

# **Logic, Knowledge, and Identity:**

An analysis evaluating the effects that the irrational logical basis for colonial epistemological knowledge, *along with the discourses it espouses*, have had upon the existential reality faced by Africans.

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## The Logic of Knowledge

### Metaphysics & Epistemology

On one conception, metaphysics can be viewed as a ‘first-order’ inquiry into “what there is”—with topics within the field of metaphysics include the nature of the mind, its relationship to the body and the external world, the nature and existence or non-existence of the self, and personhood (Van Inwagen & Sullivan, 2018). In the other hand, epistemology is a ‘second-order’ inquiry reflecting upon “what it takes to know what there is”—with topics including the knowledge of basic logical laws, deductive inferential knowledge, along with epistemically circularity (Steup, 2018). However, the pursuit of epistemology raises metaphysical questions too, such as: What do our ways of knowing tell us about ourselves and our place in nature, along with the counter-factual question of: What does human nature and the nature of the world tell us about our ways of knowing? (Steup, 2018. Van Inwagen & Sullivan, 2018).

One of the primary areas of inquiry within the study of epistemology seeks to answer the—*seemingly*—simple question: *Can any deductive argument give us knowledge of its conclusion?* Although intuitively any non-skeptic would simply conclude the answer to be a definitive yes, the justification for such answers is often taken for granted, and when expanded outside of strictly philosophical enquiry, is often absent completely (Steup, 2018).

As such, within its initial section; this paper will begin by setting up Lewis Carroll’s paradoxical regress, both in the classical form present within his literature, along with additionally presenting the argument within its abstract, sentential logic, formation. While other scholars generally only present the argument within a single form, this paper has specifically elected to include both forms. This decision was primarily adopted as; while when one solely utilizes Carroll’s original language, those not well versed with formal logical structures are able to readily grasp the core concepts at hand, discussions regarding its logically paradoxical nature are hindered. Subsequently, the paper will adopt a ‘Justified True Belief’ theory of Knowledge in order to evaluate how knowledge may be gained from deductive reasoning such as the above. Subsequent to defining what constitutes a Justified True Belief, a ‘Regress Argument for Justifications’ is raised concerning what constitutes valid justification under JTB accounts of knowledge. Agrippa’s Trilemma is raised in response to the Regress Argument, leading this paper to compare the views of Foundationalism, with those of Coherentism, and Informatism.

## The Logic of Deductive Reasoning

A deductive argument is held to be any argument in which the speaker intends to provide a conclusion that is guaranteed to be truthful, provided the assumptions contained within its premises are true (Hawthorne, 2018). When such conditions are met, an argument can be said to be deductively valid (Hawthorn, 2018). Simple deductive arguments are among the most effortless to formulate, for example take the following simple deductive argument:

- It is currently raining in Cape Town.
- If it is currently raining in Cape Town, I will be wearing a raincoat.
- Therefore, I am wearing a raincoat.

Due to their simplicity, and their purported truth preserving qualifiers, deductive arguments in various formal forms—such as the Modus Ponens forms displayed above—are fundamental axiomatic laws within all logical systems, and are thus often taken for granted (Ewald, 2019). As such various logical forms, specifically Modus Ponens within the section of this paper, are generally not afforded the same individual scrutiny when compared to non-axiomatic forms of argumentation. However, while when viewed in the context of the above example, simple deductive arguments are uncontroversial, in others, such as those utilized in order to justify colonial activities, intense scrutiny—both to the premises, along with the logical structure utilized—is required.

The scrutinization of the various elements present within deductive reasoning processes, along with the underlying logical axioms utilized, is exactly what Lewis Carroll (1895) attempted to achieve through his short story ‘What the Tortoise Said to Achilles.’ Picking up right after the conclusion of Aesop’s most recognizable fable ‘The Tortoise and the Hare,’ Carroll (1895) imagines a scenario where after finally catching up to—and over taking—the Hare, Achilles is immediately challenged by the Tortoise to another logically paradoxical discourse. Specifically the Tortoise precedes to dilate the following deductive argument to Achilles (Carroll, 1895):

- 1) Things that are equal to the same are equal to each other.
- 2) The two sides of this triangle are things equal to the same.
- N) Therefore; The two sides of this triangle are equal to each other.

