

The Role of the Colonial Effigies in the Communal and Educational Space within the Diverse Historical Landscape: A Provocative Memorial Discourse

Eric Buhle Gumbi

Abstract:- The research paper sought to examine some perpetual causes of the current social unrests born from the historical erected colonial statues within the diverse socio-political landscape and its sensitive reminder bringing about a new climate change that defile the nuclear and cultural fundamentals of educative space and socio-political patterns. The eruption of emancipative engagements and participatory principles, as communal interactions, craft deeper strategies to defile toxic elements of colonial mentality and cultural deficiency syndrome.

The research paper further lean towards probing the ability, within the restorative environment, that would enable people to examine the role of such colonial effigies and its part in the democratically controlled educative settings within social and radical diffusion. The aim is to look at its central stage in the construction of knowledge and memorial pattern that, apart from democratically emancipating, but also culturally transforms, and shape the distinctiveness of the society, helping people to reflect on their original identity through transformative engagements beyond colonial misrepresentations. The bewildering human behaviour is a testament manifesting that communities were scarcely untied from the colonial fetters, and masked so that they hardly preach the gospel of humanity to the broader society. Such a challenge created a provocative environment, since there is no longer applicable platform for the voice of the voiceless, which negatively affect human belonging and well-being.

The community supporting structures within the diverse historical landscape is required to empower people towards functional reactions in stressing related needs, such as counselling services, welfare and discipline policies within a tolerated social atmosphere. Various governmental and non-governmental structures should provide conflict-resolution initiatives and mediation programmes and other related community approved human edifices in the forms of heritage-marked days, commemoration and celebration of cultural events which will not defile the memory of people and offensively remind them of human atrocities and inhuman patterns of the past embodied in statues that mete out the horrific history.

Keywords:- *Transformative Engagements, Restorative Environment, Cultural Fundamentals, Participatory Principles, Communal Interactions, Colonial Mentality.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The research paper sought to investigate the discontent and violent acts emerging from the historical sights and socio-political landscape perpetuated by colonial self-centred, self-sanctified and self-glorified memorial statues used as commemoration of the past human endeavours. The colonial and historical statues, as proclaimed by Dresser (2000), seem to carry ferocious acts and anti-tolerant behaviours that maimed the democratic and liberal perspectives in the present socio-political discourse. The aggressive syndrome lied in the erected colonial effigies that seem to tarnish humanitarian dignity and violate the legitimate rights of humanity, or stand as a historical symbol reminding the minority and the oppressed of their past atrocities and inhuman exodus under the yoke of slavery (kinderman *et al* 2013).

II. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Despite the plethora of legal imperatives, policy directives and humanitarian initiatives initiated by world bodies for human emancipation, violence and politically centralized societies, evoked the levels of feud and internal animosity related to the presence of colonial statues operationally measuring the past in the present communal and educative space. Some are dehumanising, while others are otherwise compromising the societal developments. The perpetual instability regarding the presence of memorial statues calling to mind the atrocity waves of the colonial past, which according to Williamson (2011), turned to be a major concern within the humanitarian dimension for a democratic discourse within the diverse historical and socio-political background.

III. THE OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the research paper is to investigate the perpetual cause of the persistent socio-political unsettlement, cross-cultural conflict and violence-riddled atmosphere in the epoch of past commemoration, defiling the nuclear and indigenous social fundamentals in the patterns of history, as well as emancipative engagements and participatory principles as socio-political interactions.

The paper further leans towards probing the ability, within the restorative environment, that would enable societies, to democratically own and take control of the central stage (capacity building) in the construction of political tolerance and behavioural pattern that transforms, and shape the distinctiveness of the society. Objective is to relatively help people to reflect on their original identity through transformative engagements amid political conflicts and combat dehumanizing acts that connect internal conflict to the actions of localized memorial erections epitomized by colonial effigies hailing the successes in the colonisation of people and fulfilment of asymmetric ideological interests.

IV. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The research study has been viewed through the lens of a Critical Social theory as its theoretical frame work. According to Agugua (2017), critical social theory can be referred to any significant alterations over time, commenting on behavioural patterns and cultural orientation tribally and ethnically aligned to any behavioural manifestation. It is embedded in the people's conscious act of fighting for their common interest on the bases of dissatisfaction and discrepancies, which according to Pedwell (2017), based on underprivileged circumstances constrained by various forms of social, cultural and political domination.

