Reclaiming Our Africanness in the Disaporized Context: The Challenge of Asserting a Critical African Personality

by

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ABSTRACT:

In the annals of African and Black peoples history, and particularly anti-colonial nationalist politics, Nkrumah remains in a unique position as a nationalist and anti-colonialist who pioneered a struggle for Independence for the first Black nation on the continent. Given the post-colonial challenges facing African peoples today, African intellectuals today have a responsibility to revisit some of his pioneering ideas as we seek to design our own futures. To revisit Nkrumah is more than about a 'return to the source' i.e., Sankofa'. It is also about to return to the source to listen, learn, and hear that is 'Sankotie' and Sankowhe' (see Aikins 2010). This paper would borrow from the philosophy and ideas of Nkrumah as we rethink how African peoples can design their own futures in the area of schooling and education. I centre the possibilities Pan-African spirituality as a base/sub structure on which rest the possibilities of community building. I focus on Pan-African spirituality as resistance to the disembodiment and dismemberment in Diasporic contexts. In so doing, I will also seek to draw connections of Afrocentricity and Pan-African struggles to highlight the challenge and promise of African agency.

As African peoples we cannot speak of a critical Pan-African personality today without first appreciating what we mean by an African identity. In a forthcoming paper (Dei 2011) I have argued for reclaiming an authentic African identity in the so-called post-colonial contexts. Of course, I am fully aware of the dangers of claiming authentic knowledge. I speak of such authenticity beyond a sense of 'pure' and 'uncontaminated' past or present. I emphasize the importance of the African experience far beyond the experience and vestiges of European colonization and unending colonialisms. I speak of an authentic of African collective identity[ies] as informed by the Indigenous African cultural experiences, local cultural knowledges, and the histories of the politics of resistance that have shaped and continue to shape our existence as African beings. Such identities cannot be taken away from us in the seductive 'postmodern' discourses of "fluidity" and "messiness", "complexities" and "complications", often rattled as if Africans do not know who we are! After all, if one does not who s/he is how else can we expect others to know us? Long ago, Europeans knew who 'Africans' were and so they sailed long distances to capture and enslave African traders, fishermen and fisherwomen, farmers and local artisans.

I have argued that in claiming local cultural resource knowledge that herald issues of the past, culture, ancestral knowledge, history, heritage and language, the question of post-colonial identities becomes relevant for an important reason. A number of postcolonial writers (e.g., Gilroy 1993, 2000; Appiah 1992, 2005; Gates 1992, 2010; Hall 2005, 2007a, 2007b) have often criticized the evocation of the past as problematic in its claim of an "authentic" past. Hall (2005) in particular has rather been skeptical about any attempts to recover an "authentic" pre-colonial African identity, undamaged by the experience of colonial dominance and oppression, [as much as he recognizes that such attempts and its politics may serve as psychological resources for resistance]. He discusses the complexities involved in the negotiation and the re-invention of "postcolonial identities". I share such concerns to some extent. My point of departure is that the re-assertion of identities at any time in a people's history always recognizes the complexities of identity and the fact that all identities are metaphorically in constant flux. However, I am gesturing to the importance of claiming African identities as an exercise of Pan-African decolonization that recognizes the authenticity of the African voice and human experience. Such identity is in contrast to that identity which is often constructed within Euro-American hegemony and ideology. Thus, I bring a different meaning to 'authentic', which is not to be read as pure, unfettered or uncontaminated. How have the ideas of pioneer Indigenous African anti-colonial thinkers helped shaped the foregoing thoughts?

In the annals of African and Black peoples history, and particularly anti-colonial nationalist politics, Kwame Nkrumah remains in a unique position as a nationalist and anti-colonialist who pioneered a struggle for Independence for the first Black nation on the continent. Given the post-colonial challenges facing African peoples today, African intellectuals today have a responsibility to revisit some of his pioneering ideas as we seek to design our own futures.