While the above is worded in slightly archaic language, through a careful reading, most readers would intuitively accept such an argument as uncontroversial, and proceed with their day—one may refer to the above example for ease of reference as they are logically analogous. Following the dictation of the above Achilles, under the Tortoise’s advisement—and following commonly held wisdom—accepts that anyone who accepts premises 1 and 2, must also accept the conclusion N (Carroll, 1895). However, the Tortoise interestingly states that while it is often commonly employed one cannot exclude the complex *unstated* claim of “If *Things that are equal to the same are equal to each other* and *The two sides of this triangle are things equal to the same*, then *The two sides*



logical axioms as premises within our arguments we force ourselves to add additions rules, *ad infinitum*, that compel us to accept the axioms and the preceding rules, thus making the task of gaining deductive knowledge seemingly intuitively practically impossible. Conversely, by excluding logical axioms as premises for inclusion within our arguments, we subsequently are left without a compelling reason to accept these axioms, making the task of gaining deductive knowledge, again seemingly impossible.

Thus the question is raised: Given the intuitive impossibility of gaining deductive knowledge, regardless of the inclusion or exclusion of logical axioms within the argument itself, can any deductive argument give us knowledge, and if so how?

### **Knowledge as Justified True Belief**

In attempting to answer the above, it is first important for this paper to define a framework of what constitutes knowledge to operate within. This paper has opted to utilize the uncontroversial Justified True Belief (JTB) Theorem of Knowledge, to analyze the implications of Carroll's Paradox. Under a JTB theory of knowledge, individual S knows proposition P iff (if and only if):

- (A) P is true,
- (B) S believes that P
- (C) S is Justified in believing that P.

(Ichikawa & Steup, 2001).

When analyzing deductive arguments of the Modus Ponens form, under the JTB account, justification for one's true beliefs—as implied by the name—is required for knowledge to be gained. This justification is held as emerging from various 'background beliefs—defined here as; additional argumentation that is used as justification for one's currently held beliefs (Ichikawa & Steup, 2001). With this framework of background beliefs and JTB accounts let us consider the Regress Argument, outlined below:

- (1) To have justification for a proposition is to have an argument from which the proposition follows.
- (2) Thus one possesses justification for proposition Q when such an argument is present, say: Q logically follows from premises P & O
- (3) Due to (1) we must seek further justification for the propositions P & O, say premises N & M
- (4) Due to (1) we must yet again seek further justification for propositions N & M
- (5) Therefore, due to (1) further justification will be required to support any background belief.

(Klein & Turri, n.d.).

When examining the conditions of the above argument, we see that one may rightly inquire as to the justification for a premise, or proposition, *ad infinitum*. When

confronted with the above inquiry, one is faced with two possible outcomes; provide further argumentation, or refute to do so. If one refuses to provide further argumentation, it would appear that they lack the justification required for knowledge of the original proposition Q. Conversely, if further argumentation is provided, one faces a tricotomous division of outcomes:

- Firstly, one will eventually reach a point, like above, where further justification is not given
- Second, further justification will continue until the argument chain of background beliefs contains the original proposition.
- Or Finally, the argument chain may continue to provide justification, ad infinitum.

(Vogt, 2010).

These three distinct possible outcomes form part of an epistemological problem proposed by Sextus Empiricus (Vogt, 2010) and is titled 'Agrippa's Trilemma.' The Trilemma states that when rational justification is sought via the above method, the above three outcomes form an exhaustive list of possible outcomes—if skeptical concerns are set aside (Vogt, 2010). At this point it must be noted that; with regard to the provision of a logical epistemological justification for colonialism, along with everything associated with it, all three of the differing epistemological positions outlined below have been utilized—as will be discussed in the subsequent analysis.

Plainly stated the possibilities, and the resulting epistemological schools of thought they birthed, are:

- *Firstly*, emerging from the belief that a proposition or belief is only justifiable, and thus knowledge granting, when one possess an infinite series of non-repeating background beliefs to support holding said proposition or belief is Infinitism (Klein & Turri, n.d.).
- *Secondly*, there is the school of Foundationalism, which argues that some of our beliefs are 'basic' and require no further justification, and thus our subsequent beliefs may be epistemologically justified via these basic beliefs (Poston, n.d.).
- *Lastly*, there is Coherentism, which posits that circular reasoning is the pinnacle justification for knowledge as it confirms the validity of one's own internal "general word-view" (Herrera, 2014).

## The *Irrational* Logic of Justifications for Colonialism

### The Cyclical Nature of Spanish Religious Justifications

Beginning with our analysis with Coherentism: historical analysis illustrates that one of the most commonly utilized methods to justify colonial activity was through claims of a divine, immutable right afforded to colonial powers due their superior nature (Kohn & Reddy, 2017). Under this view, the superior nature of Western Europeans was utilized as justification for why they exclusively possessed such a right, and their superior nature was explained as emerging due their possession of such a right—circular reasoning (Herrera, 2014). This is displayed within the Spanish conquest of the Americas, based upon the core (yet circularly justified) claim to a “Petrine Mandates”—dictating that the care for the souls of the Christ human flock required exclusive Papal jurisdiction over temporal along with spiritual matters, and that such control extended to non-believers as well (Kohn & Reddy, 2017).

