Un-schooling the Postcolony: Using Development Paradigms to Underdevelop Africa

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ABSTRACT

The colonial educational system was not intended to develop Nigerian children's cultural identities. In religious texts, images of Lucifer were black, while those of Saints, Mary and Jesus were (and are still) "white". In school books also, imageries of the Queen, London Bridge, castles, koala, reindeer, etc, were parts of the unAfrican concepts administered to children. In problematising these, this paper uses the analyses of historical narratives, social evidence, illustrations in primary and secondary school textbooks and field observations to highlight how British colonial enterprise un-schooled the colony, using un-African cultural materials that alienate Nigerian children from their own cultures.

Keywords: Nigeria, Colonialism, Educational System, Un-African Images, Un-schooling children.

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria is a nation in the West African coastline, with a large land mass and people of various ethnicities, religious beliefs, and customs. The weather in Nigeria is dependent on the season and can go from dry to muggy, with some regions experiencing much heavier rainfall than others. The country is bordered by Niger in the north, Chad in the northeast, Cameroon in the east, Benin in the west, and the Atlantic Ocean in the south (Falola and Heaton (2008). The population is close to 250 million, distributed in its 36 states and Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory. Whereas Lagos state was the former capital, it still remains the country's commercial hub, with lots of factories, markets, and the oldest and largest Nigerian seaport. Prior to colonialism, Nigeria was made up of city-states like the Igbo Kingdom of Nri, the Benin Kingdom, the Yoruba Kingdom of Ife, the Igala Kingdom, the Hausa States, and Nupe. The ethnic constituents of these early kingdoms and states are still visible today, distributed in the current states in Nigeria. As a multicultural democracy, Nigeria is made up of 3 major ethnic groups, Hausa of the north, the Yoruba of the southwest, and the Igbo of the southeast, with several other minor ethnic groups. English is the official language in Nigeria. In terms of natural resources, Nigeria has petroleum, natural gas, and various agricultural produce, including mineral deposits.

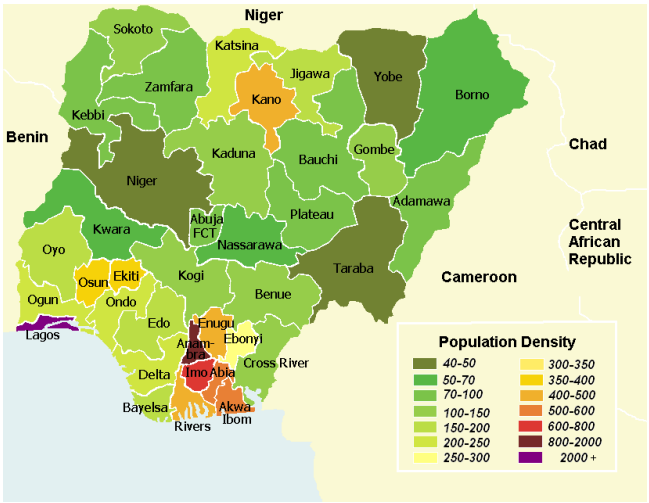

Fig. 1: The map of Nigeria, showing the various states and countries bordering it.

