Research article

AFRICA: COLONIAL MENTALITY *VS* POSTCOLONIAL REALITY

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Abstract. The article explores colonial mentality, a phenomenon that is equally inherent in and influences the contemporary sociocultural development of both former colonies and former metropoles. Colonial mentality (or *colomentality*, as musician Fela Anikulapo Kuti called it in one of his compositions) represents a particular model of perception, status, and behavior based on a system of hierarchies and subordinations, which, in turn, presupposes the (co)existence of dominant and subordinate societies and the cultures produced by them. Colonial mentality, which determines the format of the relationship between the notional "us" and "them" (in reality, pseudo-us and pseudo-them), acts as an integral element in the systemic and overt manifestation of internalized racism. It gives rise, on the one hand, to targeted protest among educated Africans and, on the other, to intentions of integration (up to assimilation) into white society. The authors focus on the interaction of colonial mentality with the problem of identity in a postcolonial reality. Particular emphasis is placed on the genesis and development of intellectual history within Africa and the diaspora, both African and African American. Drawing on the experience of several generations, from William Du Bois and Leopold Senghor to Chigozie Obioma and Chika Esiobu, the authors trace different signs of colonial mentality, ranging from inferiority complexes to the desire to meticulously imitate Eurocentric standards. The authors further examine the manifestations of colonial mentality in creative and intellectual circles. Their focus is on scholars, writers, and artists—those who have managed to grasp the phenomenon of colonial mentality, transforming it into a tool for combating stereotypes about Africa and Africans, and who have recognized the importance of transcultural dialogue and a return to traditions.

Keywords: Africa, colonial mentality, identity, internalized racism, decolonization, postcoloniality

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ORIGINS OF COLONIAL MENTALITY

Colonial mentality is a phenomenon inextricably linked to the histories of Europe, the Americas, Asia, Africa, and Australia, as well as to the legacies of transatlantic slavery, colonialism, and neo- and postcolonialism. It is equally characteristic of states and societies engaged in expansionist policies and territorial conquests and of subjugated peoples (subalterns) deprived of the right to their own history, culture, and languages. In recent years, the phenomenon of colonial mentality has attracted the attention of philologists, historians, and psychologists. The development of postcolonial studies has contributed to the renewal of methodology, tools, and the study of colonial mentality in conjunction with the theory and practice of hermeneutic analysis of narratives available to scholars and critics.

Colonial mentality originated within Europe and subsequently disseminated to other regions. This mindset was shared and spread by a diverse array of actors, including slave traders; slave owners; Christian missionaries of both European and non-European descent, actively promoting the teaching of Christ; colonial administrators; military personnel; educators; travelers—all those who, in one way or another, were involved in the implementation of the "civilizing" mission toward the "barbarians" inhabiting the conquered lands and created "myths" about them.

The integration of "backward peoples" into the universal (Western) culture took place through its dissemination beyond the borders of Europe and was carried out in accordance with the guidelines adopted by the colonizers. In British Africa, it was through the introduction of the Anglo-Saxon model of education. In the Portuguese colonies, the Catholic tradition and the ideological principles of Luso-tropicalism played a special role, while in the French colonies, it was the policy of cultural assimilation. And although the ideas about the "barbarism" and "savagery" of the local inhabitants turned out to be false and based mainly on their obvious otherness, it was precisely these ideas that led to the emergence and fixation of stereotypes, internal and external, adopted by the metropolises and colonies and sometimes persisting to this day.

Most European writers on Africa, and later photographers and filmmakers, emphasized the exotic, the previously unseen landscapes, the unknown languages, demonstrating, over the centuries, "a standing interest in what was considered a lesser world, populated with lesser people of color, portrayed as open to the intervention of so many Robinson Crusoes" [Said 1994: xvi]. Analyzing the perception of Africa in Western narratives, the Palestinian-American intellectual Edward Wadie Said (1935–2003) referred to the images created by the master of the swashbuckling maritime novel, the Polish-born British writer Joseph Conrad. His real name was Józef Teodor Konrad Korzeniowski (1857–1924). He achieved fame with his novel "Heart of Darkness" (1899) [Conrad 2024], a work that, in the eyes of Africans, appeared as one of the manifestations of fractal racism[1].