To revisit Nkrumah is more than about a 'return to the source' i.e., Sankofa'. It is also about to return to the source to listen, learn, and hear what is 'Sankotie' and Sankowhe' (see Aikins 2010). This paper will borrow from the philosophy and ideas of Nkrumah as we rethink how African peoples can design their own futures in the area of schooling and education. I centre the possibilities of Pan-African spirituality as a base/sub structure on which rest the possibilities of community building. I focus on Pan-African spirituality as resistance to the disembodiment and dismemberment in Diasporic contexts. In so doing, I will also seek to draw connections of Afro-centricity and Pan-African struggles to highlight the challenge and promise of African agency.

NKRUMAH'S VISION AND PHILOSOPHY

One may ask: What is the African-centred imperative in revisiting Nkrumah and his ideas and philosophy? As Africans we must ask ourselves how much do we know of Nkrumah, his ideas, his politics and his philosophy? There is no denying Nkrumah's philosophy and its relevance for today. The concepts of African Personality, African Identity and African Unity, are at the cornerstone of Nkrumah's ideas, vision and philosophies. Nkrumah's politics of mass mobilization of the workers as vanguard of any political movement is a testament of his foresight and vision of revolutionary struggles in Africa. Among Nkrumah's memorable words, one can recall his stance on the eve of Ghana's Independence, March 6, 1957: To him there was a New African today, one capable of managing his or her own affairs. He further asserted that the Independence of Ghana was meaningless unless it is linked with total liberation of Africa. Nkrumah was for 'One Africa' and what some today have translated as a 'United States of Africa". To Nkrumah, Black Power can only materialize through African Unity. In fact, Nkrumah cautioned that national pride is important, but must not be at the expense of a Pan-Africanist vision of United Africa.

There is a need, at this time, for African scholars to have uncomfortable conversations sometimes about our history and what has happened to us long after some of these ideas of Nkrumah were expressed. Many of us are caught in the seduction of a "post-modern", "post-racial" world. We are busy seeking to make connections and relations while decentering questions of our Africanness, race and politics. But, what is this thing called 'post-racial'? I have never been there and have neither seen it. As African and peoples of African descent, do we truly understand our Blackness/Africanness? Where are we going? How can the politics of radical Black/African scholarship help us leave our mark on society? Do people know our contributions? How do we ensure that our contributions are not erased?

Dei and Asgharzadeh (2001) state, "within the colonized people's historiography, the historic past offers an important body of knowledge that can be a means of staking out an identity which is independent of the identity constructed through the Western ideology" (p. 299). Kwame Nkrumah and Cheikh Anta Diop's creative ideas on the African Personality anchored culture and identity.

The challenge for African scholars in the ensuing years has been to intervene with a more comprehensive concept of Pan-African Personality that reflects the distinct cultural character of African aspirations globally. The Pan-African personality embodies the historical memory, common sense, collective consciousness, artifacts, social institutions, innovations and creative visions of the composite African People.

The idea of 'Pan-African Personality' must also imply a critical understanding of African spirituality as a form of resistance. That is, to see African spirituality as a humanizing, theoretical and practical framework that can be marshalled to examine the everyday experiences of African bodies in North American contexts. In another context for example, I have examined how African spirituality becomes a theoretical framework for us to understand and resist the dismemberment and disembodiment of Euro-colonial schooling (see Dei, 2010a, b). In this paper, however, I focus on ways African communities, influenced by Afrocentric ideals, are advancing ideas and social systems to improve their own existence by designing their own futures. What is the relevance of Pan-Africanism and Nkrumanist ideas in speaking about Africa?