Critical social theory draws an attention to power differentials including class conflict and general contrast historically dominant ideologies. This is precisely postulated by Crossman (2019) viewing it within the confinements of the Marxist interpretations, probing that the issue of scarcity and dominance tend to focus on how power and domination operate in the realms of the supernatural. Power and domination, as later concurred by Moorhead (2013:3), elucidated the ideas of Lukas and Gramsci, which exposed the cultural and ideological side of power and domination focusing on social conflicts that prevent people from seeing and understanding the existing forms of power and domination that exist in society as compromising factors affect their social beings.

V. DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The research paper is viewed within the parameters of the qualitative research design and methodology. A qualitative research encompasses or embraces the study through the socio-political point of view, which, according to Pedwell (2017), revolves around a frame of reference where occurrences are viewed from the perspective of democratic human settlement and freedom. The approach, in this context, sought in every situation, the appropriate centrality of emancipation and perspectives on socio-political dynamics.

The study adopted a qualitative research as its approach, since it intention is to uncover trends in thoughts, opinions and to delve deeper into the existing problems in the socio-political aspect in connection with political determinations drawn towards the past colonial iconism. Qualitative research, as expressed by Pathak, et al (2013), is

a type of social science research that collect and work with non-numerical data seeking to interpret meaning from the collected data helping researchers to understand social life of targeted population or place. Because of its nature of population involvement and mass participation, the study required a practical intervention or approach of participatory action research (PAR), which empirically create conditions that foster space for empowerment and transformation (Kindon & Elwood, 2009: 20) within the confinements of the participative perspective.

The relevancy of PAR in this article developed from its ability to allow an open engagement from the holistic participative engagements. The holistic participative engagements involved parties that collaboratively shared social realities as custodians of social experiences. PAR, as further recommended by Goodyear (2013:57), promoted social justice by creating conditions that foster empowerment and address differences between power structures as it enabled researchers to put the theoretical framework into practice by ensuring that everyone who had a stake in the outcome of the partnership had a voice in the process of decision-making where colonialism failed to acknowledge.

In this context, the study turned to be embedded in principles of social order declared by Ross (1986:247), as maintained by domination and power, rather than consensus and conformity. The study further accomplished mainly within the components of the four major paradigms of sociology; comprising of structural functionalism, social conflict, equality and symbolic interactionism as proclaimed by Ross (1986), as embedded in discursive dialogues, bilateral talks, observations, social interactions and peacekeeping mediators in the form of conflict resolutions through a functional participatory action research as an approach.

5.1 Structural functionalism

Structural functionalism is a paradigm where, according to Porth et al (2011), the society is viewed as a structure with interrelated parts designed to meet social needs of the individual in that particular society. It simply explains as to why society function the way it does by mere emphasising on the relationships between various social institutions which symbolically make up the society. This means that it prototypically gives shape to the life of the society which may include families, communities or organizations as a lens through which these parties viewed their existences and well-being.

5.2 Social conflict

Social conflict is viewed by Malesevic (2010) as a struggle for agency or power defining social life as a competition and focuses on the distribution of resources, power and equality. As a macro-oriented paradigm, it views society as an arena of inequality generating conflict and social change which emphasises interest rather than norms and values where societies may portray a sense of cooperation. A continual power struggle existing between social or racial groups pursuing their interest give rise to the

historical backgrounds, of which in this context, the issue of colonial symbols took a centre stage. The group with more resource gain or maintain power at the expense of the underprivileged and through the realms of dominance exercises the status quo and asymmetrically dominate the other.

5.3 Inequality

The inequality part of the critical social perspective is intertwined in the range of diverse ideas originated in the social discrepancies, structured and in favour of a dominant way of thinking. This paradigm, according to (Frankema & van Waijenburg 2012), focuses on the communal world through the lens of social inequality as it addresses the roles groups have in the society.

5.4 Symbolic interactionism

Symbolic interactionism focuses on the relationships among individuals within the society. It denotes the exchange of meaning through communicative structures believed to be the way in which people make sense of their social world. It is further rooted in phenomenological emphasis of the subjective meaning of societal reality. According to Crossman, (2019), this perspective relies on the symbolic meaning developed by people and built upon in the processes of social interaction, which may derail the mind-set if it provoked the brutal doom of atrocity human history.