"Colonialism in Nigeria started in the 15th century by the Portuguese and by the 19th century, the British began to gain great influence. The Portuguese were the first Europeans to engage in the buying and selling of slaves in Africa (Lovejoy, 2000), buying slaves as early as the 14th century, mainly for labour purposes, but later began exporting small numbers from Africa to other parts of Europe. The British began exerting influence in what is now Nigeria by annexing Lagos in 1861 (Falola and Heaton, 2008). The full colonization of Nigeria occurred through the establishment of the Northern and Southern Protectorates in 1900, culminating in the amalgamation of both in 1914 to form the Colony and Protectorate of Nigeria (Lugard, 1922). The business of the slave trade flourished, and the substantial profits made from selling African slaves encouraged the British to expand their colonial holdings, leading to the capture and colonization of other territories, such as Barbados and Jamaica (Williams, 1944). According to an article from *The Commonwealth* entitled *Nigeria: History*, by the 18th century, the British had superseded the Portuguese as the kingpin of slave-trade business, supplying over 2.7 million African slaves to all its European colonies including the north and southern regions of America (*The National Archives, 2016*). This overwhelming profit caused many "British nationals who were in the business of trading slaves to relocate permanently to Nigeria in their numbers, settling around the Niger River area in Lagos" (Lovejoy, 2000). This way, it was easier and faster to ship slaves out of Nigeria, through the Lagos waterways. But the British were also shrewd, learning and fine-tuning their colonial machinery on-the-go. For example, in 1831, a large number of black slaves, piloted by Samuel Sharpe, decided on a peaceful demonstration. In the process, things got out of hand, and there were huge losses. Learning from these kinds of losses, the British deployed new, subtle but more effective tools of colonialism such as colonial films, education, religion, and politics as indirect tools to stay in control of colonies like Nigeria.

Nigeria gained independence on October 1, 1960 and adopted a republican constitution in 1963. From that point, it became a member of the Commonwealth. However, virtually every other thing that followed independence was based on the initial domination and extractive culture of the colony. Since the colonial mechanism was an exploitative system posing to "enlighten and civilize" the Africans, it only actually ravaged, extracted, and repatriated human, natural, and agricultural resources. According to Alme (2016), "the British profited from the economy of Nigeria, because their intervention, was based primarily on the export of different crops including palm oil, cacao, and peanuts".

In a sense, the mechanisms of colonial British Empire in Nigeria (and all of Africa) achieved profitable control by demeaning the existing culture. For instance, cultural products like sculptures, religious artefacts and shrines were termed "idols", "evil" and "devilish", and many were rounded up to be burnt and confiscated. The people were generally discouraged from practicing African religion and made to become "Christians". While religious institutions plundered artefacts covertly, the military arm of British imperialism was more overt, as the so-called "punitive expedition" to Benin Kingdom in 1897 (Igbafe 2009) did, to plainly appropriate cultural artefacts. In an interesting hypocritical way, today, it turns out that thousands of these confiscated "devilish" artefacts ended up in the West, and many Western Museums have samples of arts that were religiously and militarily plundered from Africa. These plundered artefacts have been profitable to western media also, since electronic and print encyclopaedia, journals and museum publications, etc, have done features that celebrate the splendour of the African artefacts, and those of individuals and institutions holding them. At the same time, these western media gloss over the fact that the artefacts were stolen, to begin with, by a colonial system that demonised the cultures that produced them. Yet, the media generally are supposed to be agents of development, since they function as agenda-setters in society. Therefore, it does seem that the western media has either deliberately refused to perform its positive agenda-setting duties in respect of Africa arts and culture, or then that it has become too much a part of the systemic un-schooling, to be useful.

What remains interesting is that, Colonial Britain used several "development" tools such as religion, education and film in covert and subtle underdevelopment processes that made plundering easier and more enduring. In the discourse of this enduring colonial un-schooling, this paper uses the analyses of historical narratives, social evidence, illustrations in primary and secondary school textbooks and field observations to highlight how the British colonial enterprise un-schooled the colony, using un-African cultural materials that alienate Nigerian children from their own cultures. In doing this, the paper is underscored by both the historical particularism theory (Boaz 1940), which seeks better understanding of the notion, uniqueness and concepts of a society; and Piaget's (1954) theory of cognitive development, which argues that children's perception and cognitive development is socialised from their interactions with others in their environment, in four stages of cognitive

development. Thus, on the basis of African cultural particularities the paper will identify how visually communicated elements of colonial "westernness" have given direction to the development of unconscious cognitive behaviours that have also led to underdevelopment in a postcolony like Nigeria.