Let me offer some personal reflections. African peoples continue to live in a highly toxic and anti-African climate. There is the unending struggle to resist the internalized colonizing assumptions that continually divide us. Three quick examples: The first is the question: What is in the name 'African'? I have often wondered: What does it mean to say not all Africans are Blacks and neither are all Blacks Africans? Some of us take great pride in such assertions. I wonder how often do we hear the saying - "not all Europeans are White"? Show me an "African European"? to me is to say "African" is both a badge of honour and a call to action. A Second example is the case of the coloniality of Euro-American schooling and the continuing pathologies of the African-family. For example, schools take credit for students' success, but then educators would look for somebody else/somewhere to blame rather than accept responsibilities for student and school failures (i.e., deep pathologies of local African communities and families for the problems our children face in schools). Anyone who takes credit for success must be well prepared to accept responsibility for failures. But what is even more disturbing is that every day we see segments of our community fall into the trap of what I call 'Eurocentric blame the victim thinking'. Rather than offering a sustained critique of the structures and procedures of schooling, we place the roots of the problem of the mis-education of our children on ourselves, citing single parents, broken homes and fragmented and irresponsible families as the causes. Of course, there is a responsibility for families and communities.

While I agree that schooling is too important to be left in the hands of educators alone, schools cannot be left off the hook by shifting the problem of youth education unto families and communities. African families always speak of the importance of education. We need to understand the conditions that make it possible and impossible for this understanding to materialize in the everyday schooling experiences of their children.

The third example is the issue of memory and forgetting through prevailing discourses of forgetfulness of the historic atrocities on African peoples. This can be attributed to selective remembering and institutional mis-capturings conveyed in official discourses (e.g., media, school texts, curricula and official museums).

Anti-colonial practice begins by asking new and critical questions. An anti-colonial Pan-African perspective brings certain questions to the foreground of radical African scholarship. I offer a number of questions here for us to ponder over: What has and continues to constitute us as Africans? Why is such understanding of our Africanness critical for coming into consciousness of who we are as a people? How are we to explain the self-negations and the silencing of some voices? How do we reclaim our cultural spaces of knowing as forms of intellectual and political resistances? How do we heal ourselves spiritually from the negations, dismemberment and disembodiment of the self, our collective selves and existence? In what ways does the systemic fragmentation of our communities dislocate and alienate us from our own histories, cultures, knowledges, language, and sense of place and identity? How do we connect these moments of systemic fragmentation and the dominant's propensity to conscript idea of 'fragmented communities' in order to deny responsibility and accountability? How do we embark on a radical Afrocentric project of claiming our collective memories as an exercise to counteract the dominant's selective forgetfulness and accompanying Eurocentric cultural amnesia?

CRITICAL PAN-AFRICAN VISION AND RADICAL AFROCENTRIC SCHOLARSHIP

There are no absolute answers to the questions posed above. However, I believe the search for answers entails that we engage a critical Pan-African vision and radical African-centred scholarship, of which I propose the following:

a. Theorizing Africa beyond its geographical boundaries/physical spaces. That is, we must see the African construction of identity as "collective identities". Such reading has stood the test of time as a powerful challenge to Western liberal epistemology which continues to embody, eschew and over-privilege individualism. Of course, the African shared collective is not and has never been a singular experience.

b. Theorizing Diasporized African Indigeneity. That is, we must seek in our intellectual politics to reclaim our Indigeneity as a significant site of knowing. As African peoples living in the Diaspora, many of us may not be indigenous to the lands we occupy currently. But this does not mean we have lost our indigeneity. We are indigenous to "African" both as a space and a concept.

c. Embracing an Afrocentric conception of African identity and personality which is outside of that, and continues to be constructed within Euro-American ideology and hegemony. This is a challenge to the ways dominant scholarship has defined our realities and experiences.

d. Reclaiming and Reinventing Our Africanness in a Diasporic Context is Not an Option but a Necessity for Survival and to regain our sanity. What We Seek to [Re]Claim Has Never Been Lost. It has always been there! It is through such reclaiming of our Africanness that we develop a consciousness of who we are as a people and the responsibilities of such reclamation.