In his book "Culture and Imperialism" (1993), Said noted: "All Conrad can see is a world totally dominated by the Atlantic West, <…>. He could neither understand

[1] The concept of fractal racism is based on the idea of the replication of discriminatory practices, their self-reproduction at all possible levels of social interaction, from international relations and national policies of states to interpersonal everyday communication.

that India, Africa, and South America also had lives and cultures with integrities not totally controlled by the gringo imperialists and reformers of this world…" [Said 1994: xviii].

This "misimpression" was shared by many. Karl Marx's (1818–1883) famous thesis that "they (the inhabitants of colonized territories—Authors' Note) cannot represent themselves; they must be represented," put forward in his essay "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte" (1852) [Marx 1907], proved to be more than biased. Said, who criticized Western concepts of the East and, to some extent, Africa, chose this thesis as the epigraph to his book "Orientalism" (1978) [Said 1978].

The myths about Africans' backwardness and inability to perform intellectual work were being spread on for centuries, leading to the emergence of a persistent inferiority complex among Africans themselves and giving rise to a wide variety of pathologies, brilliantly described by Frantz Fanon (1925–1961) in his book "Black Skin, White Masks" (1952), which was noticeably ahead of its time and was first translated into Russian 70 years after its first publication. The author managed to flawlessly define the boundaries of "an existential deviation" [Fanon 1986: 16], which became the foundation of the colonial mentality and its connotations with language, lifestyle, and style of thought.

It's difficult to strictly define the meaning of the term "colonial mentality." Its foundations stem from the rigid division of society into "us" and "them," manifested in various subordinations and hierarchies. Its essence lies in the unconditional recognition of the superiority of the colonizers over the colonized and in the distorted self-perception and mutual understanding of the oppressors and the oppressed. Colonial mentality can be viewed as a manifestation of internalized racism, characterized by the conscious and unconscious assimilation and subsequent reproduction of negative attitudes towards oneself and one's own culture and the idealization of the dominant culture [Pyke 2010; Sanders et al. 2024].

Typical markers of this form of racism are devaluation and/or emotional reactions (shame, guilt, humiliation, hatred) towards one's racial/ethnic/ethnocultural group, as well as the acceptance of moral and aesthetic standards of another dominant community (for example, Eurocentric beauty standards) [Campón, Carter 2015].

Nkuzi Nnam, a researcher of Nigerian origin (Igbo ethnicity), professor at Dominican University (Illinois, USA), and author of the book "Colonial Mentality in Africa," offered a rather simple but eloquent definition: "Colonial mentality is an unintentional attempt by Africans to continue to live and behave like we did during colonization, even several decades after our independence. It makes us appear to be ashamed of our culture, customs, and who we are. We pretend to be what we are not by trying to dress like foreigners, speak like foreigners, and even alienate our God in order to pray like foreigners. <…> The worst of all is when we question our physical and mental appearance. We use expressions such as *oyibo kariri madu*[2]. It begins to affect our psyche, our mentality, and our *modus cogitandum*. Then we bleach our skin and straighten our hair. We separate church and state, only because the foreigners do so." [Nnam 2007: vii].

[2] This Igbo phrase literally translates as "more than human".

Having affected all spheres of life on the continent—economics and politics, governance and justice, education systems, religion, languages, and social relations—colonialism also entailed a transformation of ideas about identity, provoking victim and deviant behavior on a mass level right up to the present day. In Nigeria, for example, it manifested itself in various forms of cheating and fraud, often of a protest nature and repeatedly—due to the prevalence of the phenomenon—described by writers, including Nkem Nwankwo (1936–2001) and Teju Cole (b. 1975), in the stories "Danda" (1970) [Nwankwo 1970] and "Every Day for a Thief" (2007) [Cole 2014].

The acceptance of the idea of the colonizers' superiority shaped Africans' intention to emulate them in everything. Culture became a kind of "protective enclosure" a kind of armor, which, according to Said, ensured Europeans, and subsequently Americans, the right to unconditional dominance, despite their obvious involvement in "sordid cruelty of practices such as slavery, colonialist and racial oppression" [Said 1994: xiii].