However, while such circular justification was extensively utilized, it is certainly not logically feasible as; referring back to the Regress Argument, if proposition P is used to support proposition Q, then Q cannot logically be used to further support P, as this would constitute begging the question ultimately resulting in very possible proposition being self-justifying under our JTB account of knowledge. The absurd nature of such reasoning is readily apparent when formalized in forms such as the following:

- $A \supset B$
- $B \supset A$
- $\therefore A \supset A$  (via Hypothetical Syllogism of the above).

Ultimately, such absurdity forces Coherentism to collapse into a fundamentally Infinitist position, as they dispel their core tenets—in order to adequately respond to Agrippa’s Trilemma.

### The Infinite Regression of Anglo Saxon Justifications

Moving our analysis onto Infinitism, we can see its utilization within French, German, and British philosophical justifications of colonialism, where these empires argued that they had an obligation to “civilize” the rest of the world based upon Enlightenment ideologies (Kohn & Reddy, 2017). Arguing that focuses such as European languages, culture, and religions served to inculcate morality and reinforce norms of respect within the ‘uncivilized’ peoples of the the world, colonialism was justified as it; aligned the prospects of such people with that of Europe, with each regression being justified through European history, ad infinitum (Klein & Turri, n.d).

However, as with Coherentism, such reasoning can be shown to be illogical, and absurd (Klein & Turri, n.d.). The most compelling critique of Infinitism is that of the ‘Affirmation & Denali Chain (AC/DC) Objection. As stated previously, those who ascribe to

the Coherentist school of thought, justify propositions through the formation of infinitively regressing ‘chains’ of supporting background beliefs; referred to as either Affirmation or Denial Chains—for the justified acceptance, or denial of a given proposition respectively (Klein & Turri, n.d.).

Thus, when evaluating the proposition P, the AC/DC Objection may be presented as follows:

*Initially assume*: The validity of infinite regression is a valid form of justification for knowledge. As such, the relevant Affirmation and Denial Chains for proposition P is constructed as follows:

Affirmation Chain (AC)	Denial Chain (DC)
$Q \cdot (Q \supset P)$	$Q \cdot (Q \supset P)$
$R \cdot (R \supset (Q \cdot (Q \supset P)))$	$S \cdot (S \supset (R \cdot (R \supset (Q \cdot (Q \supset P))))$
$S \cdot (S \supset (R \cdot (R \supset (Q \cdot (Q \supset P))))$	$S \cdot (S \supset (R \cdot (R \supset (Q \cdot (Q \supset P))))$
...	...

(Klein & Turri, n.d.)

Referring to the above table, as both the Affirmation and Denial Chains are equally, *infinitely* long, and thus both *equally* convincing for Infinitists, we are forced to simultaneously accept both to be valid, and true. As such, continuing the *reductio ad absurdum*, the argument would proceed as follows:

- I)  $Q \cdot (Q \supset P)$  (Premise: Affirmation Chain—from above)
- II)  $Q \cdot (Q \supset \sim P)$  (Premise: Denial Chain—from above)
- III)  $Q \supset P$  (I Simplification)
- IV)  $Q \supset P$  (ii Simplification)
- V)  $Q$  (I Simplification)
- VI)  $P$  (III & V Modus Ponens)
- VII)  $\sim P$  (IV & V Modus Ponens)
- VIII)  $P \cdot \sim P$  (VI & VII Conjunction)

Succinctly, the above *reductio ad absurdum* argument illustrates that *absurd* nature of this school of thought. As, by attempting to accept infinite regress as adequate justification for knowledge, Infinitists allow for both the affirmation and denial of a proposition to simultaneously be true justified knowledge. As such, this paper will move to the last remaining outcome of Agrippa’s Trilemma, namely Foundationalism.

### The Predominance of Foundationalist Justifications

Lastly, this paper will analyze the commonly utilized method of justifying colonial activities, and the superiority of European civilizations, emerging from Foundationalism,



which was to simply assert it as fact—without any further justification required (Kohn & Reddy, 2017). Unlike the other forms of justifications presented above, foundationalism while certainly the most intuitively acceptable answer to the previously raised paradoxes, has proven to be the most detrimental towards the existential realities of Africans (Kohn & Reddy, 2017. Nyamnjoh, 2012).