e. Reclaiming and affirming African past intellectual traditions, knowledge and the contributions in world history is a necessary exercise in our own decolonization (see Du Bois). African peoples have something to offer the world. Besides our Humanism, we have a gift of knowledge that helps inform an understanding of humanity. Reflecting on the African past, present and future as a continuum offers important lessons for Africans to design own futures.

f. Reflecting critically on the Question of African Consciousness, Unity and Power. The critical reflection on our collective existence is about developing a consciousness of our interconnected realities and social well-being as resistors who are continually contesting agendas in order to design our own futures. But the search for African Unity is only a means to an end, i.e., African Power (see also Carmichael and Hamilton 1967).

g. Recognizing/Understanding that A New African Personality must extend beyond claiming self-respect, dignity and freedom to spiritual emotional, political and material enrichment. To understand the need for a spiritual rebirth we must also anchor our analysis in how Euro-colonial processes of knowledge production, interrogation, validation and dissemination has either denied or invalidated our humanity, self-respect and our cultural sense of knowing.

RETHINKING PAN-AFRICANISM OF EARLY YEARS

I borrow from the in-depth work of Blake (2006) in articulating Pan Africanism as essentially a political, cultural-ideological framework linked to notions of culture, identity, freedom and liberation to ensure the sovereignty of the African world and its peoples. Pan-Africanism was a politics of action. As a movement and philosophy its politics was dedicated to a tradition of vigorous and liberating African-centered intellectual and cultural activity. Pan-Africanism was also largely a cultural manifestation. As a project of decolonization, Pan-Africanism focused on liberation, independence and political sovereignty, with a goal of African Unity. Essentially, such traditional versions of Pan-Africanism were re-adaptations of Eurocentric visions of the world as articulated through understandings of "communism", "scientific socialism", "governance" and "democracy"

In fact, historically, the Pan-African nationalist ideology, has been centered on Marxist social thought, rather than on African concepts and knowledge principles (see also Marable, 1995; Walters, 1993).

As noted elsewhere (see Dei, 2010c), in rethinking these early ideas of Pan-Africanism, we must enthuse a critical need for the development of a particular Pan-Africanist-Afrocentric framework that resonates with contemporary possibilities, time and challenges. That is, a Pan-Africanist ideology based on African indigenous value systems, concepts and principles such as community, collective responsibility, traditions of mutual interdependence, and responsible governance -- and not adaptations of Western value systems. This Pan-Africanism must seek to dialogue through Diasporan African social thought as informed by Pan-Africanist frameworks. The framework must undertake broader project of decolonization – a mental and politico-material approach-- with the spiritual at the base (rather than politics and economics). This Pan-African framework cannot shy away from highlighting Western [colonial] responsibility and complicities. It must be bold to assert that the search for African unity is only a means to an end, i.e., the emergence of Black/African power. It must seek to reaffirm Africa's continuing contributions to global humanity and world civilization (Du Bois 1947, 1969). It must uphold African cultural rebirth and revival that reflects integrity and pride in self, culture, history, and a commitment to the collective well-being of all African peoples. It must also highlight the necessity of developing a strong sense of African identity rooted in African history. It must seek to actualize the vision of United States of Africa – elimination of boundaries/borders, a common passport/currency. It must not be afraid to work with the idea that 'race matters' in the intersections of identities, that is, a need for a consolidation of the African race, as beyond irreducible difference (Negritude). This thought borrows from Sartreian and Fanonian influences (Sartre, 1967; Fanon, 1967). It is essentially a Pan-Africanist philosophy of fecundity, rooted in local/grassroots political organizing and activism that seeks to develop an African/Black consciousness" [Steve Biko, 1979] and understands the politics of "national culture and liberation" (Cabral, 1970) matched with political sophistication and 'intricacies" (James, 1989).

