

## Anti-colonial Diktat

by Wanjiru Njoya

(with comments section added)

<https://www.wanjirunjoya.com/home/anti-colonial-diktat>

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I know a few things about colonialism. I learned these things from growing up in Kenya, a former British colony. I have always been interested in hearing what other people think about colonialism, the advantages and disadvantages, and how it has influenced the socioeconomic outcomes of former colonies and their peoples.

Now Bruce Gilley's Studies in Anti-Colonialism, a book series that aims "to raise questions about the normative and empirical validity of anti-colonial perspectives, to stimulate debate and offer new solutions to pressing global problems" has been characterised as a threat to public health: it risks exposing readers to positive views on colonialism.

Many people consider Bruce's work to be interesting and important, advancing our understanding of the world and our place in it. But his books have now been deemed too dangerous for innocent readers to be exposed to, because the series exposes the truth about colonialism and some of that truth might not fit the woke 'social justice' narrative.

The notion that writing on colonial history should be policed by self-appointed guardians of 'fairness' and 'justice' (as defined and enforced by themselves) and that no academic inquiry into the nature of colonialism should be published unless it conforms to leftist egalitarian diktat, is abhorrent.

The self-appointed gatekeepers who dictate what other people should be permitted to read have justified their autocratic edicts under the new mantra of our age: it's for our own protection, to keep us all safe and to save lives. Because if people read Bruce's books, they might feel hurt, and nobody wants to live in a world where people might get hurt by stuff they read. By burning all the books that might hurt people's feelings, we can all be kept safe and happy. See how that works?

I disagree with that view of public safety, and with its extension to policing books and other academic publications.

Black people who have come up out of colonialism do not need to be protected from the idea that maybe some good stuff emerged from the colonial experience. We know that

so many good things came out of colonialism. We were there. That's how we know. We experienced both the trauma and the liberation of colonialism ourselves, and nobody from their blinkered and mollycoddled ivory tower can tell us that what we experienced in the trenches is not true. I know what is true, because I was there and the anti-colonial artists who want to 'decolonise' everything were not. They know nothing about the matter. All they know, is how woke they are, and how important it is to destroy anyone who does not admire the woke way of life.

Anti-colonialist dictators have no idea what colonialism was all about, they just think the idea of 'decolonising' fits well with wokism because it signals all those egalitarian virtues, and that's all they need to know. This is why egalitarianism is a dangerous ideology: egalitarians start by declaring everything to be identikit, and then take up an axe and hack away at everything until the entire universe and all humanity are remoulded to fit with their ideals. There is no reasoning with them, and they will not rest until they achieve their goal.

The news that Africans can make up their own minds about what to read may come as a huge surprise to all the wokerati who are new to the discourse - it is only in the last few years that the woke have discovered, to their growing horror, that there is a place called Africa! Where poverty and hunger and other social ills abound! Wow, they are shocked. They didn't know that. Nobody told them about that. So now, quickly, to catch up on lost time, they are on a mission to fix everything. They will start by writing the history of Africa from scratch. First they will burn all the books that were previously written since the 16th century. Then they will police all the new books coming through, and thus remake Africa in the Woke image.

We are African. We know what Africa means. We know what it is, with all its trials and triumphs. We do not come along out of Africa in search of mad wokists who can kindly woke-splain to us all about 'whiteness' and the meaning of colonialism. Nobody can cancel our lives and our own lived experience. We sat in the schools built by the British, we read English literature, we were taught by British teachers, we sang Jerusalem in the brushland of the African savannah (only marginally green and pleasant), and we know what we think about all of that. We have formed our own view of the matter, thank you.

We may be black (yes, it's a trial) but we managed to figure this out all by ourselves, like actual human beings with brains and reasoning abilities (I know, shocking!) We are the living testament to what colonialism achieved, and nobody can cancel us or force us to reset ourselves to fit the New Woke Order.

Life is a balance of good and evil, and the idea that some good may emerge from difficult circumstances is a self-evident truth. And so it is with colonialism. Once you realise that life is complex (who knew!), you can relax and read anything you find interesting and insightful. Read what you want! It's a free world, my friend. You will enjoy life much more if you think for yourself and decide for yourself what to believe.

Fly, you fools, flee from anybody who tries to tell you what to read and what to think. If they are trying to 'decolonise' your reading list for you, and promising to keep you safe from life, they are not your friend. Ignore the anti-colonialists. Ignore the equality artists, too, and all other forms of woke creatures who are trying to enslave you. Live your life. Expand your world. Study colonialism from all angles positive and negative.