Colonial mentality was spread and modified by the transatlantic slave trade and colonialism. The movement of millions of Africans to North and South America created historical diasporas, whose members became even more vulnerable to inferiority complexes. African Americans became one such community. Having lost ties to their historical homeland and experienced plantation slavery and racial segregation, by the early 20th century they, in the words of Pan-African ideologist William B. Du Bois (1868–1963), found themselves in a state of internal conflict caused by a "double consciousness." In his book, "The Souls of Black Folk," first published in 1903, he wrote: "After the Egyptian and Indian, the Greek and Roman, the Teuton and Mongolian, the Negro is a sort of seventh son, born with a veil and gifted with second sight in this American world—a world which yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world. It is a peculiar sensation, this double consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder" [Du Bois 1903: 8].

The modern, asymmetric global model of migration from Africa has its roots in the colonial system and, at its initial stage, was inextricably linked with the shortage of a highly skilled workforce that arose in Europe and America after World War II [Gavristova 2002: 44–63] and became one of many factors that catalyzed the process that has received the name of "brain drain" in the English-language press, also widely known as "brain theft."

In subsequent years, this process was further influenced by various internal determinants. During the first decade of independence, the governments of many young African states invested heavily in higher education to comprehensively implement what Tanzania's first president, Julius Nyerere (1922–1999), called the principle of "self-reliance" [Nyerere 1968]. However, the political and economic crises that afflicted most African nations in the 1980s did not foster an environment conducive to the professional application of specialized skills by qualified experts.

Reports from multiple United Nations agencies and the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) indicate that, during the early 2000s, there were more than

300,000 highly skilled Africans living across the world, 30,000 of whom held doctorate degrees[3]. Migrations continue: the African Union estimates that approximately 70,000 professionals[4] leave the African continent annually.

STRANGERS IN THEIR OWN LAND

For Africans, education significantly expanded opportunities for self-realization while simultaneously intensifying a sense of guilt. On the one hand, it was associated with an exaggerated gratitude for "enlightenment" and exposure to European values, which often took the form of "cloning": the meticulous imitation of behavior, clothing, hairstyles, and speech. On the other hand, guilt plagued many so-called "black Europeans"—university graduates who recognized the "superiority" of the colonizers and felt compelled to prove the "equivalent value of their intellect" [Fanon 2022: 8], all while feeling acutely alienated from their own culture.

Due to their education, ethos, and status, "Black Europeans" often felt like "strangers in their own land," which, in the words of the typical *évolué*[5] Fanon, entailed the "internalization" (or "epidermalization") of inferiority and manifested itself in relations with compatriots, right up to direct confrontation, initiated from various sides, which was noted by writers, scholars, and political figures belonging to different generations.

Fanon, for example, was irritated by people from wealthy African families who wanted to be "French" more than the French themselves [Khokholkova 2025]. That is why during his years of study, he preferred Lyon to Paris, since in the latter, in his words, "there were too many blacks" and "too many fools" [Jinadu 1986: 27–28]. However, like his older contemporary, Leopold Senghor (1906–2001), a fighter for African liberation, the first president of Senegal (1960–1980), a graduate of the Sorbonne, a participant in World War II and the Resistance movement, a member of the Constituent (1945–1946) and National Assemblies of France (1946–1955), a poet, and the first African to be awarded the honor of becoming a member of the French Academy in 1984, one of the most famous Africans in the world, he intended to become like Jean-Paul Sartre (1905–1980), an icon of the post-war generation of intellectuals, an existentialist philosopher. However, he remained acutely aware that he was destined to be viewed through the lens of a "Black European."

Sartre, in his turn fascinated by the poetry of Senghor, called him "the Black Orpheus" [Sartre 1948], thus emphasizing not so much the originality of his works but rather their right to exist, their equal similarity to European models. The same image of "the Black Orpheus" can be seen in his preface to Fanon's book "The Wretched of the Earth" (1961) [Sartre 1961], which, in a certain sense, may serve as a hint that poetry and

[3] Globalisation and the post-colonial world: New challenges for education. Professor Leon Tikly. *Open Inaugural Lecture 2008.* https://www.bristol.ac.uk/media-library/sites/education/migrated/documents/lptikly-inauguralbooklet.pdf (accessed: 20.06.2025)

[4] Migration Policy Framework for Africa and Plan of Action (2018 – 2030). *AU.* 2018. P. 39. https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/35956-doc-2018_mpfa_english_version.pdf (accessed: 20.01.2026)

[5] The terms *évolué* and *assimilé* (literally translated from French as "evolved, developed" and "equalized, assimilated") were used in the first half of the 20th century in relation to people from French and Belgian colonies who embarked on a path of cultural assimilation, adopting the language, values, and traditions of the metropolis.

journalism coming from the pens of black people are nothing other than a continuation—an emanation—of centuries-old European traditions, for "reason belongs to the Greeks" [Senghor 1964: 24].

