Continuity of Injustice

The Colonial Legacy of Development and Missionization

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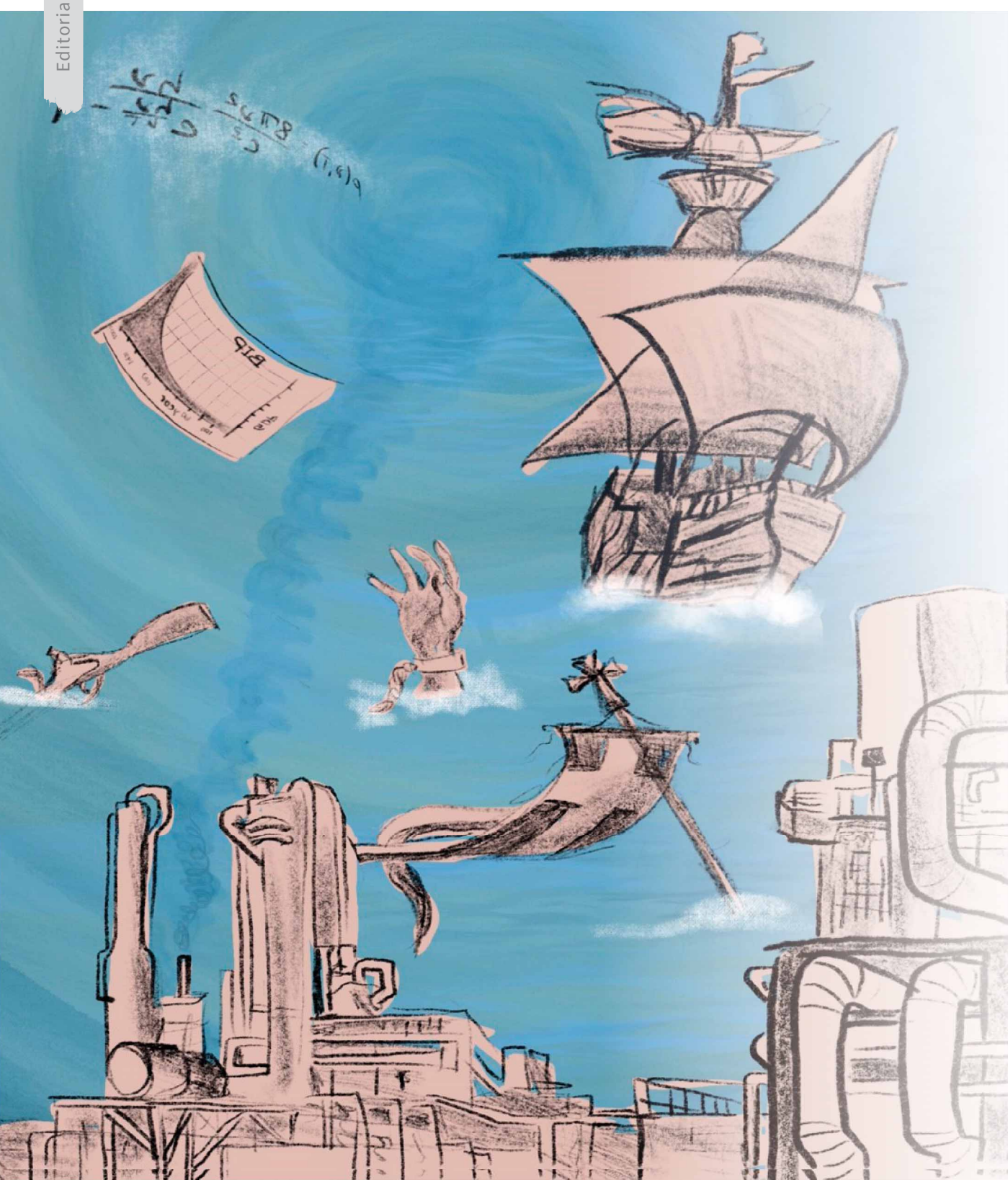

EDITORIAL

For some time now, Germany and other European countries have been discussing the return of art objects that were shipped in large numbers during the colonial era from regions of Africa, South America, and Asia to the countries of the colonialists. These restitutions are intended to contribute to the historical reappraisal and political recognition of colonial crimes.

In the discussion in this regard, it is also often pointed out that colonialism, with all the suffering and destruction it brought, cannot simply be regarded as a closed historical epoch. The term postcolonialism expresses the fact that colonial structures still shape social and individual actions and thinking up to this day. Postcolonial efforts therefore do not end with the demand for the restitution of artworks or the political recognition of genocides committed, but call for a deconstruction of Euro- and ethnocentric relations today, and for resistance against ongoing forms of exploitation and discrimination.

We see some facets of neo-colonial violence in Ukraine presently in the violent military assault on people and their habitat, the murder and expulsion of innocent people, and the despotic annexation of territory. This issue of the Grüne Reihe, which was already conceived before Russia's belligerent invasion of Ukraine, seeks to deal with colonialism and its consequences, in which, among others, the Church, theology, but also institutions of so-called development aid were and are embroiled.

The articles in this issue make it clear that engagement with postcolonial discourses is particularly relevant for us as a Franciscan aid organisation. Boniface Mabanza Bambu and Julia Schöneberg, for example, demonstrate in their articles how political and economic interests, Eurocentric normatives and the desire to maintain a colonial world order are still hidden behind seemingly innocuous terms such as „development", „education" or „progress". However, postcolonial engagement is not just a political imperative. Stefan Silber uses the example of theology to show how postcolonial critique makes it possible to break out of the corset of entrenched theories and discover a new path to the message of the Gospel.

With this issue, we are hoping to contribute to the understanding of the necessity of dealing with past and present colonialism in our society, but also to provide impetus for critical reflections on our own work as a Franciscan aid organisation.

The Editors

THINKING DEVELOPMENT DECOLONIALLY. TOWARD A SUSTAINABLE WORLD

Boniface Mabanza Bambu

In his 2015 essay, „If we accept the term development, we are lost. On the need for a mutual decolonisation of our thinking", Cameroonian philosopher Fabien Eboussi Boulaga[1] shows why it is problematic to accept the perceptual filters through which Africa and other so-called developing regions are defined from the Western point of view. From a so-called Western perspective, development aid plays a central role for people living in the so-called developing countries. Accordingly, their societies are reduced to deficit regions in which only problems exist – for which, however, there is plenty of problem-solving expertise in Western industrial societies. The problem is that those who consider themselves developed do so on the basis of their own standards of development and in accordance with constructions of the underdevelopment of the others. Moreover, their developed status cannot be separated from the colonisation of others.

The development approach that springs from this constellation does not deliver what it promises, namely, prosperity for all. On the contrary: it bears destructive elements that threaten the foundations of life for present and future generations, for example, through the multiple transgressions of planetary limits. On the other hand, mere sustainability rhetoric does not help. What is needed is to rediscover the diversity that exists in humanity in order to design models of living that meet the needs of all people living now, of the shared world, and of future generations. The following text seeks to deal with this set of problems and to deconstruct what development promises, what it counteracts, and what it means to take the diversity of humanity seriously with regard to development issues, and, from there, to sketch some reflections on African „development routes".

Development: What it promises

The emergence of development policy as a subject and as a practice took place almost simultaneously with the decisive phase of decolonisation in Africa. „After colonialism had definitively discredited the idea of a civilizing mission, development erected itself as an unquestionable norm of progress within human societies,"[2] notes Senegalese economist and philosopher Felwine Sarr. The Encyclopaedia of the Third World writes the following about development policy: „Development policy is the sum of all means and measures used and taken by developing and industrialised countries to promote the economic and social development of developing countries, i.e., to improve the living conditions of the population in developing countries."[3] This definition makes it clear that development policy only focuses on changes that are to take place in developing countries. Industrialised countries are not affected by this, because they embody the status[4] that developing countries are supposed to achieve. Development policy hence formulates the claim to be at the service of all humanity with universal goals.

In accordance with this claim of the North to supremacy over the South that is contained in the concept of development,[5] it is the countries of the North that determine the logic and spirit of development policy, even though this definition unjustifiably

[1] EBOUSSI BOULAGA (2012). - [2] SARR (2019), 21. - [3] NOHLEN (2000): 235. - [4] The Truman Doctrine of 1949, considered the founding moment of development policy, states: „... we must embark on a bold new program for making the benefits of our scientific advances and industrial progress available for the improvement and growth of underdeveloped areas." - [5] Because of this claim to supremacy contained in the concept of development, the Cameroonian philosopher and theologian Eboussi Boulaga argues for rejecting the concept of development. Cf. EBOUSSI BOULAGA (2012).

mentions the developing countries[6] equally as subjects of the measures of development policy. At the level of implementation, they are undoubtedly involved. It is different at the level of conception, behind which lie strategies of dominance and control that blatantly contradict the actual interests of the populations of the so-called developing countries. It is no coincidence that development policy got underway precisely with the project of decolonisation: it was supposed to provide the lachrymose phrases to garnish an aggressive, interest-driven politics that had to reposition itself in the face of the project of decolonisation. The reconfiguration consisted in maintaining the orientation of the economies of the colonised countries towards foreign beneficiaries while changing their forms, since the „metropolises" could no longer practice exploitation openly.

Development policy in its interactions with the areas of trade, finance and currency, raw materials and armament policy, etc., is part of the structural dependencies and power relations, originating from the colonial era, that have been restructured and cemented again and again. Accordingly, it is hardly surprising that, over the years, this has repeatedly forced developing countries into „reforms" that were designed to incorporate them into the geopolitical strategies and economic interests of the former colonial powers and the new powers such, as the USA. The result is a succession of slogans without approaching the actual goal: to develop people and their countries, whatever development may mean.

Changed rhetoric for the same methods and results

Unlike in many African traditional religions, for example, where changing the names of people and communities always heralded changes in essence, development policy in the past decades has repeatedly produced new programmes without fundamentally changing anything. The history of development policy is a history of replacing slogans without significant consequences for practice. Whether the talk was of modernisation and social change, trade instead of aid, basic-needs-oriented funding, sustainability and debt initiative, good governance, human rights, or even autocentrism and dissociation, the frame of reference remained the growth-oriented, resource- and energy-intensive economic and social model of the Northern Hemisphere. The model of catch-up development, according to which countries categorised as „underdeveloped" (must) strive for the Western model, has been maintained and justified again and again.

The first Development Decade launched by the United Nations General Assembly in the early 1960s already clearly expressed the imperial thinking of the development project. This unfolded within the framework of the so-called modernisation theory, which assumed that underdevelopment had to do with a lack of capital, that the engine of growth was integration into the world market, that growth led to trickle-down effects and, first and foremost, that catch-up industrialisation was the only possible path to development. This catch-up industrialisation could only take place via an external impetus (capital, expertise, technology transfer), and its promise of economic growth was only possible through „world market integration".

Sociocultural and economic modernisation was seen as incompatible with traditional societies, whose structures were considered backward and inferior – hence in need of renewal. This supposed modernisation destroyed structures that worked well in some cases and tried to replace them with „imported solutions", which in many cases never worked. The destruction of old structures and the non-functioning of the new ones, which are

[6] Even if this were true, a distinction would be necessary, because developing countries cannot be understood as one unit. Not only do they differ among themselves and take on different geostrategic roles depending on their clout, but different interest groups can also be discerned in those countries. The elites, who often cooperate with the makers of development policy, have different interests than the majority of their compatriots.

supposed to be scientifically superior, have caused a disorientation and uncertainty that find expression, among other things, in the fact that many people have forgotten how to take initiatives to develop their many areas of potential. The external orientation as an effect of development policy is noticeable in many areas, including education.

Education: Its significance within development policy

The example of education can be used to show how development ideology cements the external orientation of people in developing countries. Development ideology proclaims education as the key to individual and social change.[7] The question as to the content of this education is rarely posed. Most elites who have ruled the African continent since the attainment of independence 40 to 50 years ago have not asked this question. They have not considered the task of an educational system appropriate to local ideals and necessities, and it has not been considered important for their central goal of seizing and conserving power. It is even to be suspected that in some countries this task was not undertaken because it was seen as very dangerous for the elites' maintenance of power and for the preservation of existing economic interests, as it contains subversive potential. Where educational reforms did take place, they were reactionary in design. One colonial model of education replaced the other. For example, after independence, Namibia exchanged the Burian-influenced South African model for the British model, only to realise a few years later that this too did not represent what the country needed.

If there is talk of a crisis in education in most African countries, then it still remains a crisis at the level of implementing the colonially influenced and externally oriented model of education. And if there is talk of progress, then progress also means within that system. For example, the Prime Minister of the DR Congo declared at the start of the 2014–2015 school year: „*The improvement of education is being done in a comprehensive manner. We are building schools, distributing books, improving the living conditions of teachers, and we are also pushing forward with teacher training in order to provide the children with a global education.*"[8] His education minister added that „there is much to be done in terms of the education system's quality and efficiency."[9] The question as to what education is and what it should achieve is not even asked. The system that privileges a few experts and effectively leaves the vast majority out is accepted as the most natural thing and is not questioned. The consequences of this tunnel vision are disastrous for the countries, as the glorification of expertism shows.

