality of power helps in investigating into how the current 'global body politic' was constructed, constituted, and configured into a racially hierarchised, Euro-American-centric, Christian-centric, capitalist, hegemonic, asymmetrical, and modern power structure (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015). To Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2015), therefore, coloniality of power enables delving deeper into how the world was bifurcated into the 'Zone of Being' and the 'Zone of Non-Being' wherein the former incorporates the Global North or core Euro-American world (beneficiaries of modernity) whilst the latter comprises the Global South populated largely by the so-called peripheral peoples (victims of imperialism, colonialism, and apartheid). SSA in general and Zimbabwe to be precise are located within the 'invented' Zone of Non-Being, where the socio-political and economic power of erstwhile white colonisers is still being felt.

Coloniality of knowledge "focuses on teasing out epistemological issues, politics of knowledge-generation, as well as questions of who generates which knowledge and for what purpose" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015, p. 490). This coloniality of knowledge, thus, portrays the Euro-North Americans as the custodians of real knowledge which is worth being sought. "Coloniality of knowledge is useful in enabling us to understand how endogenous and indigenous knowledges have been pushed to what became understood as the barbarian margins of society" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015, p. 490). Coloniality of knowledge, therefore, carries with it the disparagement and denigration of local epistemology (home-grown knowledge production and/or meaning-making) within the formerly colonised regions. As a result of the continuity of this coloniality of knowledge, Africa, for instance, is saddled with irrelevant knowledge that serves to disempower rather than empower individuals and communities (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015).

Coloniality of being gestures into the ontology of human beings (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015), ontology herein construed as the science of being and/or existence. The ontology of human beings, thus, speaks to the humanity of the different human races among which the humanity of Africans is questioned by the Euro-North American-centric school of thought. To Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2015, p. 490), therefore, "coloniality of being is very important because it assists in investigating how African humanity was questioned as well as into the processes that contributed towards the 'objectification'/ 'thingification'/ 'commodification' of Africans." This unfortunate idea of questioning African humanity and commodifying Africans finds expression in the ideas of Immanuel Kant (1724-1804

A.D./C.E.) who, according to Kaputa (2011), once said ‘Africans need to be driven by thrashing’ and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831 A.D./C.E.) who, according to Funtsh (2015), once remarked ‘there is nothing harmonious with humanity in Africa’.

Mendoza (2020) conceives ‘coloniality’ as a residue of colonialism whereas Quijano (as cited in Makuvaza & Shizha, 2017) views ‘coloniality’ as the structures of power, control, and hegemony that have emerged during the era of colonialism. It should, therefore, be noted that ‘coloniality’ differs from ‘colonialism’ because colonialism ends with independence, *id est*, when external and direct administrative rule comes to an end whereas coloniality continues to structure social relations even after independence (Mendoza, 2020). Hence, Thondhlana and Garwe (2021, p. 4) define coloniality as “the continued imposition of epistemic, geographic, and psychological domination of power that transcend colonialism.” Thus, coloniality spans beyond the end of colonial rule. Likewise, Maldonado-Torres (as cited in Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015, p. 487) writes:

Coloniality survives colonialism. It is maintained alive in books, in the criteria for academic performance, in cultural patterns, in common sense, in the self-image of peoples, in aspirations of self, and so many other aspects of our modern experience. In a way, as modern subjects we breathe coloniality all the time and every day.

In other words, coloniality continues to permeate life and education in the formerly colonised nations of the world up to this day.

Coloniality of Postcolonial Education: The Zimbabwean Context

The British colonisers, under the auspices of the British South Africa Company (BSAC), invaded Zimbabwe in 1890. By 1894, these conquerors had destroyed the sovereignty of the Shona and Ndebele-speaking people (the indigenous peoples of the area) and established a new political order which embodied their sovereignty. This marks the genesis of the ‘coloniality’ of power, knowledge, and being in the then Rhodesia now Zimbabwe. The preceding coincided with the establishment of colonial education, largely under missionaries, in Rhodesia, which transcended the colonial era right into postcolonial Zimbabwe.