VI. PRELIMINARY LITERATURE REVIEW

The dynamics of socio-cultural conflict and violence are viewed under the perspective of power differentials determined by class conflict and general contrast of historically dominant and ethicist ideologies. That is what Karl Marx specify as a state of “perpetual conflict” because of competition for limited resources and political intolerance (Crossman 2019), of which in this context, is perpetuated by the perennials of statues adorning the past oppressive behaviours by dominant race.

Cultural conflict and violence connect actions of dissatisfaction as other localized groups protect their common interest in the form of racial infirmity, ethnicity and tribalism embedded in hatred and supremacism. The colonial statues along the human history depict the issues of tribalism, ethnocentrism, racism, supremacism, prejudice and the weaponisation of colour to stand supreme and dominate the underprivileged group (Taube 2018).

This conception emphasises the chronic of anti-social dynamics and discriminatory behaviours, which heighten the continuum of patterns in history which Lacourse *et al* (2002:909), referred to as an “age-related” curve. Such historical age-linked curve of racial discrimination and artistic reminders are in the midst of societal orders maintained by domination and asymmetric power. It is an unpredictable behavioural pattern that overwhelms societies who fell prey to its effect as a result of a syndrome of social distractors including slavery, inhuman labour, extermination

of the minority and supremacy based on the skin colour and indigeneity.

These delusionary patterns sprang from the logic of human condition and present typical and pathological responses to frustration, which is endemic to the human society and mind, of which its decadence affects social development and expected social cohesion as tamed by deep rooted discriminatory acts of violence, pride and prejudice (Oluwatobi & Babatunde 2010:62). According to Rose-Redwood and Patrick (2020), colonial statues and monuments became major flashpoints of political conflicts. The cry for the removal of statues and monuments are accelerated by the white supremacist behaviour which steered the provocative wave in the aftermaths of various political actions.

In South Africa, the #Rhodesmustfall movement (Chaudhuri 2016) led to the new wave of political insight calling for the removal of the statue honouring the British imperialism in South Africa. Such eruptions manifested in 2020 during Black Lives Matter, where the statue of Colston in Bristol was toppled due to his history of becoming involved in the slave trade as a member of the Royal African Company holding a monopoly on the English trade in African slaves in the 1860s (Dresser 2000). This monumental controversy was not unique from those clarion called in America, Canada, France, Germany, Britain to mention the few, as masses call for commemorative landscape towards radical transformation throughout history.

VII. FINDINGS

This section of the study presents the findings as they emerged from the literature and during analytical interpretation. The section further works towards recommendations to address the challenges that bring about risks that compromise the indigeneity of knowledge in social development, harming the social cohesion in the democratic and political landscape.

The research study showed that colonialism was a process of colonization based upon the replacement of Indigenous and colonised people with a settler society (McQuade 2017). That is revealed by both dispossession of indigenous land and erasure of distinctiveness through assimilation and elimination of identity. Colonial statues form part of political infrastructure of foreign or white supremacy. Vandalism around colonial effigies and monuments are not the random acts of hooliganism, but an expression of political protests against celebrated acts of colonialism.

Colonial statues pose a visible barriers to decolonization and human reconciliation as they embed white supremacy in both educational and public spaces. The question of whether colonial statues must fall or remain tipped beyond history since it form the part of the process of reckoning with the ongoing injustices of colonization in the present order to work towards decolonizing the future. Colonization move beyond the presence of statues in public

spaces, but further examine the reality of language, culture, education, religion and names of places that were earmarking the identity of people and iconising certain individuals in that particular society (Oliver & Oliver 2017). The research paper categorises some triggering factors leading to vandalism of colonial statues and monuments in a socio-political landscape:

7.1 Patrimonialism

Patrimonialism is a form of governance in which all powers flow differently from the leader and authority based on the personal power of the ruler. Leaders in such countries are typically enjoy absolute personal power in a social system in which the elite rules through personal and arbitrary control over a bureaucracy and over slaves, mercenaries and conscripts who have no power themselves and serve only to enforce the monarch's absolute rule (Sell 2017).

7.2 Discrimination

The unjust or prejudicial treatment of other people or different categories of people based on the grounds of race, sex or age. Discrimination, according to Kinderman, Schwannauer and Pontino (2013), can be referred to treating people or a group of people differently, especially in worse way from the way in which others are being treated because of their skin colour or originality. According to FindlawsTeam of legal writers and editors (2019), discrimination means singling out or make a distinction with an aim of unfair or unequal treatment. Colonial statues are regarded as the most common source of conflict and violence and measure cause of unrests where people try to asset their concern through defiance of any socio-political developments (Nagy 2013:46).