COLONIAL MIS-EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

There is no doubt at all that thousands of individuals benefited from colonial education, with scholarships and trainings in Nigeria and to the United Kingdom too. In the colonial period, many families converted to Christianity, and sent their children to live with Reverend Fathers, Catechists and other members of the missions to serve them (Ajibade 2022). Through this servitude, many of these children got scholarships to study in Nigeria and even in the UK. Both ways, they learnt to read and speak the English language, and to also revere the British way of life. However, in the manner it was structured and delivered, western educational system of the colonial times compelled Nigerian children to associate learning with confinement to a four-walled room, in which a white man or a Nigerian dressed in western attire was a teacher. And, of course, part of the curricular repertoire were English rhymes, stories and narratives that glorified the west, and Britain in particular. Such rhymes and songs are not limited to the following:

1). Pussy cat, pussy cat, where have you been?

I have been to London, to see the Queen.

What did she give you?: Bread and butter…

2). London Bridge is falling down, falling down, falling down.

London Bridge is falling down, my Fair Lady…

3). Jingle bell, jingle bell, jingle all the way

Oh what fun it is to ride

In a one-horse open sleigh…

Songs about London, London Bridge and the Queen, which glorified Britain and its institutions, did nothing to develop the cultural awareness of Nigerian children. Then of course, elaborate Christmas events in which children recited *Jingle Bells…* and other western repertoires were well coordinated. While social nuances of a "one-box open sleigh" ridden on snow went far to glorify societies strange to Nigerian children's imagination, it added layers to the truncating of the development of their own cultural identities. Even when at school, they were forbidden to speak their own languages and, in their reading texts, the illustrations were rich in western images. Images of the Queen, London Bridge, castles, apple, Koala, reindeer, etc, were parts of the unAfrican concepts administered to them. Being schooled by the same system that ran the Churches they had to worship in, Nigerian children at the time had to face the same cultural demarketing by the same set of colonial officials – this time in flowing religious robes. In the churches, the sculptures of Mary (the mother of God) and Jesus (the Son of God) were/are ostensibly Caucasian, while the devil was/is black. Putting all of these together, the onslaught of western images on young, impressionable Nigerian minds tends to have acted compellingly, to ensure that it was difficult for them to be "infected" by African cultural "particularism".

It was Franz Boaz's theory of "historical particularism" that gave distinctiveness to individual cultures. He saw culture as a "set of ideas or symbols held in common by a group of people who see themselves as a social group" (Darnell 2013: 399). In Boaz's (1940) conception, every culture has a basis in which it functions and thrives. And, this basis is a core and essential component that paddles development and advancement in all societies. One fundamental assumption here is that cultures can function and be best productive, when they are left to function and evolve on the basis of what they decide for themselves. "Particularism" emphasises that each society has its own unique historical development that must be understood based on its own specific cultural context, especially its historical processes. Particularism sheds light on the fact that social development is not a biological function of race and genetics, but of the conjunction of traditions, circumstances and social

relationships. Boaz's "particularism" offers a crystal-clear understanding of the direction of how African cultural distabilisation was achieved, using tools such as Christianity and its colonial nuances that "reconfigured" Africans against indigenous religious and other cultural "particularities". Years later, passed on from generation to generation, this colonial cultural "reconfiguration" has taken its toll in no small measure, on the African postcolony. The result has been that people now take everything western as "good", and anything African as inherently "bad". Therefore, looking beyond the thin veil of scholarships given to African children, and to how colonial education was transacted, there is a sense in which the colonialists seemed to have installed western educational systems as a channel/tool for miseducating Africans against "Africanness", or, what Boaz terms "particularities".

In a sense compatible with Boaz's notion, Brock-Utne (2000) critiques the educational frameworks imposed by the West in Africa, arguing that these systems perpetuate colonial hegemony instead of promoting genuine development. She contends that the language of instruction, curriculum content, and pedagogical approaches are designed to sustain dependency rather than autonomy. Brock-Utne's central thesis aligns with the broader discourse on postcolonial education, asserting that Africa's intellectual and cultural sovereignty remains stifled by neocolonial interventions masquerading as development aid. It is not exactly that the colonial educational system did not benefit the colony. But, before the British came to Nigeria, there were traditional and informal education systems, based on guilds and mentoring relationships. In this educational system, young men and women were inscribed under the tutelage of accomplished skilled, trade or professional people, to learn and become professionals themselves after stipulated years of training. At the end of their training in whatever choice of trade or skill, graduates of the African guild system would leave their "masters" and go set up their own practices. Such skills and trade include but not limited to farming, fishing, building, basketry, music, tailoring, fabric weaving, herbal medicine, divining, traditional priesthood, bone repair, hair dressing, etc. As can be conjectured in these examples, traditional African educational systems were entrepreneurial and based on "production".