Hence, Higgs (as cited in Makuvaza & Shizha, 2017, p. 3-4) avers:

the overall character of much of education theory and practice in Africa is overwhelmingly either European or Eurocentric. In other words, it is argued that much of what is taken for education in Africa is in fact not African, but rather a reflection of Europe in Africa.

This exhibits the ‘coloniality of power’ because Western hegemony in education is more than conspicuous, and ‘coloniality of knowledge’ because Western epistemology has

since been exalted and legitimated in Sub-Saharan education. Higgs's position is consistent with Mazrui (as quoted in Mawere, 2015, p. 61) who argues, "very few educated Africans are even aware that they are also in cultural bondage. 'All' educated Africans ... are still cultural captives of the West." Thus, people in SSA are uprooted and alienated as a result of the colonial experience and hence they continue to live the life of mimicry definitive of the colonial logic.

Strong testimony to the coloniality of knowledge in SSA (Zimbabwe included) is presented by De Beer and Whitlock (as cited in Shizha, 2010, p. 44) who report, "many teachers are hesitant to incorporate Indigenous Knowledge in the classroom out of fear of infecting classroom teaching with pseudoscience." These teachers, therefore, manifest a colonial mind-set as they tend to denigrate the African Indigenous Knowledge Systems (AIKSs) which they dismiss as 'pseudoscience', 'backward', and 'retrogressive', and erroneously regard the Western Knowledge Systems (WKSs) as 'authentic', 'legitimate', and 'progressive'.

It is clear that, "[T]hough attempts were made to reform the education systems in general, and the curriculum in particular in order to ensure relevance to the African needs in post-independence states, most research indicate that not much was achieved" (Mavhunga, 2006, pp. 446-447). Thus, educational reform in post-colonial SSA has also not quite succeeded, owing to a troubled and poor economy (Zvobgo, as cited in Mavhunga, 2006). This troubled and poor economy has stifled curriculum research, planning, design, review, renewal, and modification. Hence, it allowed for the continuity of coloniality of knowledge since the preponderance of Western epistemology seems to be continuing in the postcolonial Sub-Saharan countries.

One major mistake made by post-independence governments in Africa (Zimbabwe included) is succinctly presented by Zvobgo (as cited in Mavhunga, 2006, p. 448), thus, "Western models of education were imported by the new states in the belief that they only had to westernise their education systems in order to modernise their societies and so become industrialised and rich." Therefore, educational reforms that emerged from such arrangements ended up further entrenching Western values in the guise of 'modernising' education systems. As Mavhunga (2006, pp. 447-448) observes, "In Zimbabwe for instance, despite well documented plans to localise the curriculum by adopting indigenous values and technologies, of course tempered with technological developments from the world over, the school curriculum has fundamentally remained Western". This portrays an inheritance situation within which education in Zimbabwe is located. Mazonde (2001, p. 20) endorses the above as he submits, "there has been retention of curriculum content and theory associated with the colonial period and the educational traditions of the colonising powers. Thus, curricula often follow European

models.” This inheritance situation emblematises the continuity of coloniality of knowledge in local education.

Nziramasanga (1999, p. 362) reports, “there was a general agreement countrywide that the present school curriculum is based on a philosophy that excluded the promotion of indigenous culture in the education of the Zimbabwean child.” This implies that Zimbabwe’s postcolonial education system was and still is being steered by irrelevant and inappropriate epistemologies. Therefore, “the Commission is in agreement with the view that Zimbabwe’s education system can be best described as Euro-centric in its cultural content and orientation” (Nziramasanga, 1999, p. 367). Consequently, the indigenous African culture has been relegated to the margins of Zimbabwe’s school curriculum thereby propagating the colonial logic in general and coloniality of knowledge and power in particular.