This is clearly illustrated through analysis of the effects colonialism has had on African education, with scholars such as, Francis Nyamnjoh (2012) have stated that education in Africa has along been a victim of the resilient colonial—and *colonizing*—epistemology that was imposed by European colonial powers. Specifically, the form of education present within Africa is one that champions rigid intellectual dichotomies, and a strict boundedness of socio-cultural roles, and belief systems. Succinctly, colonial education in Africa privileges teleology, and Western analogy over negotiated alternatives, mediated through an African perspective (Nyamnjoh, 2012). Furthermore, while often lauded as the '*pinnacle of modern man*' this colonial epistemology has resulted in a devaluation, and denigration of African; agency, creativity, moral and social systems, along with instilling within Africans a deep set sense of inadequacy. Fundamentally, this serves to socially impoverish those that live within the complex existential realities that it wishes to monolithically define, ultimately denying Africans mental, and bodily sovereignty (Nyamnjoh, 2012).

When rigidly conceptualized, *education* can be viewed as the processes that; inculcate facts as knowledge within society, along with constructing the value set that is self-reflexively utilized to evaluate the knowledge at hand (Nyamnjoh, 2012). However, the values espoused within colonial era education presented the superiority of the colonizer as a god given fact, a belief that has since permeated through—and still dominates—post-colonial African life (Nyamnjoh, 2012). As such; based on the systems emphasis that mimicry was superior to creativity, *within the educational sphere*, the belief that nothing worthy of academic enquiry—even for, and by Africans—could emerge from Africa was held (Nyamnjoh, 2012). This is best espoused by Okot p'Bitek (1989. In Nyamnjoh, 2012) who argued that: modern *educated* African men and women have been rendered incapable of producing or reproducing anything of substance, as they are too preoccupied with ostentatious consumption—of dressing, eating, speaking, naming themselves after, and following the religion of their colonizers—to demonstrate the apparent value of Western education.

### **Conceptualizing the Nature of Colonialism**

Ultimately, as neither of the three exhaustive outcomes of Agrippa's Trilemma can be shown to produce epistemologically logical justifications for colonialism, this paper, along with scholars such as Mudimbe (1988) have unequivocally stated that colonialism—

along with its cause; imperialism—did not obey the logic Europeans purported it did. Ultimately it has been categorized as being constituted by “non-rational and irrational purely instinctual inclinations towards war and conquest” that self-justified “objectless tendencies towards forcible expansion” without limits (Schumpeter, 1951: 83).

The words colonialism and colonization, trace their origins as deriving from the Latin word *colere*; meaning to cultivate or design—reflecting Westerns Europeans interpretation of these connoting organization, and arrangement (Colere, n.d.). However: while it must be acknowledged that both the impact of colonists, and colonialists resulted in indigenous social structures being transformed into fundamentally European constructs; even the most cursory analysis of global histories would illustrate that colonial experiences cannot be categorized with respect to such peaceful connotations. (Mudimbe, 1988). The *harmonization* effects of such, Europeocentrist colonial activities has resulted in a structure characterized by the development of paradigmatic oppositions of value propositions (Sachs, 1971: 22). Exemplary of such oppositions are the distinctions between conceptions of: traditional versus modern; oral versus written, and printed scholarship; agrarian *traditionally* based, and largely customary driven societies versus urbanized and industrialized *civilizations*; along with the distinction between subsistence versus productive economies (Mudimbe, 1988. Sachs, 1971).

As such, in post-colonial contexts, a large amount of scholarship has been produced surrounding the implied, and *promised* advancements that ought to have been reaped by the passage from the former conceptual paradigms, towards the latter (Mudimbe, 1980 in. Mudimbe, 1988). However, as such scholarship has clearly illustrated; the presupposed benefits held by such views as fact, are in actuality misleading, and serve to obfuscate the lasting effects of colonial epistemological ideologies within Africa (Mudimbe, 1988). Specifically, efforts made by such ideologies to emphasize the formation of techniques of economic market alterations, result in the model completely neglecting to evaluate the structural modes of operations inherited by African states from colonialism (Mudimbe, 1988).

By including the above within the scope of analysis, scholars has illustrated that between the dichotomous extremes promoted by colonialism, exists an intermediate diffused space in which the extent of marginality is predominantly defined by past and current social and economic events—namely; post-colonial contexts (Bigo, 1974: 20). Thus, from such a perspective, colonialism can be held as having lived up to its original Latin meanings—albeit in a pejorative sense (Mudimbe, 1988). For example, within the cultural and religious levels of societies—though schools, churches, press, and audio-visual media—the colonialist enterprise propagated newly constructed social attitudes which, as has previously been shown, were complex and contradictory in nature (Bimwenyi, 1981). Ultimately, these *illogical* and contradictory ideologies—articulated in terms of culture, along with spiritual and moral values—sought to break the preexisting

culturally unified and religiously integrated nature of most African traditional societies—in order to *cultivate* the *redesign* of such societies in the image of Western Europe (Bimwenyi, 1981).