At the colonial time, international trade steamboats that traversed Africa's interior rivers only did so to extract products of the traditional systems (Stearns 2020). Owing to the focus on extraction, scholars note that British colonial institutions destabilised and deliberately put colonies in evident disarray (Lange 2004, Engelbert 2000a and b). Thus, Africa's traditional productive economy was systematically and deliberately overwritten by the British, and replaced with a more redundant version of "western" education, which has led to a continent-wide unproductivity today. It is clear, therefore, that the deliberateness in the British destabilisation makes its colonial educational, missionary and political institutions very much un-altruistic (Bassey 1991, Said 1993, Bock-Utne 2000). Therefore, the substitution of traditional education systems with colonial western forms was part of the British agenda for subjugation and extraction. Educational narratives and visual media like illustrations and charts used in teaching the "natives" spread the glories of western powers while downgrading and even criminalizing African cultural attributes. African languages were banned from being spoken in the schools and dress codes for schooling and for those working with the colonial government was strictly western. As Ugboaja (2008) notes, the only lucrative jobs available in colonial times were those that required the ability to read and write in the English language. Also, Ajibade (2022) notes that, for those natives working for the colonial institution at all levels, dressing in western attires was compulsory, making life's successes synonymous with the colonialists' ways. All of these merely downgraded the African culture and elevated the Western variants as universal humanist ideals.

A number of studies have shown the inseparable relationship between education and colonialism. It is difficult to discuss one without the other. In seminal terms, Said (1993) extends the analysis of colonialism beyond its economic and political dimensions into the realm of culture. Said argues that imperialism is not only enforced through military conquest and economic exploitation but also through literature, media, and educational institutions that shape *how* the colonized perceive themselves and the world. His work highlights *how* Western cultural narratives reinforce structures of dominance long after formal colonialism has ended. In Said's terms, colonialism is the direct form of control, while education is the indirect form; both have played vital roles in reshaping, under-developing, and schooling Nigeria and Africa for exploitation. Their associated influence and impacts on social values, cultural identity, and development have revealed that the latter contributes to the underdevelopment experienced in many societies like Nigeria today. Ocheni (2012) demonstrates that even the political instability experienced in Africa can be linked directly to the forces of colonialism. In his statement, he

notes that "Deep-seated corruption experienced in most African countries and the selfish desire and lust of politicians to remain in office or aspire to higher positions, even after they have outlived their years of usefulness, is traceable to colonialism and imperialism".

However, the schooling of Africans to believe in the inferiority of "Africanness" is not limited to educational means. Religion was also very critical in this miseducation, because it was used to indoctrinate the colonies that anything from the "White man", his culture and society is "God's" choice, while anything from the "Blackman's" society and culture is "devilish" and unacceptable to the "Kingdom of heaven". This glorious "Kingdom" ruled by a "white" Son of God, with His equally "white" Mother, had only one rather convenient antagonist, in the person of a "Black" Lucifer. All church posters, wall hangings and sculptures depicting "stations of the Cross", Jesus, Mary, the "annunciation", crucifixion, etc, were (and are still) framed in this untenable binary colour dichotomy that completely demonises and mis-educates the African "particularity". The outcome of this mis-education did/does not just stay psychological and invisible; it was manifestly material, in the form of visual cultural demonization. For, while prayer and devotional props of African traditional religious temples/shrines were prohibited as "idolatry", Western forms such as rosaries, crosses, pictures and sculptures of Christ, Mary, the Saints, etc, were acceptable in the colonial Christian episteme. Religious miseducation had very enduring effects in making Africans to see their cultural arts, symbols and crafts as unacceptable idols, while the western cultural and visual alternatives are acceptable. Today, one can evidence this miseducation in how African Christians demonise and repudiate their own masquerades while, at the same time, they willingly accept and celebrate the yearly masques of "Father Christmas" in the month of December.