Find out why some scholars think colonialism had more benefits than costs. Coming soon to a bookshop near you. Read it and make up your own mind about the legacy of colonialism. Gilley writes:

*This article argues that while [Chinua] Achebe was a critic of the forms that the colonial encounter often took, he also believed that the challenge of modernity put to Africa by colonialism was a healthy one. Moreover, while he decried the ways that colonialism disempowered African societies, he believed that re-empowerment required embracing, not spurning, many of the same forms of governance practised under colonialism: educational, administrative, and social. In other words, Achebe's work is a reminder that amidst the theorizing on pathways and sources of state capacity in Africa, scholars have overlooked the positive aspects of the most obvious one: the colonial legacy itself. – Bruce Gilley, "Chinua Achebe on the Positive Legacies of Colonialism," African Affairs (2016)*

If you had to design the world from scratch, because you were God and the universe was giving you a second chance to try and get it right, you probably wouldn't design a world in which some people enslave others, and some nations build empires by colonising other people. But you aren't God, and you aren't redesigning the world. Yes, I know about the great reset folks, but they aren't God either.

Moreover, history shows, that even if you chose a different starting point from which to build a new and better world because you think this one sucks, you'd still face multiple unpredictable problems that would probably be much worse than the problems you were trying to avoid in the first place. You'd find yourself hankering for a world in which the greatest threat you faced was somebody publishing a book that favoured colonialism.

Life unfolds in such unpredictable ways, and not even the wokerati can fashion the world and all its humanity in their own image. Won't stop them trying, though. But you have a choice, as to how you respond, and whether you will let the anti-colonialism police force their ideologically purged reading-lists onto you.

## **Comments Section**

- Shawnelle: Yes please and thank you! I feel the same way as a woman who grew up in and lives in the Caribbean!
- Wanjiru Njoya: Thank you Shawnelle for adding a Caribbean input. We know our countries, we know our own history, and we can make up our own minds. We are free to embrace our own heritage and be proud of it if we want to. It is our history, for better or for worse. It was what it was, and now here we are, building something beautiful out of it. Banning books and purging them from the curriculum will never succeed in cancelling ideas - they can't cancel ideas that live in our hearts and minds.
- Shawnelle: No problem! And definitely! To add a layer to it, I think many people in the politically correct camp in the US and other countries don't realize that the things they promote can have a lasting negative impact in less developed regions. We have one major university within our region. It has four campuses and is supposed to be a research university. The degree to which having heterodox ideas can affect your career and educational prospects is soooo real. I have had friends fired from their jobs as journalists for daring to ask questions when PC people present their work. I have been called all sorts of derogatory names for not thinking I am a victim. Academic freedom and freedom of speech are slowly becoming luxuries here. When America sneezes, the third world catches a cold! The deleterious effects of that PC culture and the book burning culture is concentrated when there are fewer institutions within which one is free to discuss ideas. They have the luxury of options so they can bray. Some people do not!
- Wanjiru Njoya: Shawnelle, you are so right. PC is a game for privileged (mostly white) academics in rich countries, who know nothing of the harm they are causing to poor people in the third world. 'Destroy colonialism, dismantle all your schools and hospitals that were built by the evil British!' Easy for them to say, because it doesn't affect their own life in any way. There is no welfare state in the third world - if we destroy our colonial heritage we will have nothing left. Think of the harm caused to a poor African child who is told not to learn English because it's the language of the coloniser. That closes off education to them, forever. Wokists neither know nor care about that. And poor ethnic minorities who are being beguiled into spending all their time at university studying racism. That won't do anything for their careers. 'I am black and I have a degree in Racism Studies'. Yes, because that's what all the employers are looking for. I bet these wokists don't tell their children to focus on studying rubbish, do they. Hypocrites. Our poor black children, who have to sit in school being lectured endlessly about the evils of slavery. Please! Slavery is their own heritage, they need no lectures about it from a teacher whose own life is not affected by it in any way. And the wokists saying 'there are not enough slavery lessons in school!' because their own children can have a break from it at home, right? Our children will NEVER have a break from it. Forcing them to listen to this rubbish at school, instead of learning what they went there to

learn, is an extra layer of oppression in itself. If anybody truly hated third world countries and wanted to destroy black folk, this would be the way to go about it: forcing them to 'decolonise'. Then cancelling people like Bruce Gilley who are trying to open the windows, bring in some light and fresh air into this festering discourse. Thank you Shawnelle for telling it like it is. If more people would speak up, the woke might crawl back into their holes and stop trying to cover the world in darkness. Sorry to hear that you have taken abuse for it. Sorry too for your journalist friends who were fired.

- Wanjiru Njoya: Thank you Jens for checking in from Germany - it will grieve you to learn that one of the crimes of which Bruce Gilley stands accused is that he "delivered a talk to Germany's far-right political party". I think we all know what is meant by "far-right" in the Age of Woke. It means anybody who does not swear fealty to the new woke religion. Bruce stands accused of heresy, and all the malarkey about 'harm to black people' is a sham designed to mask what's really going on.
- Wanjiru Njoya: Thank you James - there are millions of Africans quietly getting on with life, trying to earn a living and look after their families, who want nothing to do with this woke madness but are just too busy with their own day to day activities to have time for public spats. The activists may shout very loud, forming bands and going on the rampage, destroying statues and crying about historical grievances, but they do NOT speak for all black people.