For exemplification purposes, Nziramasanga (1999) cites music education in Zimbabwe’s school curriculum which at present (as was the case in 1999) is directed towards enhancing music appreciation and participation in Eurocentric music environments, which also fuels cultural uprootedness. This concurs with Mutema (2013, p. 59) who reports, “the traditional children’s songs and games are no longer as popular as they used to be. In fact, it is possible that they are facing extinction.” Mutema, therefore, views these indigenous forms of edutainment as an endangered genre. Since these traditional songs and games are endowed with the Afro-Zimbabwean cultural-philosophical package, to then allow their extinction is to allow the intensification of the coloniality of power (Western hegemony) and coloniality of knowledge (legitimation of Western epistemology) within local education.

Coloniality of knowledge is evident in the negation of AIKSs that represent African epistemology or the African meaning-making. It is also conspicuous in the legitimation of WKSs which embody Western epistemology or the Occidental ways of knowing. According to Mapira and Mazambara (2013), AIKSs were often despised in order to promote the Western forms of knowledge such as the natural neo-liberal science. Yet AIKSs cover “ecology, climate, agriculture, animal husbandry, botany, linguistics, medicine, clinical psychology and craft skills” (Mapira & Mazambara, 2013, p. 91). In spite of their diversity and versatility, AIKSs have been neglected in most academic and non-academic disciplines (Mapira & Mazambara, 2013). This observation is confirmed by Mazodze, Mapara, and Tsvere (2021) who contend that student development in higher education has remained firmly anchored on Eurocentric ways of knowing at the expense of other epistemologies especially those from the Global South. To Mazodze, Mapara, and Tsvere (2021), indigenous epistemologies are inferiorised and marginalised. Efforts to Africanise the curriculum have largely been piecemeal and student development theory has continued to be underpinned by Eurocentric epistemology with a devastating impact

on student identity and character development (Mazodze, Mapara & Tsvere, 2021). With this continuous marginalisation of AIKSs, Zimbabweans could be losing what could be of socio-economic value to them.

According to the Government of Zimbabwe (2015), the new 'O' and 'A' Level Family and Religious Studies syllabi introduced a component of Indigenous Religion. However, with the contempt that the 'uprooted' students and teachers in Zimbabwe seem to have of Indigenous Religion, chances are high that it may not receive its due recognition. Family and Religious Studies as a learning area is bound to continue being dominated by the well-marketed Judeo-Christian religious ethos that, according to Mukusha (as cited in Wuta, 2020), are literally better positioned for the Israelis. This has the potential to perpetuate 'Christocentricity' - a chauvinistic Western religious predisposition, which, in the local education curriculum, epitomises the colonial logic in general and the coloniality of power, through the Church, in particular.

Mavhunga (2006) claims that History as a secondary school subject has all along been taught and learnt with a Western slant. He further alleges that where African History was taught, the African was portrayed negatively. However, Mavhunga (2006) recognises the notable Afro-centric changes instituted, for instance, in 'O' Level History since the 1980 attainment of political independence - changes which resonate with the increased emphasis on Afro-Zimbabwean History, particularly that of the liberation struggle (1966-1980). Nonetheless, pockets of resistance to the new History content that emphasises Afro-Zimbabwean History, particularly that of the liberation struggle, have been noted (Mavhunga, 2006). This resistance bears testimony to the coloniality of knowledge because those against the Afro-centric History seem to acquiesce to the perceived veracity, believability, and legitimacy of the Western side of the story.

In terms of language-in-education, Nziramasanga (1999, p. 157) submits, "while officially indigenous languages enjoy equal status with English, the reality of examinations and the requirements of commerce and industry tend to give higher status to English." This diaglossic relationship between English and indigenous languages epitomises the coloniality of power and is consistent with the coloniality of being (nullification of African humanity) in local education. With the eternalised use of English as the official medium of instruction, Zimbabwe's school system is persistently failing to speak to *Munhu/Umuntu*. This scenario is worsened by the prevailing contempt over the use of African languages in law, administration, media, and entertainment where the majority of Zimbabweans prefer to use English (Nziramasanga, 1999), which demonstrates self-hate on the part of Afro-Zimbabweans and in the end manifest the colonial logic.