Expertism of the development agenda versus organic knowledge

A discrepancy can be observed between the ideals and methods of traditional education and colonial-influenced education. This discrepancy became very clear to me when I visited my grandparents for the first time at the age of 12 after completing the second form in the orientation cycle. My grandfather often took me to the forest where he had his plantations for pineapples and cola nuts and where he went hunting and fishing. He asked me many questions about plants and their medicinal properties, animals and all kinds of objects we encountered. Questions about the social structures in the village and Suku[10] society also came up again and again. At first, I was annoyed by his interrogations, which he constantly subjected me to – because they exposed my ignorance. However, over time, I developed a certain curiosity and a new world opened up that school had not taught me. I realised what the ancient Romans meant by the saying „Etsi multa scio, plura tamen ignoro."[11] My grandfather taught me a lot of knowledge

[7] A current Kindernothilfe (emergency aid for children) advertisement calling for donations for education shows laughing African children. At the bottom of the picture is the sentence: „Education changes everything": http://www.kindernothilfe.de/bildung.html. - [8] http://radiookapi.net/actualite/2014/09/08/rdc-le-gouvernement-veut-ameliorer-la-qualite-de-lenseignement/. - [9] Ibid. - [10] Ethnic group in the DR Congo and Angola. - [11] „My ignorance is much greater than my knowledge".

about traditional medicine in a didactically attractive manner.[12] I learned how to help myself should something happen to me in the forest (injury, snake bite, etc.).

The society in which my grandfather lived learned in the same way: the transfer of knowledge was playful but efficient, fact-based and practical. In this way, young people have been prepared over the course of several generations to take responsibility for their communities and for themselves and to serve those communities. Education in the traditional sense was closely linked to the ability to immerse children and young people in the living worlds of their communities, to perceive the potential of their communities, including their shared world, to bring these as well as their own potential to fruition, and to be capable of contributing to the care and transmission of the life received, and thus to serve those communities. Education was understood as the development of young people's potential, taking into account the specifics of their shared world and in harmony with the values of the community.

I later realised that this traditional knowledge is not recognised in our society. Anyone who can only exhibit this traditional knowledge is not only considered illiterate, but also uneducated. They have nothing to say for the future of African countries, nor are they asked. Slowly but surely, not only is the knowledge cultivated by this education system over generations dying out, but also the value system associated with it. Those who are educated are those who have gone through the European-style school system. They are almost automatically seen as experts, as having a say over the future of their respective countries, even though it turns out in practice that many are to some degree at odds with the core values[13] of their communities because of the nature of their expertise and because of the value system they relate to. A colleague from Kenya once summed up this contradiction when she asked whether the elites in her country were „educated". Her question was prompted by a panel discussion on „Development Aid for Education in Africa" in Munich in 2010, to which she, a Cameroonian colleague and I were invited. We had met very early and had decided to politicise the event by sending the message: „Education yes, but which education?" After the Cameroonian colleague and I made an effort to get the message across throughout the event, she showed great reticence. In her closing remarks, she nevertheless formulated the following dilemma of education in Africa, using Kenya as an example. She spoke of how the government counted more than 50 ministers and deputy ministers among its numbers, and how each of them earns more than members of the American government, with the head of state also being better paid than Barack Obama. Many of these ministers have doctorates or other degrees from the most famous universities (Oxford, London School of Economics, Harvard, La Sorbonne). But are they „educated"? In the traditional African sense, they are not, she replied confidently, because education is primarily about helping people find themselves by developing the virtues that constitute humanity. Essentially, these virtues are love, compassion, solidarity, etc. If such virtues no longer emerge in the lives of decision makers in politics and business, then something is wrong in the system in which they operate and in the value system that serves as their frame of reference.

If education does not provide the necessary tools to be capable of avoiding moral perversion, then one can speak of failure. In traditional Suku society, the value of a person's education was measured primarily in terms of social competence. A great deal of understanding was developed for any lack of, or insufficient, professional skills that enable one to be involved in caring for the life of the community. A lack of social competence, on the other hand, often came at a price, especially when there were repeated selfish behaviours that disrupted the community. The price was isolation, the highest punishment that can befall a human being. In Africa

[12] With wit, without much effort, so that it was fun to learn. - [13] Values such as solidarity, hospitality, empathy, sacredness of life and nature, etc.

today, too, elites who do not align themselves with community values are punished by isolation: they live in isolation, rule by force, buy sympathy to give the appearance of popularity, but isolation overtakes them at the latest upon their death.[14]

Closing remarks

Julius Nyerere, the first President of Tanzania, made the following remarks on development and education in a speech in 1976: „Development has a purpose; that purpose is the liberation of Man. It is true that in the Third World we talk a great deal about economic development – about expanding the number of goods and services, and the capacity to produce them. But the goods are needed to serve men; services are required to make the lives of men more easeful as well as more fruitful. Political, social, and economic organization is needed to enlarge the freedom and dignity of men. Always we come back to Man – to Liberated Man – as the purpose of activity, the purpose of development. But Man can only liberate himself or develop himself. He cannot be liberated or developed by another. The same is true of education. Its purpose is the liberation of Man from the restraints and limitations of ignorance and dependency."[15]

Nyerere's analysis is still of great relevance today. The development project, as conceived in many post-colonial states, reinforces the „external orientation", and the associated educational concepts cement the external perspective. Such a development strategy sees the elites with European education as partners. They are recipients of the dominant model of society and development, and they use their power to establish it at the expense of the majority of people in their respective countries. From the point of view of the traditional education system, they are traitors, those who are opening the door to a system that is destructive to local structures.

If there is any truth to the statement that „education changes everything", it is the idea that education does indeed play a key role in the transformation of societies. However, this does not yet determine the direction in which this transformation will take place. If development is conceived according to the catch-up model and not according to the internal necessities of the societies to be developed, then the education that goes with it is an instrument of external orientation. Admittedly, this model is only partially effective, because its protagonists, the elites, often do not have access to the micro-levels in their countries. Nevertheless, the macro-structures that shape them are decisive enough to have a destructive effect on the micro-levels. Education is then an instrument of external orientation for those whose heads are elsewhere than where they live: they read books written elsewhere, consume media products created elsewhere. It is hardly surprising that some talk about Africa in the same way as the mainstream media: they adopt the same prejudices, generalisations and essentialist images.[16]

In any case, it should be noted that local knowledge and its solutions are hardly taken into account due to this external orientation. It is not protected, let alone promoted. On the contrary, it is being destroyed, and that is a problem not only for the societies directly affected, but also for humanity as a whole, because the diversity of knowledge is thereby dying out. This diversity is urgently needed at a time when humanity is going through severe crises, which also, ultimately, have to do with monolithic knowledge and the economic and social

[14] Mobutu, one of the most powerful and richest heads of state in Africa, whose regime was characterised by scandalous personal enrichment and massive human rights violations, died in exile in Morocco, and even his family members did not manage to attend his funeral. In the last years of his long rule, he felt so unpopular that he left the capital and entrenched himself in his own city in the middle of the rainforest. - [15] https://www.dvv-international.de/en/adult-education-and-development/editions/aed-672006/icae7th-world-assembly/adult-education-and-development. - [16] At a conference of the African diaspora in Germany, one participant complained that many in the room talked about Africa and Africans in the same way as a certain German public, certain media and the development community. Another participant replied that this should hardly be surprising, given that the frame of reference is the same. To escape this danger, a permanent critical attitude is needed, which not every member of the diaspora has.

model derived from it. Instead of allowing this diversity to flourish, however, packaged solutions are being spread everywhere almost unchecked, i.e., solutions developed in a few centres but presented as valid for all contexts.

In the rhetoric of the protagonists of development policy, they claim that they have learned from their mistakes and have said goodbye to the „top management principle". In reality, it remains the case that the allusion to local knowledge is in most cases purely rhetorical. In disaster management and conflict management, in the structuring of the macro-economy and in many other areas related to development policy, the concepts of the dominant donor nations still prevail. Returning to local knowledge and expertise would have meant, for example, valuing local languages in the education system, because languages pass on systems of thought. Even this elementary requirement is not respected, and the crisis of education systems in many African countries has to do with the fact that many children are not learning in the languages they speak at home. They are confronted at a very early age with languages that they do not use in everyday life, the lifeworlds of which are far removed from their own.

Jacob Mabe sees this neglect of native languages in education as the origin of most development problems. He concludes that „It was undoubtedly a big mistake to declare English, French, Portuguese and Spanish the only official and teaching languages."[17] Taking into account this failure in elementary prerequisites that ought to have informed self-determined paths to development, the often-cited alignment with the development strategies of developing countries seems like a farce. This farce also involves the elites of the so-called developing countries who do not see or do not want to see the need for profound changes for their future.

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Dr Boniface Mabanza Bambu studied philosophy, literature and theology in Kinshasa and did his doctorate at the University of Münster on the topic „Justice can only be for everyone. A critique of globalisation from an African perspective". After training at the Academy for Conflict Transformation in Bonn, he has been coordinator of the Kirchliche Arbeitsstelle Südliches Afrika (The Ecclesiastical Office for Southern Africa) of Werkstatt Ökonomie in Heidelberg since 2008, focusing on trade policy, raw materials policy, and globalisation.

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IS DECOLONIAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION POSSIBLE?

Julia Schöneberg

It is not only the Oxfam Inequality Report that informs us every year as to how the gap between rich and poor, Global North and Global South, is widening. Despite decades of diverse development efforts, global inequality and injustice are visibly worsening. At the same time, a plethora of aid and non-governmental organisations around the world are committed to fighting poverty and promoting "development". How can this paradox be explained?

"Development" is the problem, and the discourses, narratives and structures it encompasses are linked to a concept and practice through which well-intentioned aid interventions alleviate symptoms at best, but do not combat causes. Gustavo Esteva writes of "development" as an amoeba-like word: it continuously changes its form and is thus impossible to grasp or define. In development cooperation, the narratives have changed several times over the last 70 years: from modernisation and structural adjustment, to empowerment and help for self-help, to sustainability. In fact, the legitimation of development has been used for decades to pursue political agenda-setting as well as foreign policy, economic and nation-state interests.

Criticism of "development" is not new, and has been formulated in the last 30 years mainly by postcolonial, decolonial and post-development authors and proponents. Thus, N'Dione and others[1] describe the culture of "development" as an "economic conception of time, the cult of statistics and competition between individuals, [and] the commodification of people and goods." Moreover, as Wolfgang Sachs and co-authors explain in the "Development Dictionary",[2] "development" is to be understood as a Western modernisation project, as an expression of the ideological and economic power of the West and the propagation of a certain Western capitalist ideal of a desirable life. In fact, despite changing approaches to legitimation and strategy, three central basic assumptions of the development discourse remain unchanged to this day:

1) "development" is universally measurable, normatively good and universally desirable;

2) "development" can be controlled through intervention; and

3) in the so-called Global North, there is expertise that is urgently needed elsewhere.

These three principles are deeply rooted in colonialism, because, for one thing, they set the way of life and worldview of the "developed" West as the universal norm. They also perpetuate the colonial logic of superiority and the division of the world into civilised/uncivilised as developed/underdeveloped. What is not addressed is the colonial extractivism, robbery and oppression on which the wealth of the West is built. "Underdevelopment" remains a deficit due to incapacity. So, if "development" remains within a colonial continuity, is decolonial development cooperation[3] even possible? What lessons can international non-governmental organisations learn from this for their actions? What would be the first steps towards a decolonial approach?

[1] N'DIONE et al. (1997). - [2] SACHS et al. (1997). - [3] Postcolonial and decolonial are often used synonymously. The commonalities are that both theoretical approaches question Eurocentric historiography, place the current world order in the context of colonialism, extractivism and slavery, and formulate demands for epistemic decolonisation. I pre-eminently use the term decolonial here, because decolonial theory and practice and its proponents have been contextualising Europe within the framework of capitalism, coloniality and modernity since Columbus's so-called discovery of the Americas. Postcolonial theory, on the other hand, often remains abstractly focused on the relations of imperial powers to the rest of the world, especially in the 19th and 20th centuries (Bhambra 2014).

A genuine and sincere engagement with the basic assumptions of "development" is an existential issue for the work of NGOs and aid organisations from the Global North, i.e., the mostly privileged part of the world. What impact would it have on their legitimacy to fundamentally question the three central basic assumptions and their own role?

A productive starting point is the question of what is meant by the term decolonial. Tuck and Yang[4] make clear that decolonisation cannot be a mere metaphor, but must include a material dimension. Gurminder Bhambra, Professor at the University of Sussex, puts it this way: "The inextricable combination of the rhetoric of modernity (progress, development, growth) and the logic of coloniality (poverty, misery, inequality), has to be central to any discussion of contemporary global inequalities and the historical basis of their emergence."[5] In a nutshell, if the goal of development cooperation is to fight poverty and global inequality, then any action can only be effective if it fights the causes and not just the symptoms. The question of the roots of global structural inequalities and their historically determined causes must be at its core.