The above was achieved predominant through two approaches, with the British being the quintessential example of one, and the French and Portuguese of the other. Conceptually, the British method of ‘indirect rule’ sought to utilize preexisting indigenous political structures, in order to effectively achieve their imperial objectives (Smith, 2009). In this regard, British colonialists sought to preserve certain indigenous culture, values, and social structures as practically; it was markedly easier to oppress a population that appeared to be at least partly governed by its own institutions, laws and customs—despite the fact that they were loyal to the British Crown (Smith, 2009). Illustrative of an alternative approach are the French and Portuguese colonial projects, who, in stark contrast with the British, sought to promote their culture through assimilation (Smith, 2009). Specifically, within such colonial expansion projects, indigenous individuals within colonies were to be ‘converted’ into naturalized Europeans—primarily through education as discussed above (Smith, 2009). As previously discussed, such projects have had long lasting, and significant effects upon the development of such areas as, due to native political elites identifying closely with their European colonizers—along with European culture in general—it was held that local culture was an obstacle for the proliferation of the ‘*better*’ colonial epistemology (Smith, 2009. Nyamnjoh, 2012).

### **Colonial Epistemologies**

Thus, as colonialist projects certainly did not result in the benevolent outcomes they espoused, colonialism in general may be viewed as an essentially violent project (Nyamnjoh, 2012). Specifically, with regard to the benevolence colonialist assumed they held, colonialism contradictorily; repressed where it should have fostered and nurtured, tamed and forcibly made subservient instead of inspiring, along with enervated rather than strengthening, the indigenous cultures they interacted with (Fonlon, 1965: 2128). Thus, while failing to achieve its explicitly stated benevolent objectives, it certainly succeeded in constructing perpetual ‘*slaves*’ from those it oppressed; to the extent that such individuals no longer perceive their oppression as existentially relevant—with some even holding the belief that their claims of victimhood are advantageous (Fonlon, 1965: 2128).

Continuing his inquiry regarding the epistemological origins of Africans current existential reality emerged from, Nyamnjoh (2012) argues that the education received by Africans is one that has fallen victim to an explicitly denigrating epistemological framework, which results in the devaluation of African creativity, agency, and value systems. For Nyamnjoh (2012) education within Africa has resulted in Africans being

driven, both *physically* and *metaphorically* towards attempts at '*lightening their darkness*'—as they seek the gratification of colonial epistemological social structures. Ultimately, colonial education is seen as utilizing the same methodology to denigrate African individuals, as was utilized to exult Western European civilizations (Nyamnjoh, 2012). Here; the African men and women who wholeheartedly embraced such education where; reduced to mere shadows of themselves, making it near impossible for such individuals to question the basis for their existential, and physical oppression (p'Bitek, 1989. In Nyamnjoh, 2012).

Specifically, the above can be seen in action through the role played by missionary churches in African education, where: they created an 'unprecedented alliance of Church, and State, along with economic capital' from which they drew *divine* justification for obligating the expansion of colonial empires; and as a result the whitening and subjugation—through the *religious* conversion—of Africans (Amadiume, 1987). It is through the above, along with their *armed* strength, that colonial educations were able to disarm, and silence the bodies, minds, and souls of African, ultimately reducing them into 'cringing cowards' (Fonlon, 1965: 18-19). Stated in more poetic prose, colonialism is seen as having made; '*dead fruit*' out of Africans who now behave "like foolish little children ... [by] abandoning meaningful local names and adopting 'the names of white men' that all sounded like empty tins, old rusty tins, thrown down from the roof-top" (p'Bitek, 1989: 12 in 1989. In Nyamnjoh, 2012). Thus, as colonial education sought to cultivate a 'bitter tongue'—one "*fierce like the arrow of a scorpion*"—those existentially *emasculated* by its effects must seek to dispel; the values, and structures acquired during the colonial era that promote the superiority of the colonizer, ultimately reclaiming control of their existential horizons (Nyamnjoh, 2012).

## Discourse: a Dichotomously Dividend World

While colonialism and modernization are certainly distinct phenomena, one cannot conceptualize them as being mutually exclusive due to significant overlaps between the actions and methodological frameworks employed (Zhilian & Rongqu, 1980). Specifically, while prior to the rise of modern capitalism, difference centers of civilization had developed largely independently across the globe, the ever increasing modernization efforts conducted by Western European nations saw the “cultural and commercial intercourse” that saw colonialist practices reach their pinnacles—although in marginally different forms (Zhilian & Rongqu, 1980).