The genesis of this diaglossic relationship between English and indigenous languages is traceable to as far back as the Kerr Commission Report of 1952 which recommended English speech training for Africans, the Judges Commission Report of 1963 which

required English to be *compulsorily and idiomatically employed in the teaching of other subjects*, and the Lewis-Taylor Committee Report of 1974 which required all subjects to be taught in English (Nzirasanga, 1999; Ndamba, 2010). Unfortunately, the post-independence 1987 Education Act continued to bestow more respect upon English. Hence, “evidence from the Zimbabwe Languages Association states that the present Education Act of 1987 is characteristically colonial because it promotes English at the expense of developing indigenous languages” (Nzirasanga, 1999, p. 161). To make matters worse, the 1987 Education Act gives no legal status to indigenous languages and effectively deprives Afro-Zimbabweans of a sense of linguistic pride in their own heritage. Thus, Nzirasanga (1999, p. 167) avers:

Essentially, language is a vehicle of the transmission of culture hence, the acceptance of English language has led to the adoption of English culture at the expense of traditional cultural values. In other words, the colonial master may have left the country as a result of the protracted liberation war but continues to dominate Zimbabweans through the English language.

This dominance of English language in Zimbabwean education, therefore, remains an epitome of the colonial logic. The 1991 and 2006 Amendments to the 1987 Education Act, the Curriculum Framework for Primary and Secondary Education (2015-2022), and the Heritage-Based Curriculum Framework (2024-2030) did not save the situation either, since they seem not to have substantially improved the status of indigenous languages.

Above all, Mavhunga (2006, p. 454) proclaims:

... the school system is accused of breeding apologists to Western hegemony, products that look up to Europe for solutions to local problems rather than independent thinkers who seek African solutions to African problems; people who have no cultural base and, therefore, no identity.

The contemporary local education system is herein criticised for inducing a dependency syndrome of some kind on the Western system, thereby bolstering the coloniality of power. It is, therefore, argued, “while SSA might have attained political independence from their erstwhile colonisers, however, their coloniality still remains and thus requires interrogation” (Ashcroft *et al.*, as cited in Makuvaza & Shizha 2017, p. 5). Hence, the continuity of global coloniality is on the whole evident. It is against this backdrop that Abdi (as cited in Makuvaza & Shizha, 2017, p. 6) declares, “SSA requires first and foremost a decolonising philosophy as well as a decolonising education,” which evokes the decolonial discourse for decolonising education in Zimbabwe.

Synthesis of Findings

The colonial hangover in Zimbabwe as configured into the colonial logic has proved to be most evident in the areas of language-in-education, curriculum content, colonial educator mindset, and general dependency syndrome, among others. In terms of language-in-education, English (the colonial language) remains the official medium of local instruction up to higher and tertiary education. In curriculum content, the Western epistemologies continue to maintain a supremacist posture and domineering role. The colonial educator mindset is that of denigrating African epistemologies as pseudoscience and anachronism, deriding AIKSs as primordial and antiquated. The general dependency syndrome is seen in Afro-Zimbabwean graduates who continue to look up to Europe for solutions to local problems instead of independently seeking African solutions to African problems. It is from this perspective that decoloniality is fathomed.

Discussion: The Concept of Decoloniality

Chief proponents of the decolonial theory include Frantz Fanon, William Dubois, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, Kwame Nkrumah, and Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni, among others. The decolonial agenda targets the 'triad of coloniality', which subsumes the coloniality of 'power', 'knowledge', and 'being' (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015). This is endorsed by Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2020) and Ranawana (2023) who construe decoloniality as the 'how' part of decolonisation as well as a process of liberation to unmask and reveal coloniality, and challenge its endurance across the three dimensions of power, knowledge, and being. Decoloniality, thus, announces a broad 'decolonial turn' that involves the task of the very decolonisation of knowledge, power, and being, including institutions of learning.

Unlike the simple decolonisation movements of the 20th century, "decoloniality was and is aimed at setting afoot a new humanity free from racial hierarchisation and asymmetrical power relations in place since conquest" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015, p. 489). Decoloniality, thus, seeks to eradicate the colonial logic in general and coloniality of power in more specific terms. This is substantiated by Maldonado-Torres (as cited in Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015, p. 488) who writes:

... by decoloniality it is meant here the dismantling of relations of power and conceptions of knowledge that foment the reproduction of racial, gender, and geopolitical hierarchies that came into being or found new and more powerful forms of expression in the modern/colonial world.