This critical Pan-Africanism I am embracing, calls for an understanding that the Pan-African personality, with deeply embedded historical roots in the past/present, is well augured within Africa. The Pan-African personality has a contributory force, which can work well to organize the social and political conditions of the Diasporized-African. The Pan-African personality ought to be transgressive, for it speaks against the understanding of some contemporary moment as individualized and ahistorical. The Afrocentric imperative infused in a new Pan-Africanist framework is to claim the power of a historical memory. It sees African history as a totality of our lived experiences. The development of our collective consciousness is imperative for our continued survival, and we owe our survival and continued existence to the African creativity and ingenuity to resist and adapt against all odds. Part of our survival can be rooted in the African Indigenous knowledge systems that work with an African spiritual epistemology as a spiritual way of knowing, centering the inner self/environment, and making connections with the outer group/environment. This spiritual epistemology is an affirmation of the power of a spiritual dialogue that calls on us to reclaim our spirituality along the path to a spiritual recovery from the "spirit injury', depersonalization of selves and the negation of part of one's humanity (e.g., history/culture).

Critical Pan-African ideology links education, culture and the African identity. It sees the struggle to "de-Europeanize our [colonized] minds" (Asante, 2009) in order to deal with both the knowledge and "cultural crisis" (Karenga, 1986, 1988, 2007). It challenges the Eurocentric mimicry of African bodies. It also sees the possibilities of anti-colonial education as a primary subversive of the intellectual aggression on African scholarship. It brings a trans-historical perspective to contemporary African education. It heralds the need for a critical contemporary education that challenges on-going "neo-colonial brainwashing" (Chinweizu, 2006) that continues to denigrate what Africa has to offer the world. Furthermore, it sees the way forward for radical African scholarship as embracing revolution and decolonization, while stressing the ontological lineage between Africa and the African Diaspora as a way to break out of our boundaries and confinement.

THE IMPLICATIONS AND RESPONSIBILTIES OF CHALLENGING OUR SPIRITUAL DISEMBODIMENT AND DISMEMBERMENT OF AFRICAN COMMUNITIES AND BODIES

African communities are increasingly being dismembered by the everyday practices of Euro-colonial and Eurocentric institutions that require we move away from indigenous African culture, tradition, social values and customs. Many of us have disembodied ourselves from our indigenous institutions, cultures, histories, languages and spiritualties. To be clear, I am not against bringing a critical perspective of one's culture, history, tradition, and spirituality so as to address sites of power, and disempowerment of experiences and bodies as sites of significant identities (e.g., gender, ethnicity, sexuality, religion etc.). Besides, as has been argued by many others, no tradition is immune to criticism. No tradition or culture is static. Culture is dynamic and must move with the times. But this assertion does not call for a total denigration or wholesale dismissal of African culture.

There is no African identity in the absence of the affirmation of indigenous cultures, histories, spiritualties and languages. Spiritual awakening and rebirth is so central to this process that in fact, while decolonization is an exercise of body, mind and soul, it is essentially a political process that sees the 'spiritual' at the base/foundational rock on which rests the economic and political superstructure. I speak of 'disembodiment' as the continual struggle over the 'spiritual proof fence' (Masseri, 1994), as well as the continued push not to wear our cultures on our sleeves in the Euro-colonial context. There is a push away from claiming African and our Africanness. This is symptomatic of the disunity and absence of African power in the spiritual sense. Thus, there is the need for a spiritual re-embodiment, given the dismemberment of our communities. Such dismemberment can be understood from tensions of "community" and the politics of fracturing communities.

A resistance to this disembodiment and dismemberment is also about healing and repairing ourselves and communities from the everydayness of spiritual wounding and mental bondage (see Dei 2010a, b). By claiming and working with our African spiritualties, we are gesturing to a cosmological space and 'world-sense' of African peoples for everyday resistance (see Oyewumi, 1997, 2003).

To engage spirituality as a theory of African resistance to Euro-colonial education, I see spirituality as embodied as in African learners as embodied subjects. The bankruptcy of Euro-American education system (e.g., the power of neo-liberalism and its approach to compensatory and remedial education is nothing more than simply 'putting the problem in the persons' (Ahmed, 2007). A re-defined anti-colonial/decolonized education is to build spiritually, politically and materially sustainable 'communities of learners'. This way education becomes 'schooling as community'. It is education that works with a 'pedagogy of hope' through resistance and believing in our abilities to design our own futures (Dei, 2010c).