### Colonialist and Modernization Discourses

A brief survey of the related literature illustrates that Modernization Theorist generally posit that: while, the ‘*global, and irreversible*’ process referred to as modernization traces its origins to the European Industrial Revolution, which occurred in the mid-eighteenth century; it has subsequently begun *in earnest*, and since become a widespread global phenomenon, following the end of the Second World War (Knobl, 2003). Succinctly, modernization theory dichotomously divides the world into *Traditional*, and *Modern* societies—with modernization being the process of transition from the former to the latter (Knobl, 2003). Under such a schema, Traditional societies exist throughout the Non-European world, and are held as being defined by: the predominance of personal attributes, values, and role structures within their societies—characterized with respect to terms such as; *ascription*, and *particularism*—along with the *functional* diffuses; all of which hold the power to become significant barriers for economic or political *development* (Knobl, 2003). Conversely, Modern societies are viewed as having organically emerged exclusively within Western Europe, and are characterized by the predominance of *secular, individualistic, and scientific values*, within their social structures (Knobl, 2003).

### Knowledge and Discourse

Such stark, antithetical, and fundamentally Eurocentric distinctions between *traditional* and *modern* societies—along with the implied unilinear conception of development, and progress—have historically been presented as fact, and where ultimately held to be ‘*general knowledge*’ (Zhilian & Rongqu, 1980). However, while often presented as such; the *knowledge* espoused, and produced by such Eurocentric—colonially motivated—projects has subsequently be seen as being neither logically, nor factually based (Nyamnjuh, 2012). Such such, as the justification for Eurocentric colonialist beliefs certainly cannot be held to be valid, following the aforementioned *Justified True Belief* framework; propositions such as these cannot constitute knowledge. Consequently, it is this papers view that the underlying justifications for colonial activists,

along with the promotion of Eurocentric ideologies ought to be conceptualized not as existing with the framework of knowledge, but rather that of discourse.

Breaking from conventional usage, scholars such as Said (1979) view discourses as the collective archive, or library, of commonly held information that attempts to homogeneously describe various phenomena. When analyzing the Eurocentrism as a discourse, it becomes apparent that it attempts to supply those existing outside the West—or First World—with; a singular mentality, along with a homogenous genealogy, ultimately allowing Western scholars, and individuals, to view such individuals through a stereotypical lens (Said, 1979). However, while often held as emerging from actually occurring phenomena, the discourse regarding the West in fact relies upon various false assumptions—as discussed above. Specifically, the discourse represents various phenomena which are in fact very differentiated, such as the various cultures, and social structures existing throughout the First World, as homogenous (Said, 1979). Succinctly, such discourse asserts that these divergent cultures are to be viewed as united into a singular coherent entity due to the fact that they are all fundamentally different from those existing outside their borders (Said, 1979).

Summarily; when broken into its constitutive elements, the epistemological discourse of Eurocentrism, along with projects justified through it, are held as functioning in the following manner (Hall, 1992):

- 1) It allows us to characterize and classify societies into different categories. It is a tool to think with. It sets a certain structure of thought and knowledge in motion.
- 2) It is an image, or set of images. It condenses a number of different characteristics into one picture. It calls up in our minds eye—it represents in verbal and visual language—a composite picture of what different societies, culture, peoples, and places are like. It functions as part of a language, a “system of representation”—once which does not stand alone, but works in conjunction with other images and ideas with which it forms a set.
- 3) It provides a stand or model of comparison. It allows us to compare to what extent different societies resemble, or differ from, one another. It helps to explain difference.
- 4) It provides criteria of evaluation against which other societies are ranked and around which powerful positive and negative feelings cluster. It produces a certain kind of knowledge about a subject and certain attitudes towards it. Simply, it functions as an ideology.

### **Dominant and Dormant Discourses**

Cognizant of the above, it becomes clear that: while, it is held that differing knowledge systems ought to be evaluated, and proliferated on the basis on commonly shared equality; the utilization and propagation of discourses certainly has not (Nyamnjoh, 2012). As such, *in light of all preceding argumentation*, this paper feels justified in holding the position that the colonially influenced ‘*social education*’ provided within Africa was not based upon logical, or factual knowledge—or held these values of the ultimate outcome—but rather upon Western European epistemological discourse; clearly illustrating the distinctly hierarchical nature of such discourse (Nyamnjoh, 2012).