Firstly, it is about understanding and analysing the current state of the world not as a given, but as a continuity of racism and colonialism. Secondly, this makes it necessary to think and practise alternatives beyond the entrenched Euro-modernist binary (developed/underdeveloped). Contrary to what workshops, training sessions and seminars would have us believe, decolonisation is not an event that can be achieved with a few selective efforts. Still less can the trend of postcolonial and decolonial analysis, similar to the buzzwords of empowerment, participation and sustainability before, be ticked off a to-do list. Rather, decolonisation is a process that requires continuous engagement.

Coming to terms with our own entanglement in structures of injustice and oppression is painful, because it requires reflection and, first and foremost, changing how we act. At the organisational level, in the context of an international aid organisation, it even threatens the very existence of the organisation: after all, the ideal case would be to make that organisation superfluous. Focusing on easily identifiable and remediable technical deficits, such as the lack of technology, knowledge and growth, is therefore a retreat to a depoliticising level that, at best, secures the status quo but does not bring about fundamental change. However, reflecting on our own role and positionality, both at an individual and at an organisational level, does not mean limiting ourselves to abstract space, wallowing in feelings of powerlessness and the inability to do anything, but has a clear material component. That is because criticism of "development" is not a complete retreat to inactivity, but the first step towards dismantling structural causes of poverty and injustice.

So, what specifically does decolonisation of development cooperation mean?

1) Questioning Western expertise (including, and especially, our own)

Questioning Western expertise does not mean that engagement in the Global South is impossible or necessarily colonial. Rather, it is about the approach to intervention. What real added value does my presence have in a particular context? Is my intervention contributing to fighting structural causes of poverty? Is it securing a status quo, or, at worst, weakening local expert positions?

2) The validation of non-Western knowledge and other conceptions of a „good life", without any form of trusteeship

In the Post-Development Dictionary, Ashish Kothari and colleagues[6] illustrate the diversity of this pluriverse, the already existing, the "already being", a diversity of practised alternatives and practices beyond the Western-propagated universalism. The alternatives that the book gathers together share fundamental commonalities in terms of what might constitute a good life:

[4] TUCK/ YANG (2012). - [5] BHAMBRA (2014). - [6] KOTHARI et al. (2019).

The interconnectedness of human and non-human life; conviviality, relationality and interdependence; autonomy and self-governance. They all criticise the logic and effects of the Capitalocene, (neo)extractivism and uncritical belief in euromodernist ideologies of progress and growth.

3) Addressing the structural causes of poverty and injustice, especially those in which „we“[7] are implicated through our imperial way of life

Reflecting on our own role and the privileges we take for granted is the necessary first step in making a contribution towards a more just world. On the individual level, this would be constituted by the question of how each of us reproduces racist stereotypes and assumptions. On the social level, it means critically questioning how our own country contributes to the creation and perpetuation of poverty elsewhere through overconsumption, extractivism, unfair trade, exploitative working conditions, and arms exports. Uli Brand and Markus Wissen aptly describe this as an “imperial way of life”, and it becomes clear that global justice cannot be achieved if the countries of the Global North continue to maintain this way of life. How seriously do we take the slogan of the Sustainable Development Goals – that all countries are developing countries? Taken at its word, this firstly entails the necessity to de-develop the Global North. Development cooperation therefore inevitably makes it necessary to look at our own society, to lobby “at home”, to put pressure on companies and governments. North–South power asymmetries must be broken down. As suggested by Jason Hickel,[8] specific starting points for a critique of power could include, for instance:

- debt relief for heavily indebted countries, reparation and restitution;
- a fairer global economy through democratic voting rights in powerful financial institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund;
- regulation of agricultural patents and subsidies, protection of seeds, protection against land grabbing, and fair trade;
- global tax justice; and
- fair pay for all.

These are worth advocating for in the interests of a decolonial approach. And last but not least: How much are we dealing with structural and intersectional discrimination in our own immediate local and national environment? Why is the focus of “development” always on distant countries?
In other words, is decolonial development cooperation possible? Yes and no. It is right to stand up for justice and to work against poverty. And perhaps this is even important and necessary, especially from a privileged position. However, as Aram Ziai[9] notes, why do we remain committed to such a problematic term as “development” instead of unequivocally naming the structural causes of global inequality and addressing them, instead of their symptoms? Clearly, decolonisation of development and development cooperation begins first and foremost “at home”.

[7] I write from a very specific positionality: white, educated and raised in Germany with many privileges. My approach to de/coloniality therefore necessarily arises from this subjectivity, and I attempt only to formulate imperatives for that. Therefore, when I speak of „we“, I mean people with similar privileges as me, who live and work in similar spaces. - [8] HICKEL (2019). - [9] ZIAI (2016).

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DECOLONISING THEOLOGY. ON THE RELEVANCE OF POSTCOLONIAL STUDIES FOR THE LIBERATION OF THEOLOGY

Stefan Silber

What postcolonial studies uncover and criticise is often best clarified narratively. Tunisian historian Sophie Bessis remembers her school days at a girls' grammar school during Tunisia's colonial era. She writes:

"During the break, national differences did not disappear in the face of the apparent ecumenism of the children's camaraderie. There were the Tunisians, Arabs or Jews in contrast with the 'French girls', a global entity whose homogeneity transcended the particular friendship that could be forged with any of them. That is because the French girls overwhelmed us with their contempt. Even if we did not accept their arrogance, we did not doubt their superiority,

for, firstly, they were blonde, with long, straight hair that could be thrown back with an elegant movement of the head. Faced with this almost angelic nature, the masochistic contemplation of the black and curly hair that adorned our heads caused us immense pain.

They also went to communion, with wedding dresses, with tulle and veils, with a missal in hand and a wealth of pious images. [...] Who of us, Muslims and Jews, who shared the same darkness, did not once dream of being Catholic in our childhood, in order to experience this fairy tale? [...]

We had to choose which second language we wanted to learn before the sixth year of school. For my parents, the question was simple: we were Jewish, but first and foremost Tunisian – in other words, Arab. After reading my application, my teacher called me over: 'What a pity you didn't choose English!' She exclaimed. I long remembered her sad voice lamenting the cultural regression to which her good pupil was condemned."[1]

In this memoir, Bessis describes several characteristic aspects of a (post-)colonial culture: the Tunisian children do not doubt the superiority of the French girls. This superiority has physical, external reasons (the hair), cultural and religious aspects (the first communion, the language), and also economic and social characteristics: the French classmates travelled to France for the holidays. A deep chasm separated the Tunisian girls from this mythical, seemingly paradisiacal land. Their own identity, on the other hand, is consistently devalued ("darkness", "regression"). Thus, Bessis' comment: "We learned that there was little glory in being what we were."[2] It was only much later, when the author was able to travel to France as an adult, that it finally became apparent to her that the perceived gulf between the French and Tunisian schoolgirls was not a given, but a product of their colonial context. In this example, a single biographical memory becomes very malleable, something that can provoke colonial and postcolonial impressions.

An overview: What does "postcolonial" mean?

"Postcolonial" refers to the fact that most former colonies have now gained national independence. In this sense, the era of formal colonialism is behind us. On the other hand, postcolonial studies also use this term to refer to the fact that, subsequent to the official, political end of colonialism, the profound cultural, economic and political transformations to which the colonies were subjected have left painful

[1] BESSIS (2002): 15-16. - [2] Ibid.: 16.

structural and cultural effects up to the present day. Tracing and critiquing these effects, revealing their connection to colonialism, and remedying them in various ways is the concern of postcolonial theories and practices, including within theology.

In this sense, Germany is a postcolonial country. A few years ago, I probably would have refrained from this statement. In the meantime, it has become much clearer to me that "postcolonial" is not only about those countries that emerged from European colonies. Moreover, in Europe, it is not only Great Britain, France and Spain that have been shaped to the core by their colonial past.

The entire world can therefore be understood postcolonially, because colonialism has transformed the world in various ways over several centuries: European people exported their ideas of politics, economy, culture, education, genders, history, humans' relationship to nature, and, last but not least, religion to the whole world and have tried to impose them with military coercion and cultural hegemony.

Postcolonial studies as an academic current originate in the independence movements of the French and British colonial territories after the Second World War. Subsequent to this, the first question to be asked in Anglophone literary studies was to what extent the literature written after the colonial era, i.e., "postcolonial" literature, is still characterised by colonial stereotypes – and why. The book "Orientalism" by the Palestinian literary scholar Edward Said, a critique of the Western representation of the "Orient", is considered a first foundational text.

At about the same time, the Subaltern Studies Group working with the historian Ranajit Guha in Asia was engaged in a critique of European historiography on India and neighbouring states. An important member of this group was the literary scholar Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. She brought not only French post-structuralism into the debate, but also decidedly feminist and critical Marxist positions.

Latin American theories that critically engage with colonial power relations are often referred to as "decolonial studies". These authors continually distance themselves from postcolonial studies of Asian and North American providence. They criticise the fact that in postcolonialism the economic and political aspects of analysis are weaker and that postcolonial studies are strongly oriented towards European post-structuralist discourses. Moreover, they are more interested in interpreting postcolonial conditions than in changing them. However, this mutual criticism should not obscure numerous similarities, commonalities and relationships between the two academic disciplines, especially since they are presently very much relating to and learning from each other. Both currents are concerned with the question of why and to what extent colonial thinking and colonial power structures are still having an effect today.

In many respects, entanglements with colonialism are also evident in Germany. Not only did the German Empire have its own colonies, but, as a result of emigrants, soldiers, travellers, business people, and, last but not least, missionaries, very many tangible personal relationships were formed that have enabled the growth and perpetuation of a colonial self-assurance in Germany. Academics at German universities have also developed and promoted imperial and colonial thinking, often without ever having been to the colonial territories themselves. German professionals were convinced that they could recognise and judge from their European desks what would best serve the colonial empire. Philosophers such as Kant and Hegel, in their own way, underpinned the European claim to superiority with ideas that assert their validity to the present day. An examination of postcolonial thinking is therefore highly necessary in Germany as well.

The mindset shaped by colonialism has not simply been invalidated by national independence. Rather, it has remained in the cultural memory of both the former colonies and the imperial nations of Europe. People in colonial countries often grew up with a self-evident conviction of their own inferiority to Europeans, which could be determined by the

colour of their skin, their mother tongue, their social background, and their educational opportunities. As a matter of course, the economy, the state system, religion – very many areas of everyday life – continue to be shaped in the postcolonial subconscious in accordance with European patterns or colonial interests. The idea that there are alternatives is often dismissed as "backward", "idealistic" or "irrational".

The challenge of coloniality has also been taken up in theological research. In a painstaking search for traces, postcolonial theologies reconstruct how the interaction of mission and evangelisation, on the one hand, and conquest and colonialism, on the other, have altered the good news of Christianity. In many cases, appropriate interlocutors for a constructive approach to the past can be found in the current forms of pre-colonial religiosity and in the resistance of the colonised against the mission, rather than in the established institutions of the colonial churches. However, even that is not certain. That is to say, another characteristic of postcolonial theories and theologies is principled methodological self-criticism, permanent review of one's own results and reflections, and the willingness to be uncertain and to make necessary corrections.

Focal points of postcolonial theologies

Postcolonial theologies have therefore also already developed a wide range of methods and forms of expression through which coloniality can be uncovered, criticised and transformed. One focus of these methods is on the cultural, linguistic and discursive factors of coloniality. These primarily concern the conscious and unconscious attribution of identities based on the skin colour, gender or ethnic and cultural affiliation of other people, but also historiography and religious studies. Such discursive questions are at the forefront of many theorists – many of whom come from literary studies.

Equally important for an understanding of postcolonial theologies are power relations in the present, whether that be in politics, economics, land ownership, physical violence, or even religion. The resistance to these power relations, including in theology, is another important focus of postcolonial theologies. Resistance to mission and evangelisation can also become a positive challenge for theology via a change of perspective. For, the resistance and countervailing power that this change of perspective represents can indicate a necessary turn-around and advancement in theology and church practice.

Postcolonial theologies do not stop at critique, but also develop theological alternatives in which they theologically unfold the countervailing power of colonial criticism and sometimes arrive at completely new understandings of the Christian faith. To this end, they also draw on spiritual and theological expressions of indigenous and other religions.