7.3 Separatists interest grouping

Separatists interest grouping as a framework is associated with internal conflict directed to racial favouritism where racial privileged groups protecting their common interest. This is common in political centralized societies where the levels of feudalism and internal conflict are related to the presence of separatism and operationally measured by the hatred and ethnic intolerance (McQuade 2017). The instigations of social and political deliberations where the separatists circumstantially refuse to acknowledge and share socio-political landscape with the marginalized for the emancipation of the beleaguered. The separatist extremists, instead of eschewing from societal deformities and relational disfigurements; embark to the colonial political dispensation. That impede the hopes of the people and shut the glimpse of affirmative political corridors, and societal imbursements through participatory action approach.

Decolonisation is an African seeking voice in the wilderness of colonial expansionism. The voice hardly understood by some descendants of the imperialists and separationists who enriched themselves from the resources of the African continent. The descendants of the settlers, especially in South Africa, fail to understand the concept of justice and equality, freedom and peace. Even during the

post-apartheid era in the said truth and reconciliation commission, less was done to heal the scars of the atrocities gashed by the system of racial repressions. The social wounds refreshed and inflicted by the sight of the history telling statues looming above all social walks and democratic institutions in honour of the history that sieve the African identity. If decolonisation is having a mark in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa, colonial effigies were to be the first colonial symbols to be toppled. The colonial resistances in the form of statues and monuments epitomize not less than what the settlers done in the peak of historical exploitation and oppression in the African continent. If FW de Klerk, the last nationalist ruler in South Africa, declared that there were no criminal injustices done by the Boer (settlers) Nationalist Regime before 1994, and supported by the then leader of the Boere majority "Democratic Alliance" party, and premier of the Cape Province, Hellen Zille, who tweeted about the legacy of colonialism having some positive results in South Africa during the apartheid aeon, these are underlying factors hidden beneath the choppers of the "Truth and Reconciliation" of the post-apartheid era. A member of parliament, Kohler Barnard, who was also a DA conservative, proclaimed that life in South Africa was better under PW Botha. According to South African struggle for liberation of the oppressed, most freedom fighters were slaughtered during his era of oppressive regime of which the truth and reconciliation commission failed to brought him forward.

In "Falling Monuments, Reluctant Ruins", Maurantonio (2020), proclaimed that the removal of the statues is not the end of conversation concerning the legacies of the past colonial perpetration of human indignities. The existence of colonial statues reflect how uneven the efforts to erase colonial symbols of a nuanced past can be among the oppressors. The statues of Cecil John Rhodes epitomised segregationist who enriched himself in mining and grabbing land from local population, Paul Kruger, who represented the settlers and the Dutch descendants, and historically acclaimed by DF Malan, while Hendricks Verwoerd declared futile to educate an African child since an African child has no future in the world of education, and they were champions of apartheid and the institutionalised system of racial repression in South Africa.

According to McKaiser (2020), the toppling of statues is based on the cognitive battle around movement in South Africa which continue to demonstrate the asymmetric power relations between the masters and the slaves; the exploiters and the exploited; the oppressors and the oppressed, and at the same time, reinforce the idea the foreigners continuing enjoying the conquered society. Colonial and apartheid statues in South Africa are conveniently used to entrench colonial and imperialist symbolism through symbols and tools of cultural dominance like statues and monuments. The settlers did not only foster colonial dominance and subjugation, but also imposed new symbols on the indigenous landscape in the construction of colonial statues and monuments and military forts symbolic to their colonial

mighty and cultural imperialism manifested in the form of colonial names of places, rivers, and mountains.

VIII. REITERATED HISTORICAL COLONIALISM

The history of settlers stand aloof in the wider meadows of the South African socio-political landscape. Its impact widely felt in the defined parameters of social and educational distances not only in the erected statues and constructed monuments, but profoundly in the realms of the written history (academic books), oral history (narratives course), physical and geographic history in the form of names of places, roads and natural historical identities (Khan 2017). Colonialism is viewed differently by two generations from different perspectives. The generation of the settlers read victory and success of their forefathers in the expeditions of colonialism, while in the generation of the oppressed and colonised the history displayed a provocative discourse which need to be abolished. The two contradicting ideas give rise to conservatism and the liberalism perspectives on loggerheads, and seem hardly ladder the parallel intersection to each other.