The decolonial agenda, therefore, is wary of the racially and colonially-induced injustice, inequality, inequity, and iniquity.

Decoloniality is understood to be adversative to the neo-colonial forces (under the guise of globalisation) that continue to afflict the ex-colonised peoples of the world, hence it is

emancipatory in outlook (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015; Ranawana, 2023). Thus, decoloniality seeks to expose coloniality as the dark side of the Euro-North American-centric modernity which continues to shape and define the life of the formerly colonised peoples across the globe (Ranawana, 2023). “It (decoloniality) is a particular kind of critical intellectual theory as well as a political project which seeks to disentangle ex-colonised parts of the world from coloniality” (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015, p. 489). Decoloniality, therefore, is an antidote to the undue supremacist posturing of the cultures and worldviews of the Global North – it is a counter to the chauvinist Euro-Oriental pomp located within the coloniality of power.

Decolonial theorists view institutions of learning within the formerly colonised countries as agents of the hierarchisation of human races definitive of the coloniality of power. Decoloniality, thus, conceives education in the formerly colonised states as a reflection of the Euro-Oriental world (the Global North) and a propagation of self-hate among the ex-colonised peoples (the Global South). It is against this backdrop that decoloniality seeks to combat the racial hierarchisation of humanity, asymmetrical power relations between the former colonisers and the formerly colonised, and Western hegemony in the formerly colonised nations – cancers embedded in the coloniality of power.

Decoloniality is a way of thinking, knowing, and doing; a way of life for the formerly subjugated peoples across the globe (Ranawana, 2023). It is part of the marginalised peoples’ persistent movements that emerged from struggles against the slave trade, imperialism, colonialism, and underdevelopment (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015). Thus, the roots of decoloniality are traceable to the iniquities committed by the Westerners against the peripherised and vulnerable global peoples like Africans, Caribbeans, and West Indians, among others – iniquities whose effects and structures (as configured into the coloniality of power) are visible up to this day. Hence, fighting the coloniality of power is at the epicentre of the decolonial agenda.

Decoloniality can also be construed as a counter-force against a lamentable situation whereby universities in Africa, for instance, continue to produce alienated Africans that are socialised into hating the Africa that produced them and liking the Europe and America that hate them (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015). These universities, therefore, manifest the coloniality of knowledge as they valorise Western epistemology much to the chagrin of decolonial theorists. Likewise, Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2015: 489) writes, “In decoloniality, research methods and research methodologies are never accepted as neutral but are unmasked as (Western) technologies of subjectivation if not surveillance tools that prevent the emergence of another-thinking, another-logic, and another-worldview. Research methodologies are tools of gate-keeping.” To decolonial theorists, therefore, Western epistemologies are deliberately designed to intellectually subjugate and dehumanise the ex-colonised peoples, forestall the possible rise of Indigenous Knowledge Systems in ex-colonised regions, and thwart the ex-colonised peoples’

heritage-based worldviews that are destined to rise to prominence. This is glaring coloniality of knowledge, which the decolonial agenda seeks to challenge.

Decoloniality is a call for the democratisation, de-homogenisation, de-Westernisation and/or de-Europeanisation of knowledge (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015). This is further endorsed by Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2020), who calls upon Africa to turn over a new leaf in the domains of politics, economy, and most importantly knowledge as it frees itself from imperial global designs and global coloniality. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2020), thus, calls for a radical turning over a new leaf, predicated on the decolonial turn and epistemic freedom. Decolonial thinking, therefore, conceives knowledge as an entitlement to all peoples (democratisation of knowledge), it is against the Western-orchestrated universalisation of knowledge (de-homogenisation of knowledge), and it challenges the perceived Western-European custodianship of worthwhile knowledge (De-Westernisation or De-Europeanisation of knowledge). This is endorsed by Ranawana (2023) who views decoloniality as challenging the assumed universality of coloniality and its associated systems. In other words, decoloniality rejects the possibility of the so-called Western universal truth, and hence it counteracts the coloniality of knowledge. Decoloniality could also be understood as an opportunity for the formerly subjugated to relearn their knowledge that could have been pushed aside, forgotten, buried, or even discredited by the forces of modernity, settler-colonialism, and racial capitalism.