The above sentiment is shared by Francis Nyamnjoh (2012) who holds that the “production, positioning, and consumption of knowledge is far from a neural, objective [logical] and disinterested process (Nyamnjoh, 2012). Contradictorily, the creation and propagation of knowledge is in fact socially, and *politically* mediated by various ‘invisible’ hierarchies between competing societies, and civilizations—with the *dominant* epistemology imposing their framework forcibly upon *dormant* epistemologies (Nyamnjoh, 2012. Bourdieu, 1999). Summarily, it is held that “those [epistemologies] who move or are moved tend to position themselves or be positioned in relation to those [epistemologies that] they meet” as; the answer to *which, why* and *how* epistemological frameworks are placed in relation to other competing models, necessarily determines whose set of discourses will become dominant, and whose will ultimately be made invisible (Bourdieu, 1999. Achebe, 2000). This is best summarized by an African proverb that eloquently posits that “Until the lions [prey] produce their owners historians, the story of the hunt will glorify only the hunter” (Achebe, 2000: 73). This relationship of unequal encounters between; highly-mobile—and thus dominant—colonial epistemologies, and popular largely immobile indigenous African epistemologies can be evaluated, in abstract terms, through the use of the Hegelian *Master-Slave Dialectic*—as will follow subsequently.

## Existential Self-Consciousness

Within his paper 'The Phenomenology of Spirit,' German philosopher Georg Hegel provides his exposition of what has colloquially been referred to as the *Master-Slave Dialectic*, as an account of both the emergence of self-consciousness and the need for recognition, specifically mutual recognition (Hegel, 1868). Although often considered dense, and unintelligible the dialectic has influenced various political scholars in a plethora of contexts, allowing the academic conceptualization of the consciousness existing within class, or racial group, as in in the work of Marx and Fanon respectively (More, 2017). Hegel allowed such academic conceptualization as, in line with the prevailing phenomenological theories of the time, self-consciousness was not viewed in objective terms, or as a disembodied Cartesian "I", but rather viewed as the cognitive awareness of the self, and its relation to the outside world, and others (More, 2017).

### A Dialectical Approach

However, despite the wide reaching utilization of Hegel's dialectic, this paper views his theories as portraying a dystopian state of affairs, as to utilize his own terminology, there seems to exist no true way for; the aforementioned dominant and dormant epistemologies to move from the destructive cyclical alternation between *thesis*, and *antithesis*, to the harmonious state of *synthesis*. This bleak view of Hegel's dialectic is compounded by the fact that many post-colonial African scholars have utilized the dialectic, specifically the Hegelian conception of mutual recognition, as the conceptual foundation for their critiques oppressive colonial epistemologies (More, 2017). The dialectic is often seen as illustrating the abstract existential methodology required within post-colonial projects as; the concept of *mutual recognition* in the Hegelian sense purports to allow both the post-colonial *self*, and oppressive colonial *other* to possess true 'freedom' affording them both the 'agency' to direct the development and attainment of their respective self-consciousnesses (More, 2017. Hegel, 1868).

For Hegel (1868), the self can only become conscious of itself through the presence of, and recognition of itself by another. However, this process of self-consciousness takes place at the expense of the other. Here, the moment in which the self becomes conscious of itself, declaring itself as an "I", the other is negated and destroyed. This negation and destruction of the other is the result of it becoming a mirror image of the self, and thus loses agency regarding its own self-consciousness (Hegel, 1868). As both the self and the other engage in this process of attempting to gain self-consciousness, Hegel (1869) posits that the result will always be an unequal relationship of strict opposition, with the colonial *Master* ultimately subjugating the African *Slave*.



What is interesting though is that Hegel (1868) posits that the colonial master ironically desires the thing that is the African slave. In the Hegelian sense, to desire something is to wish to possess it, and thus not to destroy it altogether, but also to transform it into something that is yours, and thus strip it of its foreigners (More, 2017). But conceptually, this creates a two way dependency between the oppressed African and colonialists. Here colonialists achieve their recognition through another consciousness (those within their colonies), and thus; in doing so becomes dependent on those that they marginalize for the creation, and affirmation of their own self-consciousness (More, 2017. Heel, 1868). Thus it is ultimately often held that unless a drastic alteration were to occur within such a relationship, there exists no perpetual, and necessarily guaranteed method for the achievement of true existential, and epistemological freedom—only cyclical mutual enslavement (More, 2017). For Hegel (1868), the dialectical perpetual enslavement can only be escaped through the ‘synthesis’ of these two self-consciousness, achieved through reciprocal mutual recognition.

Within the current context, it may be argued that Hegel indirectly argues that one cannot switch from; the role of having previously been oppressed, to one analogous with ones former colonial masters, without violence and armed struggle (More, 2017). This is held as Hegel (1871. in More, 2017) posits that the formally oppressed will never be truly equal to their previous colonial masters if: the masters themselves elect to abdicate their epistemological claims of dominance over their former subjects; as this would translate to merely be a *truce*, with the ever looming threat of *further* or *different* subjugation occurring in the future. However, if the equalization between these epistemologies is achieved through violence, and armed struggle by those oppressed and—as displayed within the Dialectic—‘*the slave becomes the master*’ Hegelian synthesis would not have occurred, resulting the a continuation of the dialectical cycle continuing (More, 2017).