Land ownership and the Bible

Two examples will be used to illustrate the importance of postcolonial thinking for theology. The feminist biblical scholar Musa Dube from Botswana points to the close connection between mission and land theft with a little story that is similarly told in different regions of the world: "When the white man came to our country, he had the Bible, and we had the land. The white man said to us: 'Let us pray.' After the prayer, the white man had the land and we had the Bible."[3]

The methods of land theft could vary widely, ranging from breach of trust and contracts to seemingly legal expropriation, through to forcible expulsion and seizure. Missionaries also promoted, legitimised or even practised this approach themselves. Western notions that one can cut through land with borders, divide it up or sell it, turn it into a commodity or a legal title, evict people from it and settle them elsewhere collide with different notions of land in which it is seen as sacred, as an inalienable ancestral

[3] DUBE (2000): 3.

heritage, as a family member, as a dialogue partner, or as a network of pilgrimage trails. In many cultures, a very close spiritual relationship of trust is cultivated with a very specific territory, which is why the Western conception of land as a commodity or legal title is met with incomprehension.[4]

This spiritual relationship of the people to the land was often condemned by missionaries in the past as "animistic". Land theft could thus be stylised as a civilising project. And yet, a spiritual relationship between man and his land could certainly be justified biblically, as religious scholar Ezra Chitando from Zimbabwe points out: the story of Naboth's vineyard (1 Kings 21:1–19) centres on a conflict in which a farmer is convinced that his inheritance cannot be commodified and given away. The king, who does not respect this, is condemned by the prophet.[5] This example shows how the Bible is being used in the present as an important instrument of decolonising theology.

The heroine who turns her back

A second example: US postcolonial scholar Laura Donaldson draws attention to the fact that every perception depends on the perspective in which one finds oneself. For cognition, it is therefore necessary to be in motion and to take different perspectives. By contrast, an abstract, seemingly objective perception of things independent of perspective, as Western science envisions, is not at all possible.

The changing perspectives when encountering other cultures also include the experience of people turning away and resisting the hegemonic perspective. Donaldson gives a surprising biblical example of this: that of Moabitess Orpah, who, unlike her sister-in-law Ruth, does not emigrate to Bethlehem with their mother-in-law Naomi, but instead goes back to her own mother (cf. Ruth 1:6–14).

From an indigenous perspective, Donaldson interprets Ruth as a figure who crosses cultural boundaries in order to submit to, and thus benefit from, patriarchal rule in the foreign and more powerful culture. While she could have returned to her mother's house when she left Moab, she chooses to live in the patriarchy, in the house of Boaz, and becomes the mother of a male patriarchal royal dynasty (Ruth 4:17–22). Donaldson compares this narrative to stories from the North American colonial period that have gained a strong influence in popular culture: Malinche, the interpreter of Hernán Cortez during the conquest of Mexico, and Pocahontas, as an example of the "good indigenous person" in US culture. Ruth's sister-in-law, Orpah, on the other hand, is presented in the biblical story as the one who turns her back and returns to her mother, her relatives, her culture, her homeland. The Hebrew root of her name, "Orpah", refers to the "neck" or the "back" and thus precisely to the action of turning away.

Donaldson points out that indigenous readers of the Book of Ruth react to Ruth's decision with indignation. They understand it as a story in which "yet another relative has succumbed to [...] a hegemonic culture."[6] Her assessment is therefore that this text cannot be read within the traditional interpretation. Orpah, on the other hand, the other Moabite woman who "turns her back" on this fate, is seen by Donaldson as the real heroine of the story. Similarly, new and sometimes very resistant interpretations of biblical texts keep emerging from postcolonial perspectives, from which liberating perspectives for action can be derived.

Consequences for European theologies

Can theologians in Europe learn anything from the postcolonial theologies of the world? Can we, must we, be inspired to change? What processes of learning and reflection can be initiated by postcolonial theologies in Europe, and what obstacles stand in the way of doing that in Europe itself?

I am convinced that such learning processes are inevitable in Europe. However, they are not the

[4] Cf. KRENAK (2021). - [5] CHITANDO (2020): 404. - [6] DONALDSON (1999): 141.

primary focus of the authors of postcolonial theologies themselves. Their primary concern is to recognise, analyse and resist their own dependencies on the coloniality of theology. They are not concerned with correcting European theologies, but with liberating themselves from them. As theologians in Europe, we must take this objective seriously. Transforming our way of producing theology will therefore also serve first and foremost for finding a theology that is liberated from coloniality, completely detached from colonialism, and dedicated – in partnership with the postcolonial theologies of the world – to the decolonisation of Europe.

The first necessary learning step for European theologies is thus also to acknowledge our colonial past and to take responsibility for the postcolonial structures of the present, both in the Church and in society at large. This includes exposing and questioning positions of power – power relations within the Church, along with other power relations that are supported and legitimised by religious arguments. Another important consequence is to break away from the universal claim of European theology, recognising it as one contextual theology among others, in partnership and dialogue with other contextual theologies of the world. In dialogue with other theologies worldwide, theology must constantly question its own historical position of power and its economic privileges. Only in this way can the critique and resistance that it experiences from the theology of other cultural contexts unfold their prophetic power, which urges transformation and conversion of European theologies.

Postcolonial theologies can question much that is taken for granted theologically, for, on the one hand, they can analyse theology self-critically, paying heed to the extent to which a certain theological thought could serve to legitimise colonialism and the destruction that goes with it. On the other hand, they can reveal the extent to which colonial patterns of thought have historically intervened in theological argumentation itself, and what traces they have left there. This double critique can affect very central aspects of theology. If theologies in Europe allow themselves to be affected by these critical enquiries, they will be able to experience considerable insecurities – and that is quite intentional. That is because it is the apparent theological certainties that are responsible for the persistence of colonial thought patterns in the postcolonial cultural context. Thus, breaking down such certainties can lead to liberation. The coloniality of theology constricts it and alienates it. Through postcolonial critique, it is possible to break out of the theological corset that conforms to colonialism and be newly converted to the message of the Gospel.

However, that requires dialogue and engagement with critical perspectives outside Europe. It begins with listening (and reading) sympathetically, and with attentive and self-critical perception of the limitations of the theologies of Europe described by the postcolonial theologies. It is not a question of replacing these European theologies with others, but, rather, of being prepared to engage in a common learning process in which positions that have become familiar and secure are allowed to be questioned.

In this way, European theology can free itself from the burden of coloniality. This promise forms the context for engagement with postcolonial theologies. It demands humility and a willingness to learn on the part of us European theologians. In the process of further developing these theologies, the geographical centre will in any case not be in Europe.

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POSTCOLONIAL THEOLOGY, EMANCIPATION, AND COMPARATIVE RELIGIONS: SOCIAL SCIENTIFIC APPROACH

Paul S. Chung

Postcolonial methodology denotes a recent arrival to Asian/Asian-American feminists, who represent postcolonial deconstruction in the fashion of Jacques Derrida, Edward Said, and Gayatri Spivak. They take issue with Asian liberative theology or Asian feminist (modernist) theology, because the project of the latter is considerably built on poverty, religious pluralism, and Asian narratives. Asian liberative theology at large is accused of essentializing Asian religious-cultural resources in order to promote the Asian-ness of doing theology.

Transnational postcolonialists, such as Kwok Pui-lan, contend that such distinctive methodology is obviously seen in Aloysius Pieris's characterization of Asian-ness in terms of multifaceted religiosity and poverty-stricken reality. Such position would be echoed in a fictional return of the colonized to one's indigenous history and culture. Emphasis on the essential features of Asia and the search for the colonized past would be easily exposed to the trap of a self-Orientalizing exercise.[1]

A theology focused on Asian-ness is attacked as a nostalgia for a colonized past. An accusation of self-Orientalizing quest marks a regime of problematic and requires a clarification. What is the postcolonial theory underlying such passion of deconstruction?

Postcolonial Theory and Epistemology

Postcolonial theory is concerned with social cultural phenomena of the colonial aftermath, taking issue with the pathology of late modernity. It is to recover histories (or effective forms of histories and narratives concerned with the marginalized and the subjugated), while reviving cultural individual biographies in subversion of Western discourse of representation and hegemony.[2] The conception of postcolonialism, or postcoloniality can be invented as an umbrella term in order to discern political and social cultural events in constant flux onto postcolonial reality and condition. "Once colonized world" is fraught with contradictions, confusion, hybridity, and liminality. The mixed nature of postcolonial identities in hybridity comes to terms with stratification of postcolonial people in the metropolis, as well.

It is important to awaken the consciousness of the subalterns under the neo-colonial system of domination under Empire and to cope with their condition and hybrid nature of multitude in psychological, social-cultural, political, and economic realms.[3]

Edward Said made such groundbreaking work of Orientalism by initiating postcolonial critique and demystifying the cultural representation of the Oriental societies under Western episteme. Orientalism implies a style of thought, which is mainly built upon the binary opposition or hierarchical dualism between the Orient and the Occident. It is a western style of representation that subjugates the colonial other and establishes ideological justification in dominion over the Orient.[4]

Michel Foucault's theory of discourse and genealogy of power-knowledge couplet becomes foundational for Said's analysis of the European discourse of Orientalism. Edward Said, together with Gayatri Spivak and Homi Bhaba, plays the catalyst in providing the postcolonial insights for theoretical

[1] KWOK (2007): 16. - [2] GANDHI (1998): 8. - [3] WESTHELLE (2010): xvi. - [4] SAID (1978).

sophistication and practice. Postcololnialism can be defined as a theory of reading strategy in terms of discourse of representation and power relations (Said) or deconstruction (Spivak, a translator of Derrida's *Of Grammatology*), or a psychological condition of being embedded with ambivalence, hybridity, and resistance (Homi Bhaba).[5]

Under the influence of postcolonial theory, transnational deconstructionists denounce essential features of Asia-ness to be illusion, because essential features are being incorporated into globalizing transnationalism.

Liberation and Effective History

In distinction from transnational deconstructionists, however, Vitor Westhelle provides the history of the Spanish empire as the initial stage to undertake his liberation theology in postcolonial formation. The Industrial Revolution was considerably indebted to European colonialism in Americas following Columbus's conquest. A conflictual logic of colonialism can be seen in the relationship between the Spanish Empire and desire of the conquistadores. This combination unveils a binary juxtaposition between the oppressor and the oppressed as a naïve interpretive device. Indeed, the conquistadores served the interests of the empire, while bringing their own desires often to conflict with the crown.[6]

In the first phase of the capital power of Genoa, the Spanish conquest is characterized by the Christian character of capital accumulation (structural violence), through which biopolitical colonial governance involves plundering gold and silver (direct violence). The indigenous people were nearly extinguished. The second phase of early capitalism under Dutch hegemony was driven by the triangular trade. Slaves were captured in Africa and shipped to the Americas for plantation labor to produce raw materials, like cotton. These goods were shipped to Europe to be manufactured and sold all over the world. The transatlantic commerce and trade system continued its colonialist expansion and capital accumulation under the hegemony of the Britain.

The long twentieth century of capitalism[7] has developed in various European powers, which lead to the current combination of superpowers (USA, the EU, China, and Japan) underlying the neoliberal world system.

Each regime of capital accumulation is associated with political, military, territorial forces invested within power relations, hegemony, racism, and abolition of local indigenous culture. Capital globalization in the context of transnationalism comes to terms with increasing racism and homogenizing of the local culture into the neocolonial phase. As Thomas McCarthy argues, postcolonial neo-imperialism continues along with post-biological neo-racism after the demise of formal colonies and scientific racism. This agenda of neo-racism is mediated by and invested in power structure.[8]

Agnes M. Brazal introduces a Catholic theological endeavor in articulating liberation-postcolonial ethics in the Philippines. She is aware that the term "postcolonial" refers to an umbrella discourse, but its theory is typically taken from French poststructuralism (Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, Jacques Lacan). R. S. Sugirtharajah from India is credited as a postcolonial theologian, who represents postcolonial biblical hermeneutics.

Brazal formulates her theological method by appropriating Stuart Hall, a postcolonial neo-Marxist scholar. She also fosters vernacular cosmopolitanism, underwriting the wisdom of the local culture by opening it up to intercultural exchanges.[9] A vernacular virtue like *hiya* (shame) is retrieved to promote the universal common good as a way of overcoming political populism or fake news in the context of social media. This ideological situation plagues the social-political reality of the Philippines.

[5] KWOK (2005): 2. - [6] WESTHELLE (2010): 8, 14. - [7] ARRIGHI (1994). - [8] MCCARTHY (2009): 7. - [9] BRAZAL (2019): xxxiii.

A notion of vernacular cosmopolitanism becomes innovative and challenging. It is concrete–universal rather than abstract-universal. In fact, Derrida retrieved and even misused Kant's ideas of cosmopolitanism and hospitality for his poststructuralist direction. However, Kant's racial injustice is already unveiled as a questionable regime by social scientists, such as Thomas McCarthy.[10]

Other than the transnational deconstructionism, Brazal's project is concerned with a translation of vernacular ethical concepts in order to interpret Biblical language in inculturating manner. Local people are making their own history. She draws attention to Stuart Hall's social scientific theory of articulation to enhance Catholic social ethical teaching in her own cultural and political matrix. She values Hall's approach to the outline of commodity production in Marx's *Grundrisse* and *Capital*. She paves a creative path to a correlation between liberation theology and postcolonial epistemology, while integrating the significance of comparative study of religion and culture by cutting across an unqualified accusation of self-Orientalizing quest.[11]

In this way, I draw attention to Louis Althusser, who develops a theory of articulation between social formation and human praxis. It can be allied with effective history of the diverse instances (politics, economics, religion, ideology, culture, and sexuality) – that is a complex reality of society and culture in stratification. The absence of problems and their presence within the problematics requires a symptomatic reading (or better, an archeological reading) of what is repressed in the text. It searches for an underlying contradiction or absence by which to unveil what cannot be said in the text.