As an epistemological movement, decoloniality has always been overshadowed by the hegemonic Euro-North American-centric intellectual thought and social theories (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015; Ranawana, 2023), a *status quo* emblematic of the coloniality of power and knowledge. However, decoloniality still emerged from this deliberately and structurally orchestrated invisibility to challenge the coloniality of power and knowledge. As a political movement, it has consistently been subjected to the surveillance of global imperial designs and colonial matrices of power. Despite all this reconnaissance and deliberate shadowing by neo-colonial forces, decoloniality continues to gain momentum among the formerly colonised peoples of the world; it continues to counteract the coloniality of power and that of knowledge.

Decoloniality, therefore, could be harnessed to explore colonisation, settler-colonialism, racial capitalism, modernity, and most recently, neoliberalism and neo-capitalism, and how they have displaced an array of the modes of living, thinking, and being in SSA in general and Zimbabwe in particular. Thus, decoloniality could be leveraged to restore, elevate, renew, rediscover, acknowledge, and validate the multiplicity of lives, life experiences, culture, and knowledge of the indigenous ex-colonised Afro-Zimbabweans in order to challenge the colonial logic in its entirety. In other words, decoloniality is consistent with Zimbabwe's topical heritage-based ideology, which has since been

decreed the underlying philosophy of education transcending the Early Childhood Development, junior, secondary, higher and tertiary education cycles.

Decolonising Education: The Way Forward

Being the 'how' part of decolonisation, decoloniality commits to combating the colonial logic in its three dimensions of coloniality of power, knowledge, and being. The genesis of this decolonial agenda is traceable to as far back as the late 1950s, when Ghana's first President and Pan-Africanist leader, Dr Kwame Nkrumah, highlighted the importance of Africa-centred knowledge when he established the Institute of African Studies at the University of Ghana (Crawford, Mai-Bornu & Landstrom, 2021). In further pursuance of the decolonial tradition in the early 1980s, the Nigerian political scientist Claude Ake (as cited in Crawford, Mai-Bornu & Landstrom, 2021) advocated for endogenous knowledge production on issues about Africa. The ongoing focus of the decolonial agenda was also given a major impetus by the '#Rhodes Must Fall' movement in South Africa in 2015 (Crawford, Mai-Bornu & Landstrom, 2021). The current reflection, therefore, proffers *Unhu/Ubuntu*, African redemption, African renaissance, Africanisation of education, and indigenisation of language-in-education as philosophies-ideals of the decolonial agenda for combating the legacies of colonialism in Zimbabwe. The above philosophies-ideals are, in one way or the other consistent with Gade's 'narratives of return' theory, which, according to Makuvaza (2017), articulates the yearning to return to the past for possible solutions to problems vexing Afro-Zimbabweans within the postcolonial dispensation.

Makuvaza (2008, p. 373) argues, "since education contributed significantly towards the uprooting of the Africans from their culture, then it should, indeed, be instrumental in their cultural liberation and redemption. In other words, it should equally be engaged in efforts towards de-rooting the Africans culturally." This places education at the disposal of Afro-Zimbabweans for use in resisting the coloniality of power (Western cultural hegemony) which has persisted into the postcolonial era. To this end, Makuvaza (2008) proposes education for *Unhu/Ubuntu* herein construed as a homegrown decolonising philosophy of education consistent with the heritage-based ideology currently undergirding Zimbabwe's primary and secondary as well as higher and tertiary education systems. Grounding local education in *Unhu/Ubuntu*, therefore, becomes a viable alternative for eradicating the Western cultural hegemony, thereby decolonising the African mind. With its communocentric and cooperative communalistic inclinations, *Unhu/Ubuntu* inherently challenges the neoliberal elements of individualism, consumerism, and profiteering nurtured by the Western capitalist culture.