In Africa, "Black Europeans" often experienced a sense of being "outsiders" that was even more profound than in Europe. This theme is explored through the protagonists of Ben Okri's (b. 1959) "Dangerous Love" (1996) and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's (b. 1977) "Americanah" (2013) [Adichie 2022]. And while alienation was the dominant sentiment in the 1960s and 1980s—often giving rise to either the actualization of various parasitic states or protest—by the turn of the 21st century, it had evolved into a catalyst for professional and creative self-realization. Consequently, a new wave of African talent emerged within literary, artistic, and academic circles. For many, the sense of "alienation" from ethnicity, race, and culture dissolved. As if fulfilling the vision of the renowned Kenyan historian Ali Mazrui (1933–2014) [Gavristova 2014], Africa began producing its own "Newtons" and "Shakespeares" for a new generation to emulate, fostering a sense of belonging in any environment.

AT HOME AMONG STRANGERS

In the first quarter of the 21st century, the engagement of African authors increased, resulting in enormous reader and publishing interest worldwide. Many analysts saw this as, firstly, a highly attractive novelty in the stories of Africans telling about Africa, and, secondly, an obvious and successful attempt to undermine the monopoly on the Eurocentric model of representing the continent, emphasizing its diverse history and culture, its multifaceted nature, and, in general, that "Africa is not a country" [Faloyin 2022].

Afropolitanism's[6] proponents played a huge role in broadcasting a new, much more realistic image of Africa: writers, journalists, and musicians launched a "cyberattack" not only on the educated but also on mass audience [Gavristova 2017], managing to partially dispel the myths and fears constructed by Europeans regarding the "Dark Continent" and its inhabitants.

Evidence of success is the growing representation among nominees, laureates and even juries of the Nobel, Booker, Goncourt, Turner, and other prizes. Wole Soyinka (b. 1934) and Chinua Achebe (1930–2013), Ben Okri and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Bernardine Evaristo (b. 1959) and Chigozie Obioma (b. 1986), Marie NDiaye (b. 1967) and NoViolet Bulawayo (Elizabeth Tshele, b. 1981), David Diop (b. 1966), Chris Ofili (b. 1968), and other prominent Africans were initially raised and educated in the European linguistic tradition and culture. English and French were their native languages—mostly their first, although all, with rare exceptions, generally spoke several European languages and two or three African languages.

Even more important was the genetic substrate that shaped them professionally and emotionally. The existential "knots" that emerged from the comprehension of diverse languages, traditions, and cultures, and which, at the level of self-awareness pronounced their mission of "untying" those knots, defined new boundaries in African intellectuals'

[6] Afropolitanism is a modern worldview concept based on the idea of the variability and hybridity of the identity of modern Africans, who move freely around the world but are always aware of the connection with their historical or ancestral homeland.

understanding of the problem of existence and coexistence, significantly altered the formats of communication between the notional "us" and "them."

Discussions about the necessity to create fiction, poetry, and research works in African languages were active at the dawn of independence. Soyinka, Achebe, and also Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1938–2025) actively participated in these debates. However, over time, the debates faded as the decolonization of knowledge acquired a different meaning, relying rather on the preservation and retransmission of centuries-old historical experience and cultural heritage. More important was the opportunity to be heard and thus, through the Word, influence a global community of enlightened readers, breaking established stereotypes. It is therefore not surprising that writers, alongside financiers and businesspersons, currently predominate among opinion leaders in Africa. Among them are Soyinka and Adichie, as well as those prominent activists who had to overcome numerous obstacles on their way to success, like the Nobel Peace Prize laureate and Doctor of Biology Wangari Maathai (1940–2011), who, despite the arbitrary and inert attitude of the authorities and outright male chauvinism, managed to fully implement her brilliant environmental project aimed at greening Kenya [Maathai Wangari 2006].