Clearly, therefore, the motive for western education was less for the benefit of Africans, and the improvement of Africa. Rather, it was more for the purpose of keeping Nigeria and Africans in an underdevelopment stasis, while indirectly staying in the extractive control of colonial interests. Inherited and maintained by postcolonial political elites, Ttis manipulative system has remained and become a pattern of operation that has left Nigeria and Africans with many negative effects. It has brought about significant consequences, like corruption, poverty, economic instability, and cultural identity crises. Development is about culture and no culture can develop without itself. One culture cannot blossom or thrive on the basis of another's "particularism". Western societies cannot develop based on African culture, and neither can African societies develop based on Western culture. Culture is the intrinsic framework that sustains and paddles everything that makes a society unique. It is the "blanket of ethical values that guide and envelop the morals and judgments of individual perception and approach toward life" (Wade, 2010). Once this blanket of "particularism" is compromised, tendencies for negative trends like misrepresentation of self, cultural conflict, and inability to reach national potential become a pattern. It seems Nigeria and the whole of Africa must find basis for cultural, social, economic, technological and political re-development.

According to Arowolo (2010), "Africa had established, well before the intervention of colonialism, a pattern of home-grown political systems, governance process and generally acceptable institutional rule-making arrangements, such that there was progression in the pace of civilization in Africa and self-styled tempo of technological development". Political systems and structures existed in Nigeria way before the colonial era. These political structures varied from one ethnic group to another. Places like Benin, Oyo, Kanem-Bornu, Hausa states, Nupe, and Jukun kingdoms had well-structured and developed political systems that operated without a formal written constitution and were guided by religious sanctions (Oladiti, 2014). Monarchical systems and gerontocracy were the two types of political organizations that were run before the advent of colonialism (Oladiti, 2014). Neither colonialism nor western education helped reorganize or develop Nigeria's educational and political "particularities". Rather, colonialism "helped in disorganizing the already organized system Nigeria operated and this caused Nigeria and Africa to become ungovernable" (Ake, 1991; Bulhan, 2015; Heldring and Robinson, 2013; Mamdani, 1996). Clearly, western education in the whole of Africa has not engendered the developments that Aminuddin, Jamaludin, Sulaiman and Baki (2010) have so eloquently defined:

Education is the living knowledge, information and skills during the course of life, whilst education system is a platform which had been standardized and used as a reference by teachers to teach their students in communicative, informative and insightful ways. In fact, education system acts as an indicator, which monitors the teaching carried out within a policy that operates to fulfill the specific goal, which is to achieve and enable students to perform at an expected level within a specific span of time. Thus, the efficiency of educational system

becomes the focus in the national development, as education turns to be the catalysis for eternal progress in order to produce the valuable and visionary individual (Aminuddin, Jamaludin, Sulaiman and Baki, 2010, pp. 1)

Systems, whether formal or informal, classroom or out door, traditional or novel, where teaching takes place, impartation of skills occurs and is passed down from person to person can be termed "education". And, like all education systems, the African traditional one was structured in such a way that allowed students to experience real life prowess required to live, function and tackle day to day challenges in their social environment. But colonial western education crashed-in, and "placed more emphases on individualism than communal life" (Felix, 2012), birthing a new archetypal African who grew to become clueless of his/her immediate environment, dependent on western knowledge, "unsure of himself, no longer able to defend his integrity and the integrity of his land, feels inferior and sees almost everything about Africa as obsolete and unprogressive, more favourably disposed to European way of life" (Felix, 2012).