Unhu/Ubuntu is a deconstructive, restorative, decolonising, and reconstructive African philosophy of life and of education (Makuvaza, 2008). Hence, *Unhu/Ubuntu* is deconstructive in the sense that it urges the re-writing of the Afro-Zimbabwean history to nullify the Western-orchestrated falsehoods of African ahistoricity and sub-humanness.

This way, the *Unhu/Ubuntu* philosophy accentuates the reclamation and redemption of African history and the African 'being'. *Unhu/Ubuntu* is restorative in the sense that it attempts to reorient Africans to the African culture. *Unhu/Ubuntu* is decolonising because it is emancipatory in outlook. It (*Unhu/Ubuntu*) is, above all, reconstructive as it seeks to resuscitate African heritage and rebuild African history, power, knowledge, being, image, confidence, and pride. Being inclined towards resuscitating African heritage on the part of *Unhu/Ubuntu* places the said philosophy into close propinquity with the heritage-based ideology, which accentuates development, based on locally available resources that include the cultural, agricultural, climatological, and mineralogical endowments. *Unhu/Ubuntu* is on the whole a decolonising philosophy undergirding a decolonising education.

Operationalising the philosophy of African redemption in Zimbabwe's system of education also serves to counter the colonial logic. Therefore, Zimbabwe is urged to adopt Ignatius Loyola's counter-reformation *modus operandi* of 'taking the school first' (Rusk & Scotland, 1960). James (2009) decrees that the new philosophy of African redemption, being a revelation of the truth in the history of Black people's civilisation, must be taught in the home to the young children; in the colleges and schools to students. This cultivates a liberated consciousness among the Afro-Zimbabwean youths so that they lead authentic African life; a life anchored in the heritage of Zimbabwe, not the life of mimicry (mimetic existence), alienation, and uprootedness. Operationalising the philosophy of African redemption, thus, serves to fill these youths with African pride and liberate them from mental servitude, thereby redeeming and reasserting Afro-Zimbabwean power, knowledge, and being.

Equally important in the decolonial agenda is the notion of African renaissance. According to Higgs and Van Wyk (as cited in Msila, 2009), the colonial subjugation of Africa ignored indigenous knowledge because of the inverted mirror of Western Eurocentric identity. This deliberate nullification of African epistemology occasioned the coloniality of knowledge, a state of affairs which gave birth to numerous attempts to reassert distinctively African ways of thinking and of relating to the world, and it found expression in the call for an African renaissance (Higgs & Van Wyk, in Msila, 2009). African renaissance resonates with the call for the recognition of indigenous knowledge and hence it counteracts the coloniality of knowledge. According to Msila (2009, p. 312):

African renaissance is a unique opportunity for Africans to define themselves and their agenda according to their own realities and taking into account realities of the world around them. It is about Africans being agents of their own history and masters of their destiny.

African renaissance, therefore, is replete with emancipatory ideals and predicated essentially on the realisation that what is regarded as education in SSA is, in fact, a

reflection of Europe in Africa. In view of the above, African renaissance could be deployed to counteract the coloniality of power, *id est*, the Euro-American hegemony in SSA in general and Zimbabwe in particular using education as a tool.

The fusion of AIKSs and WKSs with the former occupying a larger portion within the current regimes of education in SSA in general and Zimbabwe in particular, herein referred to as the Africanisation of education, is also consistent with African renaissance and the decolonial agenda. AIKSs constitute African epistemology; the African ways of knowing or African meaning-making. Therefore, the Africanisation movement testifies that something is missing in the African education systems and hence 'Africans are somehow not African enough' (Chetty, as cited in Okeke, 2008). This intimates the coloniality of knowledge as emblematised in the denigration of AIKSs matched with the exaltation and legitimisation of WKSs (Occidental epistemology) in local education. Regrettably, little has so far been achieved in terms of the Africanisation agenda. As a result, the need to Africanise the school curriculum continues to suffuse educational discourse in Africa South of the Sahara. This agenda for Africanising education is targeted at exposing, destabilising, and counteracting particularly the coloniality of knowledge, which is ubiquitously and abundantly manifest in postcolonial Zimbabwe.