In Althusser's view, Foucault brings substantial insight into epistemological break or rupture in his study of cultural formation in different historical times and episteme. "There is nothing in true history which allows it to be read in the ideological continuum of a linear time that need only be punctuated and divided."[12]

There is no correspondence within diverse spheres or instances (the economic, the ideological, the aesthetic, the philosophical or the scientific), because they "live in different times and know other breaks and other punctuations".[13] The coexistence of a presence and absence, or articulation of two different moments can be regarded simply as "the effect of the structure of the whole in its articulated decentricity".[14]

The backwardness, forwardness, survivals, and unevenness co-exist in the structure of the real historical present, in other words, the present of the conjuncture or combination of diverse events. This perspective features effective history (centered on break, decentricity, and difference), which reacts against the marching history of progress and technological rationality tainted with Western imperial power.

The effective history helps buttress a postcolonial stance in seeking to measure and appraise the dislocation of colonial histories and cultures against the line of a single continuous reference time. The latter regards the dislocation as backwardness or forwardness in terms of its ideological reference time. The effective history is constructed with the historical reference to and critical exposition of linear march and progress (Eurocentric position).

World Christianity and Postcolonial Mission

A social scientific theory of effective history helps unveil the western church historiography as retaining a dichotomy between church history and mission history. It tends to lose the unrecorded voices of Biblical women, evangelists, catechists, translators, and uncounted faithful laypeople in the history of mission. The history of victors in the colonial system of domination had the lion's share of representing church history, which subordinates the local agency and role of missional project to Eurocentric historiography.[15]

[10] MCCARTHY (2009). - [11] BRAZAL (2019): 41. - [12] ALTHUSSER/ BALIBAR (1979): 103. - [13] Ibid.: 104. - [14] Ibid.

This perspective becomes crucial in scholars of World Christianity, which focus on inculturation and indigenous translation of biblical message to recasts postcolonial notion of God's mission. Stephen Bevan and Roger Schroeder propose an interactive model which focuses on self-renewal and reconstruction of Christian identity, while challenging the painful history of colonial mission. Their study of Bartholome de las Casas in Spanish colonialism refers to his mission as liberation and solidarity with the indigenous people. The interactive model focuses on Matteo Ricci's mission as inculturation and recognition in Chinese Confucian context, including Robert de Nobili in India. Bevan and Schroeder redefine God's mission in terms of prophetic justice, interreligious dialogue, and a hermeneutic of appreciation.[16]

Postcolonial missional theologians such as Jonathan Ingleby confront the global reality of the Empire through a constant biblical theme. In a biography of Rudyard Kipling, the imperial mission is recommended to the colonization of the Philippines.[17] Ingleby advocates a prophetic tradition of the scriptures and other emancipatory voices in religion and politics. A new biblical exegesis focuses on the Old Testament, the apocalyptic writings in the gospels and Paul's letters. Ingleby upholds anti-imperialist or postcolonial mission beyond Empire to overcome the structure of the legitimation and hegemony.[18]

A postcolonial notion of God's mission is classified by interpolation, mimicry, archeology, extraordinary realism, palimpsest, and re-presentation. Incultural or transcultural translation relies upon local wisdom and language, and it becomes a commentary on interpolation, because the colonized uses the cultural capital to dismantle the imperial system. Colonialism has written off on a place by choosing names and ways of representing their interest through maps, monuments, and boundaries. In a piece of manuscript or a palimpsest missionaries wrote their own version of the Gospel under their cultural, linguistic biases. However, no inscription is indelible.

Ingleby is critical of a notion of mimicry and the role of mimic person whose identity is the indigenous yet with Western in taste. His/her role is to mediate between the colonial authority and the colonized, particularly as a colonial collaborator. A policy of mimicry is, however, not a deliberate strategy, having unhealthy consequences.[19]

Walter Benjamin's anamnestic position remains crucial in Ingleby's mission of resistance against European Fascism. "There is no document of civilization which is not at the same time a document of barbarism. And just as such a document is not free of barbarism, barbarism taints also the manner in which it was transmitted from one owner to another" (thesis VII).[20]

A postcolonial passion of rewriting or re-presenting the side of effective history calls for an archeological skill in fight against Fascism and Eurocentric progress, and it seeks to decipher the irregular side of the downtrodden who is buried on the underside of history, religion, and culture. An archeological skill unearths history in the light of life-world as the constellation. There are many voices, stories, cultural patterns in the Arabic calendar like stars in constellations on the celestial sphere, which are irreducible to European scientific, technological revolution.

Global, Critical Trajectory: Orientalism and Eurocentrism

At a deeper level, effective history (Wirkliche Historie) is juxtaposed with history of effect (Wirkungsgeschichte). Such combination helps take a critical outlook of Eurocentrism and Orientalism, as seen through the lens of archeological interpretation and genealogical analysis of discourse and power relations.

Samir Amin seeks to unveil a myth of Eurocentrism over and against Islamic civilization, in accord with his tributary world-system. Such world-system was divided into core and peripheral areas (arranged

[15] SANNEH (2002): 94. - [16] BEVANS/ SCHROEDER (2004): 176-195. - [17] INGLEBY (2010): 32. - [18] Ibid.: 29. - [19] Ibid.: 51. - [20] BENJAMIN (1968): 256.

from 500 BCE through Hellenism, then the birth of Christianity, and finally the birth of Islam to 1500 CE). In all tributary cultures there is the preeminence of the metaphysical and religious aspiration in the search for absolute truth.[21]

Tributary ideology and culture were already present in the accomplishments of ancient Egypt, Hellenistic-Eastern Christian, Islamic civilization, and European Christianity. Amin challenges any opposition between Greek thought and 'Oriental' thought, because the latter does not exclude Greece.

In Amin's view, Said's theory of Orientalism is insufficient and even at fault, because he has not managed to propose another system of scientific explanation, when it comes to socioeconomic basis for Eurocentric system of domination. Said is vulnerable to his provincialism, leading to inverted Orientalism.[22]

Therefore, Said's theory of Orientalism is met with a serious critique, because he reiterates and accepts the objective scientific device fabricated in the Western scholarship, without reservation. According to Muslim intellectuals such as Tariq Ramadan, Said shares in the same objectives and the same tools which are utilized and abused among Western secular scholars. A European projection of Orientalism is justified and taken for granted by Said's own ideological or self-invented position. Said lacks Islamic history and its religious, cultural tradition with the high civilization that he should have depicted.[23]

To cut through a Manichean dualism of binary opposition, it should be said that the Muslims in the sixteenth century and even into the seventeenth had reached the zenith in terms of political power and cultural creativity. According to Marshall Hodgson, a leading scholar in the history and civilization of Islam, "in the sixteenth century of our era, a visitor from Mars might well have supposed that the human world was on the verge of becoming Muslim. He would have based his judgment partly on the strategic and political advantages of the Muslims, but partly also on the vitality of their general culture."[24]

A theory of 'Islamdom' in analogy of Christendom necessitates a juxtaposed notion of modern development in the sense of Oikumene. Ecumenical correlation in the universal history remains crucial in the comparative study of civilization between Christianity and Islam. A theory of Eurocentrism or Orientalism is discarded as a conspiracy theory in its abdication of Islamic civilization. Genealogy of power can be seen in the argument: Saudi theologians who claim for the authority of medieval Islamic texts are to be regarded locally, but Western scholars who rely on the authority of Western modern literature are to be taken universally.[25]

Furthermore, in my view, Said's major problem can be noticed in his hermeneutical malnutrition in disseminating an anachronistic reference to historical, political life-setting. For example, Said cites in passing from Marx's sentence in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*: "Sie können sich nicht vertreten, sie müssen vertreten werden."[26] They cannot represent themselves politically, but they must be represented.

In Marx's own historical context, they (sie) refer to the poor peasantry, which was politically betrayed by Louis Bonaparte. Against the politics of Bonaparte, Marx advocates for the peasantry and their vulnerability by claiming their rights in the French political system. In sum, they have nothing to do with the poor Orient, as Said speculates. Representation in Marxian sense implies political advocacy, rather than defending an anachronistic theory of Orientalism and its panacea of representation.

Amin formulates his theory of Eurocentrism through the Renaissance; the very first traces are found in Italy, but coming to cover much of Europe. Perhaps, it would mark the transition from the Middle Age to the modern age.[27] After the fall of Constantinople in 1453 by the Ottomans, many eastern scholars fled

[21] AMIN (2009): 100. - [22] Ibid.: 176. - [23] RAMADAN (2012): 87. - [24] HODGSON (1999): 97. - [25] ASAD (1993): 8. - [26] Ibid.: 87. - [27] Ibid.: 152.

to Italy, introducing important books and manuscripts and a tradition of Greek scholarship. This event was associated with Columbus' voyage to the New World (1492) and the development of the Renaissance.[28]

However, Amin's reliance upon European Renaissance appears to lack the high stage of Islamic civilization, which had influenced the European course of modernity. Unlike Amin, however, the Renaissance in the European context cannot be regarded as a point of departure in confirming European modern hegemony. In fact, the Islamic contribution to European Renaissance can be traced back to the translation of the works of Greek philosophers in Baghdad in the period from 750 to 850 under the rule of Abbasid caliphate. Cosmopolitan Baghdad had a valuable library, and with the help of Syrian Christian scholars, it contained Greek works of science, medicine, and mathematics. It includes philologically accurate translations of the works of Plato and Aristotle into Arabic.[29]

Furthermore, Cordoba, the capital of the caliphate in Spain, was the jewel of the earth in the tenth and eleventh century in terms of economic flourishing and cultural and intellectual aspects. One caliph's library among seventy libraries retained 400,000 volumes.[30]

At the dawn of the sixteenth century Islam – the Ottoman in Anatolia, the Near and Middle East, North Africa, the Balkans and other European regions, the Safavid in the Fertile Crescent and the Iranian highlands and the Mughal in northern India – was the most vital civilization in the world, and they had established good organization and reached prosperity which Occidentals had admired. They held a hegemonic potential over East and West. This Islamic civilization, or Islamdom can be defined as the civilizational source of European Renaissance, since it had advanced the cultural characters in the political cities in vast geo-cultural areas.[31]

This global, critical trajectory renews Amin's argument, which focuses on the origin of capitalist modernity only on the Renaissance, Protestant Reformation, and the Enlightenment. The year 1492 inaugurates European expansion, conquest, and massacre in biopolitical colonization. Biopolitical massacre, done by Spanish colonialism in America, was allied with a Christian character of capital accumulation, and it must become the point of departure for postcolonial study to engage in biopolitical governmentality, bureaucracy, and economic exploitation, military massacre, and racism.

Archeological Interpretation and Genealogy of Religion

"The postcolonial" that I have discussed implies a new method of effective history and archeological theory involving a semantic retrieval of the religious source. The term 'archeological' is a descriptive term in defining the site of history as not homogeneous with empty time; rather the archeologist attempts to fill time and rewrite present history by unearthing past materials, religious classics, wisdom, and life stories of local people in the tradition and history. 'Hermeneutic' refers to one's interpretive reason in interaction with tradition, history, culture, and texts as the life-world, while exploring social discourse in one's contemporary location or social topography. A hermeneutic archeologist is contrasted with conformism and historicism, which reaches culmination in the universal history of homogenizing every particular and dissimilar into empty time.

Interpretive reason is of anamnestic character in explicating the effective history by taking up what has been downtrodden in the underside of history and tradition. An Archeological hermeneutics is concerned with deciphering of effective history in many stories in the constellation with reference to meaning understanding, and truth, as interpreted in the multiple process of fusion of horizons. It implies a shift in historiography from Eurocentric

[28] AMIN (2009): 152. - [29] KÜNG (2007): 366. - [30] Ibid.: 376. - [31] SALVATORE (2009): 3.

mode of representation to polycentric description and constructive principle by problematizing the regime of the homogeneous, progressive-linear, and empty time.

Foucault's notion of archeology concerned with discourse analysis can be enhanced to entail genealogical position in dealing with the significance of understanding and meaning (Gadamer). Foucault's archeology does not necessarily oppose to meaningful regime of truth and subjectivity, which is irreducible to power.