The conservatism perspective seeks to preserve a range of colonial institutions with a socio-political philosophy that promote traditional institutions within the contexts of culture and civilisation at the expense of the other. Its realist form opposes modernism in seeking to conserve the way things were established (Frankema & Jerven 2016). The liberalist approach seeks at protecting and enhancing the freedom of individuals to be the central problem of politics. It encompasses the belief of the necessity of protection of the people from being harmed by others.

The third epoch comprised of the liberal conservatism which embrace the ideology combining conservative and liberal stances within economic, political and ethical issues and representing a brand of political conservatism strongly influenced by liberalism (Meiser 2018). If liberalism is a defining feature, modern democracy, as a way of describing free and fair rule of law and protection of civil liberties, will always question the role of colonial statues within our socio-political and educational landscape.

The challenge is how the two generations (of the settlers and of the indigenous people) view colonial statues and monuments in this face of time, how do they cling, refute or denounce its potentiality in history. The way in which the Robben Island, in South Africa, was viewed, and is viewed by the two generations. Does it symbolises victory in one and defeat in the other, as compared to the era of the nationalist regime before 1994. What type of history does it convey within the spheres of socio-political perspectives. The colonial statues ambivalently portray the “good and the bad” within the socio-political and educational landscape not only in South Africa, but on the global view (Cooper 2019).

IX. CONCLUSION

The African communities seem less adhere to a dual system of conservative liberalism as a communal practice and governance as it might be by some settler generation. Apart from democratically leadership perspectives, Africanism is inundated with historically acknowledged traditional leadership abided, beside cultural perspectives, but embedded in historical identity defined by names of places which were historically changed by settlers as part of colonialism (Law 2002). If the new dawns of political pendulums bi-pass the legitimate traditional existences of the roles of indigenous identity, that result in collision of ethnicity, bringing about socio-political conflict and disorientated life patterns of violence in defiance of commemorated calendar and effigies.

A sustainable historical indigenous knowledge in the form of heritage sites and narratives prevail under conditions where justice is not a priority within the socio-political juncture. The quality of social justice is affected by unfair judgement, fight for equality in relation of power and arrested eradication of the root cause of prejudice (Groce 2018) prevailing in the form of statues erected in various institutions reminding people the realities of the past. Prolonged inequality, negligence and socio-economic imbalances become a threat to a quality social justice system causing people to fight for a just social course within a just democratic epoch. If high rate of deprivation in timeous delivery of human satisfaction is not addressed, antisocial community issues prevail where forceful elements will develop and engulf people, and distort sustainable indigenous Africanism towards fair democratic perspectives on colonial statues and monuments displaying the historical human atrocities.

Finally, an essential component of any prevention strategy is for emancipative and transformative program of engagements that will offer community building and capacity. This would teach the communities, despite political differences, to support the development of positive culture that honours diversity, provides forums for dissent, and offers values that contribute to the society capacitating people to be responsible citizens and custodians of their own Afrocentric identity.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Power and decision-making still largely concentrated at the centre of the most powerful and privileged, which raised the stake of anti-recognition of the role of statues in telling people more about colonialism. The perception of winner-takes-all in the nature of heritage drives a wage of intolerance and feuding within the contestation of history. Winning and losing in the space of time must be reduced to avoid the violence that the winner-takes all triggers through ignoring acts where supremacy suppresses the voice of the indigenous people (Frankema & van Waijenburg 2012). For many years, large scale dissatisfaction has been reported in the midst of every colonial construction where the losing party accuses the winning party of reminding them about the

carnages of oppression and bragging about the asymmetric past. Cases of violence in some stages, as expressed by Ngah (2018), as a result of disapproval, suppress societal education and transformative endeavours across educational sector insisting violence in the wider social dimensions.

The community supporting structures are needed to assist people towards functional reactions to stress related needs, such as service delivery and fulfilment of social promises. Various governmental and non-governmental structures should provide conflict-resolution initiatives, peace-keeping mediation programmes and other related humanitarian approved structures in the forms of reconciliation and communal support needs. One has to review Gilley's argument on Khan (2017), where he proclaimed that colonialism can be observed by comparing former colonies to countries with no significant colonial history where the latter erroneously include Haiti, Libya and Guatemala. Claiming the benefit of colonialism suggested the review of bringing back the colonial system. In his statement Professor Bruce Gilley proclaimed the colonialism was both "objectively beneficial and subjectively legitimate" in most places where it existed (Khan 2017). The question lies at how far this statement sinks in the African perspective.

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