There were several instruments used by the colonial machinery to make Africa "favourably disposed" to cultural repudiation. One of the most effective was the use of visual media such as colonial films to spread imaginations and ideals that negativised African "particularism" and glorified western culture (Okome 1997, Adesanya 1997). Visual media is information in the form of visual representations, pictures and images are said to speak more clearly than many words (Elemi, 2012). It is possible for one's intentions to be reflected and projected onto another person's action, without physical manipulations because perceptual approach to communication reveals that emotion is a major factor in visual communication (Barry 2005). Piaget's (1954) theory of cognitive development drives this point home. His theory argues that children's perception and cognitive development is socialised from their interactions with others in their environment, in four stages of cognitive development: the sensorimotor stage, preoperational stage, concrete operational stage, and formal operational stage. These stages formulate the construction of reality in children. In this theory, Piaget believed that perception is an active enterprise that involves cognitive processes such as categorization, organization, and interpretation. He argued that children's perceptual abilities and understanding of the world develop as they grow and gain experience through their interactions with their environment. These interactions can come from socialization, imitation, instructions, play, and, feedback, as they are able to receive responses on their interactions and behaviour from those around them, including teachers, peers, and parents, which helps them to refine their social skills over time. During each stage of cognitive development Piaget's theory states that children become more advanced in their ways of perceiving, representing, and reasoning about the world. This theory highlights the role of children's own experiences and actions in shaping their understanding of the world and emphasizes the importance of hands-on, interactive learning in supporting children's cognitive development (Table 1).

Table 1: Colonial Cognitive Underdevelopment of the African Child

Stage	Age	Colonial Cognitive Motivator
Sensorimotor	Birth to 2 years	Parents converting to Christianity and shifting from Nigerian to English language and western attires
Preoperational	Ages 2 to 7	Learning to speak English language, singing western rhymes, going to church and seeing "white" Mary, Jesus and saints
Concrete operational	Ages 7 to 11	Everyone dressing in western attires, reading western images in textbooks, disconnections from masquerades and African particularities, accepting Santa Claus masque.
Formal operational	Ages 12 and up	More western-glorifying images, narratives in textbooks and other visual media.

The analysis in Table 1 above illuminates a subtle but effective sense in which the British colonial enterprise miseducated the psyche of the African child in the colony. Right from the cradle, there was virtually no respite for children of the colony, from the miseducative bombardments of western particularities. Born "black", there entire reality was continually "whitened" at every stage of cognitive development. In that sense, those ubiquitous

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"white" religious images acceptable in the colonial church (Figs. 2-6), and the "Black" unacceptable African cultural ones were a serious communication that went far deeper in the continent's psyche than many words could ever have achieved. In the end, the nuances of such images have only unschooled the African, until the continent's "particularities" have come to be seen as uncivilized (Felix, 2012).

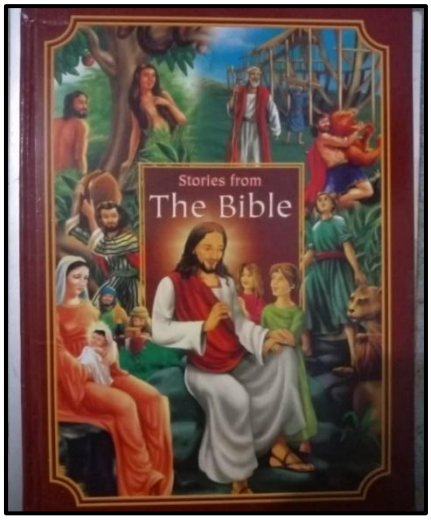

Fig. 2: The cover of a typical colourful Bible stories book for children in Nigeria.

Fig. 3: The sculpture of Mary and Jesus at St. Bernard Catholic Church, Calabar, Cross River State, Nigeria.

Fig. 4: The sculpture of Jesus (son of God), in St. Kizito Girls Secondary School Umudioka, Anambra State, Nigeria. Source: Author, 2024.

Fig. 5: The sculpture of Mary (mother of God) in St. Kizito Girls Secondary School Umudioka, Anambra State, Nigeria. Source: Author, 2024.