Notwithstanding the good intentions of many educators, the case of African-Canadian education speaks in a myriad of ways to the spiritual wounding of African learners. We ask: who controls the agenda in public debate on the education of minorities in our communities? What impact does this have in terms of the definition of priorities and the allocation of critical resources for African education? Where is the authenticity of local community voices? Where are the spaces for creative solutions? And how are the re-imagining and designing new futures received?

Despite the successes we can all point to, it is also true that when the history of African/Black education in North America is told, cases of labeling, stigmatization, low teacher expectations of Black learners, push outs and drop outs, and low achievement are always embedded within the dialogue. It has and continues to be part of our reality. There is hard evidence to support these assertions and one cannot deny this fact without an egg in one's face (see King 2005; Brown 1993; Dei, Mazzuca, McIsaac and Zine 1997, and TDSB 2009, among many other works). A review of educational policies and practices offered as solutions only reveal a case of more spiritual wounding of our learners. The impact of 'standardized testing reforms', 'school effectiveness and improvement programs' current 'school-to-work transitions policy and research synopsis', and 'equity and inclusive education policy initiatives' have been clear (see Dei, 2009).

The lessons here include the case of adding stories to a weak foundation, disturbingly expecting success while reproducing the status quo; multiple complicities in the making of the 'educational crisis'; lip service engagement of the critical literature of African scholars; the power of neo-liberalism and its focus on outcomes (rather than the processes of schooling which produce the unequal outcomes); an unquestioned faith in integration; cosmetic, stop-gap and recycling measures versus substantive changes and a need to return to the source.

A 'RETURN TO THE SOURCE': THE AFROCENTRIC IMPERATIVE IN SCHOOLING AND EDUCATION.

What is needed is schooling that builds or empowers the ability of students to withstand the politically and culturally mediated experiences of conventional schooling through the development of a critical sense of self, self-worth, purpose and belonging to a community of learners. In the quest for educational excellence, we need schools that assist their students to call and rely on wider social supports, including material and non-material support networks, both inside and outside school and in the wider community. Such schools can only assist in sustaining the ability of learners to identify with the institutional systems for teaching, learning and administration of education to ensure academic success. Furthermore, such schools can cultivate the learner's ability to evoke individual agency and responsibility in calling for accountability and transparency (to multiple learners and communities) in educational practices (see Dei, Butler, Charamia, Kola-Olusanya, Opini, Thomas, and Wagner 2010d).

African peoples must strive for education that places the African learner at the centre of her/his education. Such education must emphasize the centrality of culture to knowledge production (pedagogy) and the importance of reaffirmation and reinforcement of the myriad identities of youth. It should be education aimed at developing the learner's agency and social responsibility (Asante, 1988, 1991, 1992). African-centered education works with principles of community, solidarity, social responsibility, mutual interdependence, collective histories, and spiritual learning. It cultivates in the learner a sense of group responsibility, and a search for the wellbeing of the African subject. The idea of 'community education' that such an education espouses also ensures close relations and bonding with parents and Elders. There is a broad definition of 'success' to encompass social and academic growth. Furthermore, such an education develops high teacher expectations of the African learner. There is the special position of the African teacher imbued with an anti-colonial pedagogical spirit to 'save our children from mis-education and under education'. Teachings of self, collective racial and cultural pride is foundational for a strong African identity and personality. The success of the new vision of Pan-Africanism with Afrocentric imperative rests on how we begin to cultivate a genuine African-centered education that works with the principles espoused above.