However, Foucault's archeology should be renewed with reference to history as effect or its meaningful influence upon interpretative reasoning in the sense of life-world. It involves meaning and deep layered intelligibility in the sense of fusion of horizon that Gadamer rightly deploys. Of course, history could be misused ideologically as progressive and homogenous time reference to support Eurocentric system of episteme and scholarship.[32]

In strengthening ideological-critical sensibility, I focus on Walter Benjamin's creative view of history which synthesizes the effective history of the innocent victims with Messianic sense of historical and social transformation. His anamnestic reasoning, which is concerned with struggle for those downtrodden in the past, reinforces the social scientific experiment in unearthing realm of the effective history. As Benjamin writes on his thesis on the Philosophy of History, "nothing that has ever happened should be regarded as lost for history" (thesis III). "Only that historian will have the gift of fanning the spark of hope in the past who is firmly convinced that even the dead will not be safe from the enemy if he wins" (thesis IV).[33]

Genealogy of effective history in the world of religions examines the way in which particular discourse and practices in religious symbols and cultural pattern have been foreclosed and discarded by dominant narrative of the sacred truth. A genealogy of religion takes issue with anthropological conception of religion as the system of symbols, which is imbued with its realism in an aura of factuality (Clifford Geertz). Archeological method appropriates a method of thick description and relocates it in the wider spectrum of sacred texts, religious narratives, material interests, and institutional power, which have run in different course from the religious source.

Having said this, Asad's critique can be reviewed concerning Clifford Geertz's approach to religion as a cultural system. Asad's leaning to religion through power or coercion sidesteps Geertz's anthropological deliberation of religious symbols and cultural practices (for instance, Balinese Cockfight as the Balinese meaningful way of life) in the local realm. Religion as cultural system is defined as an ensemble of semantic texts which is deciphered and thickly described for meaning and truth in a phenomenological, hermeneutical frame of reference. The culture of a people is an ensemble of text, in which local people are making their history and society.[34]

Accordingly, the Biblical symbol of reconciliation underwrites religious practice of recognizing the otherness of the other, which is accorded with each life-word in specific time and different place. The cultural realm of religious symbols and practices is irreducible to Asad's power reductionism or coercion.[35]

Postcolonial God and Alternity

A genealogy of religion leads to a postcolonial articulation of God as the radical alterity, in other words, totaliter aliter imbued with relationality. It is relational in the presence of the divine speech act through the face of the Other. A hermeneutical reflection of God as an infinite horizon of speech act has multiple dimensions which embrace intratextual narrative as well as extra-biblical narrative. It is inter-textuality, as it were, that underlines the Biblical symbol of reconciliation with reference to the life-world. A dynamic process of fusion of

[32] CHUNG (2012). - [33] BENJAMIN (1968): 254 f. - [34] GEERTZ (1973): 452. - [35] ASAD (1993): 34.

horizons transpires in involving the life-world in terms of dialogue, responsible critique of sedimented obscurities and prejudices, and emancipation. A semantic circle is moved in intertextual interaction by synthesizing biblical narrative with socio-biographical narrative in society and the world.

Emmanuel Levinas deserves merit in his distinction between the saying (living discourse) and the said (written text), which facilitates a postcolonial notion of God as relational totaliter aliter—God's saying in the otherness of the Other. Dabar in Hebrew manner means speak, talk, and reveal in the ways that God's speech act happens as promise, hope, and future.

Enrique Dussel proposes ana-lectical method and ethical hermeneutics by incorporating Levinas' ethics of the alterity into emancipatory framework. His ana-lectical method begins with the discourse of the Other in Latin America and seeks to discover the analogical character of the word of the Other. Dabar entails ana-logy and a dialectical dimension in the sense of critique of social injustice and advocacy of grace for the poor.[36]

The language of analogy or parable is featured by approximation, tentativeness, and open-endedness. Analogical and parabolic narrative situates linguistic signifier to describe social reality in terms of powerful and creative tension between similarity and dissimilarity. The biblical symbol of God's speech act is associated as meaningful signifier with Jesus' use of secular parables and analogies in the life context of public sinners and tax collectors (massa perditionis). Such biblical signifier remains fulcrum for intertextuality, while protesting to all forms of idolatry, masculine domination, and absolutism.

A hermeneutical endeavor of intertextuality is required to re-read the comparative texts in terms of analyzing religious discourse, institutionalized knowledge system, social location, episteme, and cultural stratification. A new horizon of emancipation considers the regime of dissimilarity in dealing with gender, sexuality, race, and ethnicity, which is hierarchically stratified in society and culture.

Comparative Study and Axial Age Theory

It is a well-known fact that the comparative study of religion has been under much criticism because it attempts to typify whole religious traditions and result in gross simplification underwriting an apologetic purpose. However, in recent approaches to comparative religious ethics, there is a shift of emphasis on refining the hermeneutical-dialogical approach, which uses intercultural moral theorizing and praxis. It involves the quest for cross cultural understanding and the fusion of diverse moral and religious horizons.[37]

Robert King in his postcolonial study of religion contends that Said has left the ways in which indigenous people of the East have constructed their own critical response to colonialism. A legitimate re-presentation and rewriting of the Orient is required on the part of the colonized for comparative study of religion, culture, and morality by resisting traditional Orientalist discourse of misrepresentation.[38]

A sociological analysis of religious ideas in the texts can be undertaken in explicating the extent to which its elective affinity would be imbedded with material and ideal interests in the historical course of time and driven by institutional support, legal dominion, and bureaucracy. It is genealogically invested in discourse formation and institutional power and disseminated in terms of rationalization (underlying a general idea of order or existence), motivational action and religious disposition, discipline, exclusion of difference, institutional bureaucracy. When the religious discourse functions as a disgrace effect of a knowledge system (episteme) to support the powerful by betraying its prophetic, critical source, it should be subject to the immanent critique, which first comes from the source of the text, then from historical differential and social location.

[36] BARBER (1998): 50 f. - [37] TWISS/ TWISS (1998): 1. - [38] KING (1999): 95.

Framed in the comparative study of religion, a notion of axial age and its critical principle deserves attention. The social concern and alternative critique to the prevailing system of domination had always remained crucial in the visions of the great world religions, as developed from the Axial Age (c. 700 B.C.E. to 200 B.C.E.).

In all the civilizations of axial age "there is a profound tension between political powers and intellectual movements. New models of reality, either mystically or prophetically or rationally apprehended, are propounded as a criticism of, and alternative to, the prevailing models."[39]

Liberation theologians such as Ulrich Duchrow and Franz J. Hinkelammert advocate the notion of axial age in the global civilization for spirituality, wisdom, and ethics of world religions to confront life-destroying civilization; the latter is inscribed and manifested in economic injustice and ecological destruction in the thread of global capitalism.[40]

In the sociohistorical analysis of antiquity and religions, they focus on the Judeo-Christian position of economic justice and solidarity in the comparative study of the Buddhist critical stance against greed, aggression, and illusionary consciousness, which finds its significance in the Buddhist alternative to capitalist modernity. They also include Islam as a renewal of axial age spirituality in post-Axial period in terms of Muslim liberation theology cutting through the institutionalizing greed and capitalism.[41]

Accordingly, the socioeconomic inquiry facilitates a social scientific method in taking on the elective affinity between religious ideas, ritual practices, material interests, and power relations in monetizing and stratifying a given social formation. In fact, it unveils the character of a human being as the monetized being. Greek principle of participation in the cosmic rite of passage is of critical, democratic, and communal character in the ancient polis. But in ancient India the monarch is of archaic character, becoming the center of the power and ritual sacrifice in underlying the mystical union of the one's inner self with cosmic principle; it is undertaken in terms of monetization, power monopolization, and colonial hierarchy.[42]

In the principle of the Axial Age (critique, social justice, and solidarity) religion entails one of the most distinguished features in protesting to the hierarchy of the prevailing system, power hegemony, and stratification of economic injustice. Such position finds its validity in a postcolonial study of comparative religions to advance toward alternative modernity or trans-modernity in overcoming the reification of the monetized fetish being and masculine system of domination penetrated into in a neoliberal global capitalism.

Comparative Theology and Narrative Experience

A constructive theology of comparative religions in postcolonial formation implies an attempt to refine one's religious identity in conversation with a variety of religious traditions and resources. Resources from other cultural traditions (emic theory of thick description) help enrich theological epistemology (hermeneutical self).

Francis Clooney conceptualizes comparative theology in commentarial and exegetical manner, in which practice of reading together plays the most important role in shaping substantial features of his comparative reasoning of faith seeking understanding. His comparative theology is characterized by *Homo Lector* and self-effacement, and argues therefore against an attempt, which reduces the studied traditions and other traditions' faith to mere safe and disposable information for the apologetic manner. Rather, he respects the transformative power and its claim to universal validity, without distorting the other tradition.[43]

[39] MOMIGLIANO (1975): 8-9. - [40] DUCHROW/ HINKELAMMERT (2012): 1-6. - [41] Ibid.: 74-83; 85-96. - [42] SEAFORD (2020). - [43] CLOONEY (1993): 5–6.

Clooney envisions comparative theology as a project of *collectio* (reading together) "intends a rethinking of every theological issue and a rereading of every theological text" in light of other sacred texts.[44] A *homo lector* requires self-effacement before the text, allowing for the textual world to disclose productive ways of thinking and transforms the reader. This perspective explains Clooney's experiment for theology after Vedanta.

However, I sense that a composed textual world by the comparative theologian tends to violate the source of life-world; a comparative reader replaces such a regime without analyzing the textual world in connection with religious ethics, material interests, disgrace effect, and power relations, all of which affect and even distort the source of the religious texts. A self-effacement should be reformulated in phenomenological notion of suspense. It does not necessarily discard a character of critical, constructive stance and problematization of doctrinal regime and its authority for rich application of the two different religions for semantic retrieval and emancipation.

If the religious discourse is inscribed into material interests and justifies the social system of power structure (the caste in Indian society), to what extent would comparative theology reinterpret the religious belief system and its doctrinal regime as the source of the immanent critique of social injustice? For this task, constructive theology of comparative religions undertakes a sociological-hermeneutical inquiry in which a semantic notion of synthesis of meaning is compared in the two traditions through fusion of horizons. It further frames such semantic experiment in a symbolic, materialist analysis of power relations within social stratification or in the reality of postcolonial condition.

A bio-political reading strategy finds itself in the problematization of or critical distance from questionable regime by suspending what is taken for granted. Such inquiry remains crucial within the framework of each life-world, and it requires commentarial, exegetical work on religious texts in accord with immanent critique, solidarity, and emancipation. The sacred literatures are historically conditioned, socially located, and interest-bound. This sociological or more specifically, archeological hermeneutics allows for self-effacement in the initial stage of appreciation in authentic listening to and learning from other sacred texts; it then proceeds to explicate elective affinity between religious ideas and material interests among religious carriers inscribed into discourse formation, and technical rationality, and biopolitical domination.

Thus, *homo lector* cannot be separated from *homo socius* and *ethicus*, and this sociological articulation takes issue with a mere submission to the hierarchical elements of the religious texts and their problematic discourse in justifying religious authority and its symbolic violence.

In the comparative practice of reading together, interpretive reasoning cannot avoid the plurality, multiplicity, difference, and ambiguity which affect all religious texts. A hermeneutical self takes issue with the history of religions and their practice, which are vitiated by appalling litany of genocide, inquisitions, crusade, just wars, obscurantism, exclusion of the Other.

The self is a telling creature in which a narrative is at the heart of personal identity. A Christian identifies with biblical narrative and living Word of God, while a Christian comparatist seeks to find its meaningful discourse in other religious narratives in the transcultural context.

Narrative experience finds its prophetic significance in a thread of cross-cultural effectiveness; it is reported that the Russian novelist Tolstoy (1828–1910) made impact on Gandhi (1869–1948) in his ascetic non-violent life. Religious narrative finds its emancipatory import in a later generation committed to

[44] CLOONEY (1993).

civil rights movement and protest to the Vietnam War: Martin Luther King, Jr. (1929–1968), Abraham Joshua Heschel (1907–1972), Thich Nhat Hanh (1926–2022), and Malcolm X (1925–1965).[45]

Concluding Thesis: Postcolonial Theology

Postcolonial theology appropriates postcolonial epistemology, which facilities unveiling the Eurocentric mode of representation or politically charged discourse of Orientalism. It denounces the Eurocentric system of scholarship, domination, and violence as a conspiracy theory, as analyzed through social scientific experiment. It takes as a point of departure biopolitical colonialism and massacre in Americas and its subsequent transatlantic trade system propagating Christian character of capital accumulation, slavery, genocide, and racism. Such colonial legacy perpetuates its logic of structural system of violence in the neo-colonial phase of Empire, which vitiates and reifies our life-world through political governmentality, a new form of social racism, and hierarchy of social cultural stratification.

Postcolonial theology is a constructive way of articulating Christian faith and intelligibility in terms of the Biblical symbol of reconciliation and through religious practice of recognition with reference to significance and validity of life-world in each specific culture and society. God the totaliter alter is of relational character by addressing ethical challenge through the face of the Other.