Fig. 6: Children flocking to happily interact with masques of Santa Claus and Mickey Mouse in the premises of churches and schools. Scenarios such as this have remained ubiquitous in Nigeria since the colonial times. This event was in NYSC Secondary School Murtala Muhammad Highway, Calabar, Nigeria. Source: Author, 2024.

DEVELOPING COGNITIVE PARTICULARISM IN AFRICA'S POSTCOLONIAL RE-SCHOOLING

In Western Christian visual literature, the devil (perdition) is black while Jesus (salvation) is a white man. In schools, the Nigerian languages are classed and frowned upon as vernacular, and English is the most and only acceptable spoken language for communication. In schools today, if a pupil speaks in his or her cultural language, that child is disciplined (punished) and warned never to speak in such tongue around the school premises. Yet, language, according to Wade (2010) "is not just grammar or vocabulary. Language is a glimpse of the human essence. It ignites and births the aura of culture. It is a vehicle through which the soul of every culture is brought to life". Since language is the "soul" of all cultures, to have played down and relegated Nigerian (African) languages in colonial times was the death of a critical component of indigenous cultural existence. This so-called "inappropriateness" of people speaking their cultural tongue has been so unsustainable that people now seek western validation for who they once were, and what they once understood as their identity. This is what Helena (2010) means in saying that a comparison of traditional and modern forms of education makes it quite clear that "the traditional form of education and knowledge fostered sustainability". What this means is that western educational systems as entrenched in Nigeria (and Africa) was deliberately structured to suppress, condemn and nullifying indigenous practices and values. Yet, it is vital for each society to evolve and follow its own specific cultural model acquainted to specific social environment, and existing history. Said (1993) has argued that imperialist discourse is embedded within cultural institutions, particularly through literature, history, and the arts. Thus, Western narratives somewhat depict non-Western societies as underdeveloped, uncivilized, and in need of Western intervention. This ideology is deeply ingrained in African education, where colonial-era textbooks and syllabi persist, promoting a Eurocentric worldview that marginalizes indigenous knowledge and

perspectives. In a keen way, therefore, development-driven educational reforms in Nigeria and Africa generally continue to serve this imperialist function. While post-independence African states may appear sovereign, their education systems remain tethered to colonial Western models that prioritize economic productivity over cultural autonomy. In critiquing colonial and neocolonial control over African consciousness through language, wa Thiong'o (1986) argues that the imposition of European languages in African education and literature is not simply a practical issue but a fundamental mechanism of cultural and intellectual domination. Language, in his view, is a carrier of culture, and when African children are taught to think and express themselves exclusively in English or French, they are alienated from their own histories, identities, and indigenous knowledge systems. conditioning them to see their own languages as inferior

In themselves, the western nursery rhymes Nigerian children were/are compelled to memorise and recite are not negative. However, placed within the framework of colonialism and the politics of destabilising and making the colony more governable and extractable, the rhymes were weapons as dangerous as colonial Christianity's installation of "God" as Caucasian. As can be seen in Figs. 2-6, the representation of Jesus and Mary in all of Africa is genetically "white", because both the mother and child are. God being Caucasian, his language being superior and Western, His ideals are then completely contrary to the denigrated African particularity. The colonial systemic destabilisation of the African particularism did not just stop at this. As part of the disingenuous narrative, Lucifer and the concept of "evil" were approximated as "black" – the visually opposite colour of Jesus' "whiteness". Among the many millions of Africa's Christians today, this dichotomised politics of colour informs how indigenous particularities are consciously repudiated, while people gravitate towards western versions of denied African phenomenon. Nowhere else can this cognitive aberration be more profoundly seen than in the yearly Christmas events around the continent. At churches and schools, masques of Santa Claus are celebrated and parents pay for their children to see and interact with the ostensibly white masquerade. It turns out that these same parents will forbid their children from even looking at traditional African masquerades, because they are considered evil, devilish and a sin to pleasure in them. No church or school will permit an African masquerade in their premises, and no parent will accept their children to either see the performances or interact with the masked performers. This is the depth of cultural damage that decades of deliberate colonial unschooling has done to Africa. In essence, the outcome of the deliberate unschooling and miseducation has been to remake Africa as a "cultural heritage of the West" (Arowolo, 2022). This has slowed down development, causing Africa to stagnate, because of the repudiation of Africanness, and the imposition of western ideas of governance, economy, religion, education and general way of life (Bulhan, 2015; Igboin, 2011).