Since the mid-20th century, the academic and researcher community has absorbed large numbers of Africans and has been particularly conducive to international communication. The University College of Ibadan, the pioneer of higher education in Sub-Saharan Africa, was founded by the United Kingdom in 1948. Over time, following independence, it was transformed into a university and developed into a major research center in the region and the continent. Its atmosphere has been celebrated by generations of graduates scattered around the world, including Soyinka and Toyin Falola (b. 1953). And if initially only those who were committed to disseminating knowledge about Africa found employment abroad, now the situation is changed.

Okri has been teaching creative writing at the prestigious Trinity College[7] for many years. Nigerian Philip Emeagwali is known all over the world as one of the "Fathers" of the Internet. Philosopher and cultural anthropologist Professor Kwame Anthony Appiah (b. 1954), of Ghanaian-British descent, is considered by Princeton University to be one of the world's most authoritative scholars in his field. Congolese Valentin Yves Mudimbe (1941–2025) and Cameroonian Achille Mbembe (b. 1957), embarking on the path of "inventing" Africa (the book under this title has earned Mudimbe the nickname of "African Edward Said"), laid the foundations of postcolonial theory, defining a body of ideas and codes that lead to an understanding of the continent's history based on the interconnectedness of past and present, myth, and reality.

"GO BACK AND TAKE IT": A RETURN TO THE ORIGINS

Decades after countries across the continent gained independence and the formal abolition of racial segregation regimes around the world, questions about patterns of identity and the distinctive mentalities of Africans remain unresolved.

[7] Trinity College is one of the colleges of the University of Cambridge (UK).

"Colomentality", succinctly named by the Nigerian musician and founder of the Afrobeat genre, Fela Anikulapo Kuti[8] (1938–1997), in his 1977 composition of the same name and perceived by him with considerable irony, became a kind of topos at the turn of the 21st century, acquiring new connotations. These often take the form of medical/psychological terms signaling deviations from the norm: trauma, syndrome[9], disorder, and so on. The next step after identifying the problem was the search for a conventional norm—a stable state, a sense of fulfillment within the boundaries of one's own culture—by returning to one's roots. This, in turn, transcended the boundaries of space and time, being both purposeful and predetermined, rational and conditioned, practical and symbolic, literal and metaphorical.

In the context of academic research, this has been embodied in the trend of indigenization, a turn to traditional knowledge systems. Today, decolonial theorist Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni[10] (b. 1968), Nigerian philosopher Adeshina Afolayan, and Nigerian-American researchers Toiyn Falola and Chika Esiobu (b. 1986) discuss indigenous knowledge systems. Esiobu notes in her book "Indigenous Knowledge and Education in Africa" [Ezeanya-Esiobu 2020] that she sees the task of transforming the academic environment as one of the most important tasks and that its solution will help narrow the gap between the reality in which Africans live and the Eurocentric education they receive.

Esiobu and her colleagues are searching for traditional African practice-oriented knowledge relevant to contemporary conditions, primarily in the fields of agriculture[11], medicine, veterinary science, and ecology, and for its potential in shaping sustainable development strategies for African societies. This knowledge includes traditional practices of social self-regulation (institutionalized sanctions and restrictions motivated by religion and belief in the supernatural, institutions of the Akan and Asafo peoples); traditional judicial practices (the *Gacaca* courts, which operated from 2002 to 2012 and delivered a significant share of acquittals, as much as 25%); traditional philosophical systems; and moral norms (for example, *ubuntu*[12] [Shubin 2024]).

An interest in historical and cultural heritage was also shared by artists. Nigerian Uche Okeke (1933–2016), the creator of Ulism[13], was a prominent figure in the 1970–1985 art movement. He headed the department, the dean's office, and the Institute of African Studies at the University of Nigeria in Nsukka (UNN), where a unique art school

[8] To attend his concert, El Anatsui made the multi-hour trip from Nsukka to Lagos and back almost every Saturday.

[9] An example is the term "Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome," coined in the early 2000s by American psychologist Dr. Joy DeGruy to describe transgenerational trauma leading to psychological and behavioral disorders common among contemporary African Americans.

[10] Ndlovu-Gatsheni was born in the southwestern territory of what is now Zimbabwe. His family belonged to a Ndebele-speaking ethnic minority that faced with discrimination. The scholar identifies as a native of Matabeleland, a historical region between the Limpopo and Zambezi rivers traditionally inhabited by the Matabele people.