CONCLUSION

In concluding, I would like to call for an urgent engagement of critical Pan-Africanism through an African-centered method of inquiry, with the intention of opening up possibilities for the schooling and education of African bodies in Euro-colonial contexts. To reiterate, the coloniality of education has decentered the African leaner. Conventional classroom, pedagogy, and curricula have been Eurocentrically configured to displace the African contribution to humanity and world civilization.

Through a critical pan-Africanism approach as centered through an Afrocentric pedagogy we can begin to fashion and re-imagine tangible spaces for African education that would contribute to genuine African development, seeking the interests of African peoples. Critical Pan-Africanism necessitates cultural, political, economic, spiritual emancipation and liberation of African peoples. This, however, is about process. Critical Pan-Africanism requires us to move beyond contemporary discourses of identity and the politics of representation, to questions of how and what are the ways in which we come to locate the politics of African materiality. Although, questions concerning identity are a necessary discursive condition for decolonizing, an African-centered reading of critical Pan-Africanism intervenes in the conversation with agency and conscientization. It seeks to extricate the material recourse of the political, economic, and the social for African peoples. The thinking of a critical Pan-Africanism as informed through Afrocentric thought is about an epistemological query, an intellectual and political journey through which the geo-African body comes to know its ontological self and sense of place.

Critical Pan-Africanism is augured through the lived experiences of African peoples. Critical Pan-Africanism must locate contemporary problems of African peoples to the historical context of human enslavement. Critical Pan-Africanism must also provide a methodological framework which allows the Diasporized African subject to understand her or his lived experiences as foregrounded through the geo-inter/intra relations of African and colonized peoples worldwide. African-centred pedagogies are of importance as they provide an interpretive framework to make sense of what it means to collectively to call oneself 'African' and to share our histories and experiences as governed through and beyond enslavement and resistance. The African-centred approach to critical Pan-Africanism offers the decolonising project a host of possibilities. For example, critical Pan-Africanism as emerging through histories of resistances to Euro-colonization can work to challenge imperial epistemes and practices residing within conventional schooling and education. Critical Pan-Africanism, as constituted through Indigenous knowledges and anti-colonial thought, works with embodied knowledges of local/African peoples which can be counter-hegemonically inserted into Western institutionalised spaces of schooling and education. At the present, conventionally schooling continues to mis-educate African peoples, as well as mis-educate others about the African experience. Historically, we know colonial education imposed Eurocentric narratives of culture, identity, and language, through installed standardized forms of education as endowed through the Western text, which unequivocally silenced the African voice and fecund the colonially imbued voice as the African-self. The trend continues very much today, and it must be subverted.

Critical Pan-Africanism should be viewed as a call for the resurgence of rich African intellectual traditions that speak to the contributive forces of trans-historical African peoples in the global context as a necessary condition of decolonization. Coming to make sense of the historical problems prevalent within the African continent today is to approach Africa through critical collective consciousness of Indigenous creativity and resourcefulness, as well as enslavement, colonization and resistance to work to dialectically understand how these colonial moments of enslavement come to mark a particular humanism of Euro-modernity.

Critical Pan-Africanism is about African peoples' setting the terms of their own social development. Critical Pan-Africanism is about political transformation as constituted through an Afrocentric praxis. It is about seeking the interest of African peoples in ways that endow the African body to participate globally through its own cultural knowing and sense making rather than through Eurocentric mimicry.

It is my hope that we can anchor Pan-African education within local African communities and critically learn and engage our Indigenous customs, values and beliefs. Dialoguing through Indigenous knowledges, critical Pan-Africanism can offer helpful ways to engage cultural difference among geo-African peoples. African learners can no longer go around co-opting Western knowledge systems. Instead, we must seek African-centred praxis as a site of epistemological location on its own term, without apologies. Asante (2007) has shown us that Afrocentric praxis informs critical pan-African education through particular questions of conscientization and agency. We must challenge the ways the colonizer has shaped African education to his own interest. A critical Pan-African education with an Afrocentric lens within the everyday classroom will help Africans to know themselves and seek to design their own futures on their own terms.

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