

# The separation of arts and sciences is a colonial poison

Art sciences are despised in favor of the natural sciences in many African societies. In fact, this trend has been obvious during, and especially after, colonization in many of our African nations. The fear is that the African child who takes art subjects won't be exposed to as many opportunities as the one who studies natural sciences. For the African middle class, that is truth. Is it though?

Education has always been one of the pillars for every people. Along with politics and economy, it has been the thing that, even to this day, is attacked and taken over during foreign occupation. This is the oldest strategy used in occupation. To appease the occupied people's innate sense of revenge, the occupant tames the occupied mind by exposing him to information that either legitimizes alien presence or distracts him with "serious matters" that divert him from thinking about the actual occupation.

The processes used in the colonial destruction of the African education paradigm is fascinating. Turning minds into muscles and praising the biggest muscle. That is the colonial education in a nutshell. All the curriculum was structured around one word: Labor. Why? Because that is what was needed from the African. The very few who tried to think of education as something that should transcend labour was reminded in the strongest of terms that they had gone beyond their pay grade and charged for trespassing.

Consequently, almost half of African countries celebrate every year a president killed by that colonial system, a victim of trespassing. His crime was that he was a laborer who wasn't supposed to possess the ideas he had acquired, not through education but through the accident of experience, trials and

tribulations – struggle. They had failed the education system because ideas, rather than labor, are the forbidden fruit of the colonial education system. Even more forbidden were ideas that defended African interests. To this day such ideas are forbidden and the penalty for having them exists but varies.

The very education system most of us grew up in, fighting every day to be the best in it, was designed to bury our innate capabilities needed to claim our humanity. “You have to understand that it is at the price of alienation that we got those A’s at school [...]” Amos Wilson wrote. The best the African was expected to be, to this day, is a skilled worker.

It follows that the measure of excellence is to become a highly-skilled worker. But then what? If the economic system is organized to ensure that all benefits that accrue from it go foreigners, a highly skilled worker then is the weakest link. In other words, the excellence you were fighting for in school was designed to create society’s weakest link. It is akin to a disease that destroys the immune system – autoimmune.

Accordingly, the colonial education system ensured that every information fed in the aim of creating a colonized mind carefully veer into idealistic worlds, abstract ideas, unpalpable feelings, and to nudge his or her consciousness or to get her in touch with her sensibilities. The modus operandi of the colonial curriculum produced a predictable modus vivendi of the colonized. To create a mind preoccupied with labor rather than thought, the colonial curriculum emphasized a lexicon of execution and efficiency rather than introspection and reflection.

A hundred years of that and there is no collective concept of a better society for the colonized with millions of minds turned into robots at a remote command. The mind so transformed cannot maneuver its way into the ideal world of dreams. The conditioning is intended to constrain the

possibility of a better world.

The abstract world is of vital importance when it comes to the well-being of a people. It allows them to imagine alternative ways of dealing with their interactions with nature and people. In that imagination process, they learn how to love each other, how to respect each other; they discover their life purpose or rather set it, they theorize concepts from observation. They develop. The mind naturally expands when you let it do so. The development of this is what is killed by the colonial curriculum.

It is in the seemingly abstract ideas of respect that a sense of community is cultivated and the abstract ideas of love that solidarity is built. It is in those ideas that the colonial education renders "useless" because they have no link to labor and the market. They are replaced by the lexicon of management noted above.

Disorder also persists because it is in the constant training of the mind around abstract ideas of good and bad that the ways to order are discovered. In African society these ideas are passed on from one generation to another, one tale, myth, legend, proverb at a time. Such were not just stories; they were approaches to exercise the mind; they would shape the minds of young people to honor the elders, to love, care, and prepare him to die in defense of what is shared in community.

In a healthy society, sciences and arts are inextricably linked: the arts conceive the ideal by pushing the boundaries of the possible while the sciences attempt to implement it. However, when science and the arts are conceived in the lens of labor, neither is capable of addressing society deepest ailments due to the deficiency of consciousness needed to heal the body (science) and the soul (arts).