Postcolonial theology utilizes social scientific inquiry in critically explicating the extent to which religious discourse would be intertwined with material interests, biopolitical governance, bureaucracy, and institutional power in the aftermath of colonialism. It penetrates today's globalized world, which reifies and stratifies cosmopolitan relation between the metropolis, semi-periphery, and the periphery.

Postcolonial theology is concerned with civil society and its public spheres, which are being integrated into the reality of postcolonial condition in which liminal consciousness and hybridity are increased along with immigration problem and neo-racism. These are organized in social stratification with its hierarchical spectrum.

Against the marching history of Eurocentric modernity, postcolonial theology takes issue with its pathology or iron cage, while it conceptualizes a notion of effective history in archeological-anamnestic frame of reference. Postcolonial reasoning takes into account the correlation of universal history between the West and the East. Islam and its great civilization are appreciated as one of the greatest sources for a different path to modernity, democracy, economic justice, and civil society.

Postcolonial theology implies a constructive theology involving the world religions in terms of the principle of Axial Age. Therefore, it actualizes religious compassion, moral stance, economic justice and integrity of nature in our global phase of the second Axial Age. It frames constructive theology of comparative religions in the formation of interreligious solidarity and emancipation, featuring a significance of alternative modernities in transcending Eurocentric form of modernity and its colonialist pathology.

There are some basic features of constructive theology of comparative religions in explicating the degree to which religious discourse and textual exegesis would be embedded with the role of agency, economic force, institutional power. This complex reality is to be explicated in the stratification of society and culture through the genealogical lens of effective history for renewal and change. A comparative practice of reading together is articulated on the basis of comparative reader as social being imbued with ethical practice in solidarity with those downtrodden in the world of religions. It is concerned with rewriting of a narrative of effective

[45] FASCHING et al. (2011): 4-5.

history, which relates to the area of sexuality, gender, race, and ethnicity in the postcolonial condition, which is fraught with hybridity, liminality, and multitude, and wave of immigration

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Postcolonial theology of God and alterity entails concrete-universal horizon in the light of Biblical symbol of reconciliation, which does not deprive of claim and validity of each life-world. A passion of metanoia and the renewal of church's responsibility can be heard in a prophetic voice of Dietrich Bonhoeffer: "The Church confesses that she has witnessed the lawless application of brutal force, the physical and spiritual suffering of countless innocent people, oppression, hatred and murder, and that she has not raised her voice on behalf of the victims and has not found ways to hasten to their aid. She is guilty of the deaths of the weakest and most defenseless brothers and [sisters] of Jesus Christ."[46]

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[46] BONHOEFFER (1995): 114.

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THE GERMAN IMAGE OF AFRICA – COLONIAL CONTINUITIES IN MEDIA REPORTING

Tina Adomako

What are the initial images, thoughts or associations that arise in the mind when a white person sees a Black person or encounters a dark-skinned person? The same as when encountering a white person? No thoughts at all, or neutral, unbiased thoughts? *"I only see a person and think nothing more of it,"* say those who consider themselves open-minded and tolerant. That would be nice. However, if we are honest, that is hardly ever the case. Completely unbiased Black and white encounters uncoloured by judgement are, unfortunately, hardly ever possible. That is because the images that both Black and white people have of each other have been shaped by over 500 years of history involving enslavement, colonisation, oppression and exoticisation.

Already starting after the first encounters Europeans had with non-white people in the Americas in the 15th century, tales of savage, primitive people came back with the returning conquistadors. The term "savages" allowed the idea of Christian brotherly love to be interpreted differently. After all, a tougher, more brutal approach is needed against savages. We know how brutal this was thanks to the eyewitness accounts of Hernán Cortés, who meticulously documented the "conquest" of Mexico and the treatment of its inhabitants. The alleged barbarity of the indigenous peoples justified the supposedly civilised colonists' barbaric behaviour toward them.

The problem is not that people set out to discover new shores or that they initially perceive strangers as "different". Human beings are wired to always want to know what is hidden beyond their horizon. Without this human curiosity, there would have been no moon landing and no Mars probes – nor would we have seen the many inventions, advances and achievements that have taken humanity forward. It is not the urge to "discover" new worlds, but the arrogance on the part of the so-called discoverers that went with this – and which took on ever worse forms over the centuries – that is the great evil that continues to spread its poison to this day. That is because, for the Europeans who "discovered" countries and "conquered" territories, it was taken for granted for hundreds of years that they had the only correct culture – and actually that is still the case today. From their point of view, Christianity was therefore far superior to the religions of the Incas, Mayans and Aztecs, the faith of the Arabs and the Chinese, and the practices of the Igbo, Asante or Nama. In order to feel like a top dog, there necessarily needs be belief in an underdog; in order to feel superior, there needs to be the conviction that there are inferiors. This conviction on the part of white people was the underlying justification for everything that followed. And there are consequences to this day.

From the outset, the indigenous peoples of Central America, their religions, and ways of life, were declared inferior and destroyed, while, at the same time, their wealth was marvelled at. Europeans behaved no differently in Africa roughly 100 years later. By then, they had so decimated the indigenous population of the Americas that they needed human resources to maintain their economic interests. Transatlantic human trafficking had begun. Now the image was consolidated that Black people were so savage that they were not really human – they were more like animals. In this way, the Global North was able to engage in human trafficking with a clear conscience for 500 years – by denying Black people their humanity. With the official end of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade (1865), the colonial era began. At the Congo Conference in Berlin in 1884, the countries of Europe divided Africa among themselves and expanded their self-imposed civilising tasks.

Buy me, white man!

At this point, missionary work really got started: the image of the savage, who could only be civilised through Christianisation, was spread by the churches, who also published many of the media sources. Until well into the 19th century, most people read mainly newspapers and religious literature. The newspapers also had a Christian bent. Stories of missionaries who had penetrated into the darkness of Africa to save poor souls and liberate them from the barbarity of their own primitive cultures captivated the readership and consolidated images. Congregations issued postcards and tracts, and their images also found their way into the newspapers. The highlight of a church year was often a visit from a missionary. From the 1890s onwards, such visits were developed into dramaturgically sophisticated mass events, which, of course, the newspapers then reported on. On postcards, Black people pleaded with the missionaries: *"Buy me, white man!"* or, *"Wash me, to make me white as snow!"*

The youth were also indoctrinated. There were early publications specifically for the youth that deepened this negative image of Africa and Black people. For example, the publishing house Herrnhut Missionsbuchhandlung published a series of booklets from around 1897–1925 entitled: "In fernen Heidenlanden. Missionserzählungen für die Jugend" (In distant heathen lands. Missionary tales for the youth). Such readings served to entrench stereotypical images of Africa at an early age.

Stories about ethnological expositions were also popular in media reports at that time. These expositions made guest appearances in the zoological

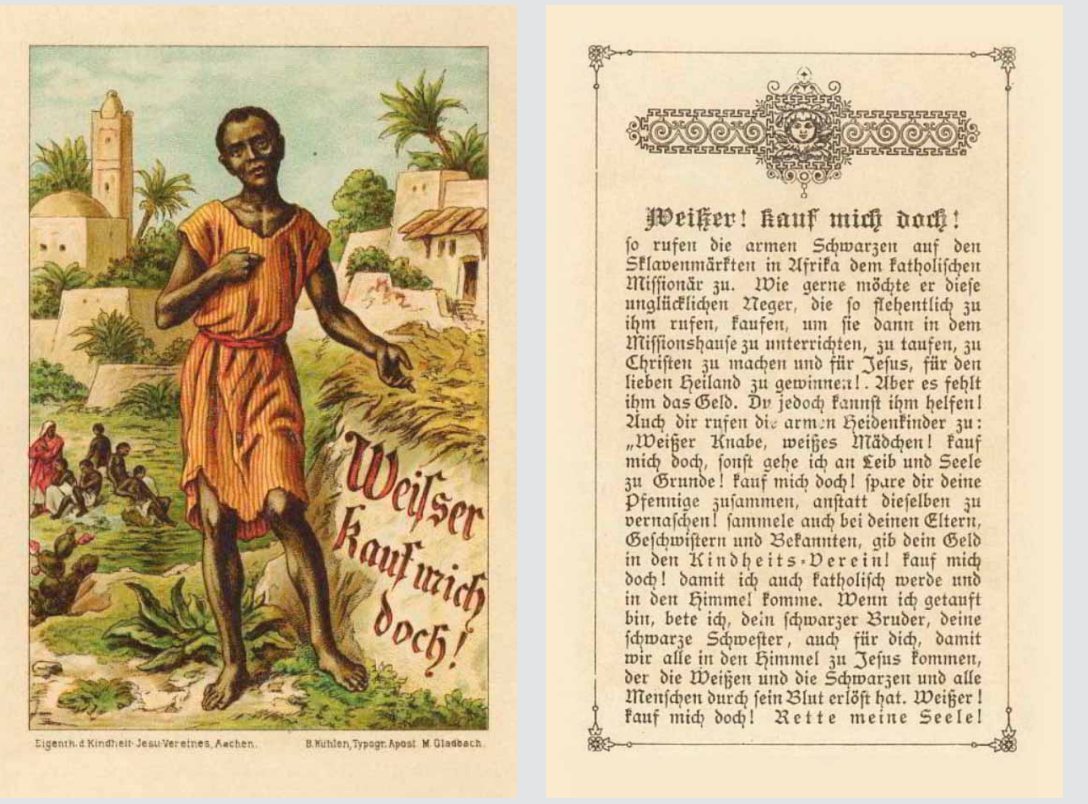

Fig.1: Postcard of the Missionary Childhood Association from around 1918; source: dortmund-postkolonial.de.

gardens of European metropolises and presented the audience with a supposedly authentic insight into the lives of "exotic peoples". They were mass events that attracted audiences of millions in Germany, Europe and also in North America. In these expositions, people could marvel at the primitive exotic people with their own eyes, or they could feast on the horror stories in newspapers. For example, a Swiss newspaper wrote in May 1899:

„[…] One should never miss the opportunity to visit the exposition of gathered savages; such a display always represents a certain cultural and historical interest. All these savage tribes, be they Black people from Africa, or brown people from the Australian island country, or redskins from America, are doomed to extinction. Their annihilation as barbarians will proceed with increasing rapidity in our times and in the times to come, thanks to civilisation advancing everywhere with giant strides."[1]

The media therefore disseminated racist images already at an early stage. The narratives of white supremacy and the image of the underdeveloped peoples permeated all media: those narratives were found in travelogues, chronicles, letters and literature, and were rendered by artists. The diary entries and travelogues of the 19th-century painter Wilhelm Kuhnert or the stories of Lettow-Vorbeck in the early 20th century are just two examples. Lettow-Vorbeck's books were bestsellers, while Kuhnert's pictures, which he produced for the chocolate manufacturer Stollwerk, among others, were as sought-after as Panini football trading cards are today. Such images, disseminated by the media, facilitated the slave trade, and later colonisation, and led to a racism that is still felt today. The image of the white saviour[2] emerged, which still permeates aid organisations and sending agencies today.

At that time, the Enlightenment had already helped to give racism scientific legitimacy. Scholars like Hume, Voltaire, Kant and Hegel reduced Black people to second-class human beings. Kant authored the statement: "*In the hot countries, man matures earlier in all respects, but does not reach the perfection of the temperate zones. Humanity is at its greatest perfection in the race of the white man. (...) The Negroes are far lower, and a portion of the American tribes are the lowest.*"[3] Hegel, in turn, was convinced that "*the Negro represents the natural man in all his wildness and unruliness. There is nothing in this character that echoes the human.*" In his lectures on the philosophy of history, published in 1838, he continues: "*This state is not capable of development and education, and, as we see them today, that is how they have always been.*"

Later generations built their ideologies on such ideas, and the media kept returning to the old images, kept telling the stories of savagery, lack of civilisation, indigence – and, at best, the exoticism of the dark continent. These images and narratives have been asserted so often that, over time, they have become entrenched in the collective memory. As such, many do not even notice the undertones when these images are repeated.

In a more subtle form, these "learned" images can still be found in the media today – in advertising, in school and children's books, in film and television, and even in the serious news media. This has not changed much in the last 50 years, as various studies have shown. In a survey conducted by the University of Hamburg in the early 1960s,[4] Africa was described as a place of savage nature, bleak deserts, impenetrable jungles, dangerous animals, and hot climates. This one-sided image is still present more than 50 years later. According to a representative survey conducted in 2017 by the Allensbach Demoskopie Institut, most Germans associate Africa with hunger, disease, flight, corruption and overpopulation.[5] Stereotyping could hardly be crasser than in the TV documentary "Die Wildnis und ich" (The wilderness and I),[6] which does not date from the 19th

[1] National-Zeitung Schweiz, 21/05/1899 cited in FUCHS/ MENRATH/ NAUER/ ZIEGLER (2011). - [2] The „white saviour" is a privileged white person who helps non-white people in a self-interested manner. - [3] KANT (1802): 316. - [4] TACK (1961). -
[5] https://globalperspectives.org/publications/gpi-studie-2017/. - [6] First broadcast in 2015 on the German television channel Kabel eins.

century but was last broadcast on German TV in August 2019. In this programme, there is lively talk of "tribal rites and feuds", men are shown in loincloths, with bows and arrows, the women are, of course, bare-breasted, and a white man gives the tribe a football at the end, because, quote: "they don't know football." 21st-century Africa is nowhere in sight.