African Indigenous Religion was not real religion in the eyes of the conqueror and coloniser. This communicates the colonial frame of mind with which White colonists deliberately instituted the coloniality of power and knowledge in SSA in general and Zimbabwe in particular. Therefore, attempting to revive the African Indigenous Religion within postcolonial Zimbabwe's curriculum is part of the crusade against the coloniality of power and knowledge. Hence, Nziramasanga (1999, p. 70) suggests, "the present Religious and Moral Education (RME) Programme (in Zimbabwe) ... should in future also include in its multi-faiths approach African Traditional Religion." This Africanisation of RME as a learning area has since been fulfilled by Zimbabwe's Curriculum Framework for Primary and Secondary Education 2015-2022 (which later on morphed into the Heritage-based Curriculum Framework 2024-2030), whose reconfigured subject 'Family, Religion, and Moral Education' now recognises the four pillars of Christianity, Judaism, Islam, and Indigenous Religion. Such recognition as recently bestowed upon African Indigenous Religion partly serves to decolonise Zimbabwe's religious instruction.

In the teaching of 'O' Level History in Zimbabwe, Mavhunga (2006) recognises notable changes which were instituted in accordance with the Africanisation agenda, which harmonises with the decolonial project. These include the replacement of 'O' Level History Syllabus 2160 by History Syllabus 2166 in 1990, which, in turn, was replaced by History Syllabus 2167 in 2003. In 2015, History Syllabus 2167 was also replaced by History Syllabus 4044, which was part of the Curriculum Framework for Primary and Secondary Education 2015-2022 (now Heritage-Based Curriculum Framework 2024-

2030). As these changes were unfolding, more African doses of History and local themes like the country's liberation struggle received more coverage thereby partially counteracting the coloniality of knowledge. Consequently, History is no longer taught and learnt with a Western slant in Zimbabwe. Where African History is taught, the African is now mostly positively, he/she is no longer portrayed as a villain without cogent justification.

Against the peripherisation of indigenous languages in education, Wuta (2020) advocates the promulgation of an official national language-in-education policy which provides for the use of indigenous languages as official media of instruction beyond the primary level of education in Zimbabwe. This indigenous language-in-education policy is strategically positioned to counteract the coloniality of knowledge because delivery of instruction in indigenous languages is synonymous with having knowledge production done in the mother tongue. According to Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1986), 'language carries culture'; culture which, in this case, is embedded in *Unhu/Ubuntu*. Therefore, the promulgation of a vibrant, forceful but progressive indigenous language-in-education policy helps in reviving the Afro-Zimbabwean culture. This indigenous language-in-education policy, thus, becomes a counter-measure against the coloniality of power (Western cultural hegemony). In alignment with the preceding, Chetsanga wrote an 'English to Shona - Science and Technology Dictionary' in 2014 (Wuta, 2020), a decolonial undertaking designed to redeem, restore, rediscover, redefine, recentre, and reposition the Afro-Zimbabwean power and knowledge.

Conclusion and Recommendations

As has emerged from the preceding, the colonial logic continues to define the education systems extant in SSA in general and Zimbabwe in particular. These Western-oriented education systems in turn continue to shape societies in the region in question. Such a trend is lamentable because if left unchecked it can lead to the complete obliteration of African history, power, knowledge, being, worldview, culture, religion, and heritage. When this happens, Afro-Zimbabweans are ushered into a world which is alien to them thereby creating a cultural vacuum which can only be filled by a rejection of the African heritage, loss of identity, confusion, and a total break of African power, knowledge, and being. Yet, Afro-Zimbabwean history, power, knowledge, being, worldview, culture, religion, and heritage need to be preserved for posterity. To decolonise local education and preserve the Afro-Zimbabwean heritage, therefore, architects of Zimbabwe's education system are urged to reformulate policy with which to escalate the philosophies-ideals of African redemption, *Unhu/Ubuntu*, African renaissance, and indigenisation of knowledge and language.

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