CONCLUSION

In all, as development tools western system of education and Christianity established in Nigeria seem to have caused more harm than good to the Nigerian and African society. They have caused Africans generally to be physically and mentally dependent on the west, its particularities and social systems, to the point that nothing is done if it cannot fit to a western frame. This level of cognitive dependence on the western social culture does not encourage sustainability and stimulate growth, development and healthy patterns within the Nigerian society. As Helena (2010) succinctly puts it, today "there is a widely held belief that it is by modern education that we can raise people from poverty. But looking honestly at things and what has been happening, we would see that it is the advent of colonialism, development, and aid that has created poverty". What makes Helena's observed reality possible is that. In the whole of Africa, the term, "modern" has come to be synonymous with "western". In effect, while Africa is free from its colonial masters today, it still suffers from the underdevelopment somewhat seeded by deliberate and subtle nuances of colonial miseducation and unschooling of the African psyche. The contemporary Nigerian socio-political system tends to respond and function based on the planted seeds of colonial extractive mis-education. And, from that perspective, right from independence in 1960, Nigerian leaders merely became *the* new colonialists, using the same extractive methods the colonial Britain used. This time, however, the "particularities" the Nigerian political elite deny are not so much cultural as they are socioeconomic, exemplified in their perennial penchant for clinging to power and using foreign companies to front government contracts. In addition to preselecting their preferred foreign fronts, they simply make contract rules and set parameters that indigenous companies cannot fulfil. As the British colonial methods were, these postcolonial indigenous methods of the Nigerian political class are only based on exploitation and material gains for self-interest and not for national development. It does seem that there has been a near holistic cognitive

underdevelopment in Africa that traverses class and social strata. For, while the general populace have been cognitively socialised to repudiate their own African particularities, the continent's political classes have embraced and used the chasm of particularities to enrich themselves.

Boaz's notion of particularism makes it clear that societies and cultures develop based on particular historical events and not destined physiological capacities. In the sense in which Brock-Utne (2000) critiques the assumption that Western education is universally beneficial, the author also highlights how it alienates African learners from indigenous knowledge systems and local realities. In no ambiguous terms, education policies framed within the logic of "development" are fundamentally designed to maintain Africa's subordinate position in the global order, the paradox of "education for all" lies in its role as an instrument for controlling knowledge production rather than fostering true emancipation (Brock-Utne 2000). There is then a need for a radical rethinking of African education — one that deconstructs the Eurocentric assumptions embedded in policy frameworks and prioritizes indigenous methodologies that serve the needs and aspirations of African societies. This underscores the imperative of reclaiming Africa's educational future from the shadows of colonial legacies disguised as development initiatives. The role of intellectuals in either perpetuating or resisting imperialist discourse is critical, and postcolonial societies must actively reclaim their narratives by producing counter-discourses in textbooks that challenge Western hegemonies (Said 1993). If Africa and its social economies are not as developed as should be, it is not as a result of a physiological destiny cast in stone, but that of a subtle, gradual and particular historical events which, in this case, were colonially, post-colonially and deliberately configured. In this sense, to roll back the negative colonial reconfigurations, there needs to be an end to the dominance of English and French as mediums of instruction in Africa, the deemphasising of Western epistemologies, and the institution of African histories and illustrations in textbooks used in African schools. In all of these, how long the effects of Africa's colonial unschooling will last, and how soon the continent can revamp its particularities to renegotiate cognitive underdevelopment remains to be seen.

ETHICAL NOTES

This paper is a small part of my larger doctoral research, which followed strict ethical frameworks, which sought and got permissions for the making and use of images at church and school sites.

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