Savagery meets exoticism

It is in this regard that Africa is reported as being either a continent in crisis or an exotic foreign land to this day. The images alternate between Biafra-romanticism and safari-exoticism. It's either disasters, wars and corruption or the Big Five. A classic image that, until a few years ago, was often seen when reporting on Africa was that of a starving child with a bloated belly and flies on his or her face. Today, this image appears in a softened form – the children are smiling, looking out of the picture with wide eyes full of hope, waiting for the white saviours. We tend to see such images in the fundraising advertising of organisations such as Plan International or Caritas, but not only there. In modified form, we encounter such images everywhere in the media – in the news, in TV films, and in school textbooks. Advertising, a very effective form of media influence, also works with these familiar images. The flip side of the Biafra-romanticism is safari-exoticism. Graceful giraffes in front of red sunsets, drumming and dancing, colourfully dressed people and "childlike" joie de vivre. Who has not seen these images? Exoticism is then supposedly given a positive slant, but such representations imply strangeness, otherness and, ultimately, that people from Africa still have something wild about them.

This subtle racism is passed on from one generation to the next through media influence, including in textbooks, in games, and in teaching materials:

In a study published in 2015, Elina Marmer, Papa Sow and Aram Ziai examined images of Africa and Black and white constructs in teaching materials.[7] The conclusion they came to was that "Black people

Fig.2: Studiosus advertisement in the Stern, source: Stern, February 2020.

are defined by certain roles and, in all images, are exclusively reduced to victims of disasters and violence, the indigent, the enslaved, those in need of aid, and strangers."

This debasing representation disseminates attributions that are constructed in accordance with racist colonial categories and implies white superiority. For white people in textbooks are ascribed more positive roles. An example that illustrates this well can be found in the textbook "Stark in Ethik" (Strong in ethics),[8] a book for teaching forms 5 and 6. Starving children digging in the dirt – the typical "Biafra image" – stand opposite the happy family community. It is noticeable that in positive situations like the happy family, the group of girlfriends, the musician, the people are all white, whereas in negative situations – child soldiers, child labour, children on a rubbish dump – only dark-skinned people are depicted.

[7] MARMER/ SOW/ ZIAI (2015). - [8] Westermann textbook (2017).

Of course, the terrible conditions should not be concealed. And yet, are there no happy family communities in the Global South? Is there no child abuse in the Global North? And if "children in Africa are starving", why is that? Why are there child soldiers? Why do minors have to work in factories? The misery is shown, but our contribution to it is concealed. What are the causes and the global contexts? " The realization that the [...] wealth of Europe has historically been built on slavery and colonial exploitation is obviously not easy to take," writes Boniface Mabanza in the preface to the volume of essays, "Afrika sichtbar machen"[9]. In some students, this misery narrative may awaken empathy for the "poor children" in Africa and Asia. However, what they learn is to continue in the role of those who are superior, and, in the best case, they develop a saviour and helper syndrome. With this white saviour mentality, they then go to Africa for a voluntary social year after they finish school.

Africa and Black people are objectified by the "problems of Africa" being spoken of from a dominant white perspective. This perspective of deficiency seems all the more racist because the connection between the conditions and the historical crimes that led to the plundering of the continent and the murder and enslavement of the population by Europe are concealed.

The comparative study by Marmer, Sow and Ziai shows that, while in over a hundred illustrations in the textbooks they studied, white people are presented as those who are well-fed, healthy, wealthy and educated, and who actively shape their lives, the Black people depicted, on the other hand, are always portrayed as victims of hunger, misery, war, etc.

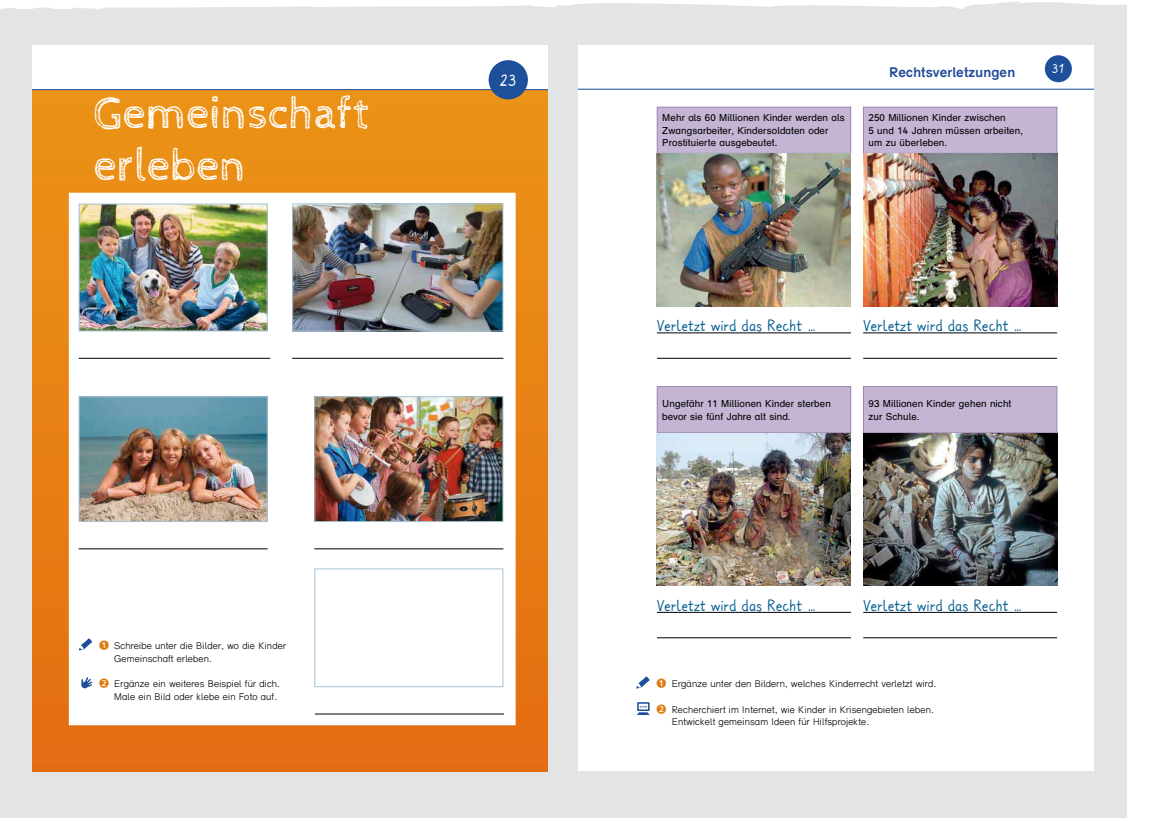

Fig.3: Illustrations in the „Stark in Ethik" textbook for forms 5 and 6, Westermann 2017.

[9] THIONG'O (2019).

In the recently published book "Afrikaperspektiven" (Perspectives on Africa), the author Fabian Sickenberger[10] examines how reporting on Africa has developed using the example of Tagesschau, a German TV programme that has an enormous reach. His examination of the content of Tagesschau reveals a similar image. In 70 years of reporting, Tagesschau has presented Africa to its viewers as a continent of crises, wars, and catastrophes.

In this manner, racist images are repeated again and again – even in the respectable media, as a comparison of images of the Black Horror on the Rhine from 1918 with more recent images from 2016 shows. The parallels are clearly recognisable. The image of the Black man as the rapist of a white woman was widely disseminated in the media in 1918. Along these lines, propagandist writings opposed to the stationing of Black soldiers in the Rhineland called upon the population to prevent "the egregious humiliation and rape of a highly cultured white race by a barbaric coloured race."

100 years later, we see images that reproduce this mindset. On a cover of the SZ from 2016, a Black man's hand grabs at a white woman's crotch, and on a Focus cover, many Black hands are groping a naked white woman's body, covering her genitals and breasts.

Lesen und weitergeben!

Eine Lebensfrage für die weiße Menschheit!

Was ist

Schwarze Schmach?

„Schwarze Schmach" ist die Besetzung europäischer Gebiete mit farbigen Soldaten, d. h. die unerhörte Demütigung und Vergewaltigung einer hoch kultivierten weißen Rasse durch eine noch halb barbarische farbige. Was die Erweckung des Machtgelüstes farbiger Völker über weiße bedeutet, wird vielleicht eine nicht allzu ferne Zukunft nicht nur Frankreich, sondern allen kolonisierenden Völkern zeigen.

„Schwarze Schmach" ist die Bedrohung europäischer Menschen mit den furchtbarsten Tropenkrankheiten aller Art; – die Vergewaltigung und Entsittlichung weißer Frauen und Mädchen und ihre Verseuchung durch tropische Syphilis und andere schwere Geschlechtskrankheiten; – die Gefahr der Schändung weißer Kinder beiderlei Geschlechts durch Einquartierung farbiger Soldaten in Bürgerhäusern; die erzwungene Einrichtung öffentlicher Häuser und Belieferung derselben mit weißen Mädchen für farbige Soldaten; — und nicht zuletzt die Gefahr der Mulattisierung europäischer, bislang reinweißer Gebiete.

„Schwarze Schmach" bedeutet aber auch das tatenlose Verharren der Regierungen aller Kulturstaaten gegenüber diesen empörenden Zuständen; die beschämende Gleichgültigkeit der großen Öffentlichkeit der gesamten weißen Menschheit all diesen Fragen gegenüber.

Deutsche, wenn ihr schweigt, dann werden die Steine schreien!

Die Steine der Schulhäuser im Rheingebiet, die geräumt werden mußten, damit farbige Truppen dort untergebracht werden konnten,

die Steine der Freudenhäuser, in denen deutsche Mädchen der Wollust der Farbigen sich preisgeben müssen,

die Steine der Wohnhäuser, in denen Farbige einquartiert sind und das sittliche Leben der Familien vergiften.

Fig.4: „Schwarze Schmach" – poster in opposition to the stationing of Black soldiers in Germany in around 1918; source: historisches-lexikon-bayerns.de.

[10] SICKENBERGER (2022).

Fig.5: Cover images of FOKUS and the Süddeutscher Zeitung relating to New Year's Eve in Cologne in 2016, sources: focus.de, dwdl.de.

No matter what image the media tries to convey, whether explicitly racist or between the lines, the message has always been: we (whites, Germans, Europeans) are progressive, we are superior, and they (Africans, Black people) are needy, naive, ignorant and inferior. In short, we have to help them. Such messages are always about domination and power, and that has not really changed much to this day.

"Civilisation" and "development" are still measured according to Western standards. Whether on TV or in newspapers, reports are explained with maps and diagrams that show us which countries are at which stage of development. And by our standards, we are always far ahead, and the countries of the South are always bringing up the rear.

However, what does developed mean and what does underdeveloped mean?

The critical scientific and social discourses from the Global South are reflected neither in school textbooks nor in general reporting. The historical contextualisation for the emergence of global inequalities is almost always missing. African sources also occasionally appear, but the master narrative remains the same as it was a hundred years ago: Africa and people of African origin are without history, inferior, and have contributed nothing significant to world history. This perpetuates certain images, attitudes and ways of thinking. We see where this ultimately leads in phenomena like Alternative for Germany (the AfD) and white supremacy, and from how people in refugee camps and people of colour are treated in Germany. The first "Afro-Census",[11] published in December 2021, makes things clear: the majority of Black people in Germany are affected by racism.

In conclusion

Misery and poverty do exist, and the media should not be ignoring that. However, the status of the African continent cannot be judged without addressing the 500 years of slave trade. Our prosperity has been built by the unpaid labour of Black people and with the resources stolen from their countries of origin. We have become accustomed to seeing the Global South as a place of misery, which, thanks to bad governance, corrupt governments and uneducated people, is to blame for its own misery. We hold on to our images because it is more comfortable for us that way. Otherwise,

[11] https://afrozensus.de/reports/2020/#main.

we would have to rewrite our entire history. In her famous TED talk, author Chimananda Ngozi Adichie[12] criticises the "danger of a single story" – the danger of continuing to tell a one-sided narrative about Africa and its people.

It is time to leave the comfort zone, to finally teach the contexts truthfully and to recognise and question the colonial continuities, thereby allowing not only a new, but a more honest, image of Africa and Black people to emerge.

About the author:
Tina Adomako studied English Literature, French and African Studies, along with German and Romance Studies, at the Universities of Accra and Freiburg. She was involved for many years in coordinating and implementing development cooperation initiatives in North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW) as a promoter in the Eine Welt Netz NRW (NRW One World Network). Today, Tina Adomako is a freelance journalist specialising in culture, development and the environment.

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[12] https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_ngozi_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story/transcript?language=de.

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