### **Reclaiming Post-Colonial Self-Consciousnesses**

Reflecting upon Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Biko and other Black Consciousness scholars became aware that possessing self-consciousness, in Hegelian terms, is only possible through encounters, and interaction with other self-consciousnesses. Hegel’s framework posits that the possession of self-consciousness primarily distinguishes a human being from other conscious being such as animals. However, as self-consciousness refers directly to human reality, and such reality is inherently social, true self-consciousness can only be formed through the presence of, and recognition by another (Hegel, 1977: 110. in More, 2017: 85).

In relation to Hegelian conceptions of self-consciousness existentialist philosopher Kierkegaard (in More, 2017: 41) states that “To be a self, is to be able to look at one’s self, to love one’s self, [...] critical of one’s self”, reflecting what Sartre (in More, 2017: 41-42)

terms 'reflective consciousness.' However, due to the effects of Eurocentric epistemological discourses, the very terms used to describe previously oppressed individuals—such as; *black*, *Third World*, or *Global South*—posses negative colonially based connotations; “evil, disaster, famine, and ugliness” (More, 2017: 39). As such, as many of these connotations have become internalized by those they are ascribed upon previously oppressed individuals, for Sartre (in More, 2017: 45-48), cannot truthfully self reflect upon their existential realities. This existential epistemological destruction of oppressed individuals reflective consciousnesses, and in turn the resulting reduction of their existential horizons, forces such individuals to perpetually exhibit 'bad faith (More, 2017: 91).

Within 'Black Orpheus', written by Sartre as a preface to Senghor's collection of poems espousing Negritude, Sartre argues that in the midst of oppression in the form of; slavery, racism, and colonial alienation, the previously oppressed person must “continuously descend into the depths of his soul to reclaim his blackness” (Sartre 1988: 291. in More, 2017: 93-94). Thus for Sartre, (in More 2017:42-48), that the re-appropriation and destruction of the Manichaeism embedded within pejorative individualistic terms such as; *black*, *negro*, and *kaffir*, with collective terms such as; *Third World*, *Global South*, and *underdeveloped* are fundamental within post-colonial efforts to escape bad faith.

Conceptualized by Sartre (1956: 44-49. in More, 2017: 90-92), bad faith is viewed as a form of self deception, namely ones consciousness deceiving itself regarding its existential freedom. Specifically, bad faith is an attempt by ones consciousness to avoid and escape the radical existential freedom it is condemned to, constituting itself as an object without such freedom (Sartre, 1956: 439. in More, 2017: 91). By expressing bad faith, ones consciousness is unable to truthfully encounter and interact with other consciousness, and thus will never constitute true self-consciousness, relegating it towards the realms of 'non human' consciousnesses (Hegel, 1977: 110. in More, 2017: 85). This perpetual state of bad faith ascribed upon black individuals is conceptualized by Fanon (1967: 184-185. in More, 2017: 30) as the 'zone of non-being'. It is this 'zone of non-being', specifically attempts to escape it, that has resulted in politicized attempts at reclaiming terms such as *Third World* by those these terms originally sought to oppress (Smith, 2009. More, 2017).

For scholars such as Sartre, Fanon, and Biko, the formation of self reflective consciousness is a necessary first step towards liberation from racial based oppression (More, 2017: 95). This is succinctly encapsulated within Odera Oruka's definition of Black Consciousness philosophies. Oruka (1990: 71. in More, 2017: 48) holds that in order to achieve true Hegelian liberation, the previously oppressed *black* individual must construct epistemological frameworks influenced not by Eurocentrism, but rather the cognizance of factors such as:

1. An awareness by those previously oppressed that the world is predominantly constructed to be a fundamentally *anti-black* existential reality.
2. A recognition, and not denial, by those that have been oppressed of their past and current oppression—specifically they must recognize themselves as ‘black’ and proudly proclaim that “black is beautiful” (Biko 1977 in More, 2017).
3. A deep set existential desire by those that have been oppressed to explain away or annihilate the reality described in (1).
4. Along with a conscious effort to move towards the creation of a new existential reality distinct from (1)—one that expresses universal humanism.

Ultimately, the above scholars advocate that: rather than accepting their externally ascribed, colonially based existential horizons; previously oppressed individuals must accept their *facticity*, and proclaim as such. In the words of Sartre (1998: 296. in More, 2017: 95), “Having been insulted, and formerly enslaved, he [the black man] picks up the word ‘nigger’ which was thrown at him like a stone, he draws himself erect and proudly proclaims himself a black man,” not only reclaiming control over their self-consciousness, but embarking on the path towards Hegelian *Synthesis*.

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