[11] For example, the effectiveness of *tassa* (*zai*) irrigation methods, traditional methods of rainwater harvesting used in arid regions of Africa to improve crop cultivation, is recognized.

[12] Ubuntu, meaning "humanity" in Zulu and various other Bantu languages, is an African philosophical system and ethical framework defined by the principle: "I am because we are."

[13] The term "Ulism" was first used by Simon Ottenberg in 1997 to describe a modernist movement in Nigerian visual art.

was formed, within the boundaries of which professional artists managed to synthesize the conceptual principles of modernism and the sacred graphics of the Igbo people (Uli) [Okeke 1960], laying the foundation for one of the most committed trends in contemporary African art, Afromodernism, represented in museum collections and galleries around the world.

Okeke's successor in all administrative positions at UNN, the outstanding master of Nigerian transvantgarde[14], El Anatsui (b. 1944), a Ghanaian native, is the recipient of numerous awards, including an honorary doctorate from Harvard University. In 2015, he received the highest award at the Venice Biennale, the Golden Lion, for his contribution to the development of art [Gavristova 2014]. In 2023, he was included in the list of the 100 most influential people in the world according to the American magazine Time.

"Go back and get it" is his motto, embodied by the mythical *Sankofa* bird, which has become a symbol of returning to one's roots in the hope of learning from the experience of the past and having faith in a better future.

The intellectual history of Africa and the African diaspora is currently inextricably linked with a rethinking of the "idea of Africa" [Mudimbe 1994]. A return to ancestral traditions and authentic names, the use of African symbolism in art and everyday life and African word forms in narratives is intended to testify to the very fact of a return to origins. For those working outside the continent, this consists of living "between two homes" or building and maintaining long-term ties with regions of Africa. For example, Emeagwali spent decades actively contributing to the creation of information and telecommunications infrastructure in Nigeria and West Africa; former Microsoft executive and engineer Patrick Awuah founded Ashesi University in Ghana; Adichie, El Anatsui, and Falola initiated numerous scientific, cultural, and educational projects in Nigeria and Ghana aimed at engaging young people in creative work.

EXISTENTIAL KNOTS OF POSTCOLONIAL REALITY

Postcolonial reality has merged features of the colonial and precolonial past, becoming a kind of "invention" [Mudimbe 1988] of those who, by the will of fate, found themselves involved in the transformation of African mentality over the centuries. This kind of mentality, in turn, being inextricably linked with African identity, along with numerous complexes, has contained a unique energetic and intellectual charge (the Igbo call it *chi*[15] energy; the Yoruba have their own equivalent, *ori*), expressed in the actualization of multidirectional entrepreneurial and creative activity, which developed largely in defiance of the prevailing circumstances.

Colonial mentality, in conflict with the principles of decolonization and, to some extent, with the realities of postcolonialism, continues to exist as part of historical and transcultural memory. Its manifestations—both negative and positive—are obvious and, at this stage, no longer pose an obstacle to the development of the continent's countries

[14] Transvantgarde is a movement in postmodernist painting that emerged in the late 1970s and early 1980s; it is distinguished by a pluralism of means of expression.

[15] Chinua Achebe, in his article "Chi in Igbo Cosmology" (1972), emphasized that *chi* is the key to understanding the Igbo worldview; the mysterious double of man; his fate and purpose; the source of his strength and its limit; his "second self." [Achebe 1975].

and peoples. During its transformation, colonial mentality has undergone changes, becoming a tool or means of communication with former and current counterparties.

Mbembe's collection of essays, "On the Postcolony" [Mbembe 2001], outlined the main features of postcolonial reality with all its contradictions, paradoxes, and metamorphoses inherent in the transitional period of decolonization, with its accompanying crises of power, ethno-regional conflicts, political, economic, and environmental cataclysms, fragmentation of identity, the phantom nature of modernization, and the rethinking and editing of history.

More than a quarter-century has passed since the book's publication. The situation has changed. In a number of countries, features of sustainable development have emerged. These include a growing motivation for young people to obtain vocational education, the development of a digital economy, and the formation of progressive environmental programs. Colonial mentality in this context retains its function as a trigger, provoking reflection and comparison: without transformation, Africa faces the prospect of perpetuating its status as a periphery, global outskirts, for centuries.

Images of postcolonial reality largely retain their illusory quality. Attentive attention is processed in a manner characteristic of fiction and has found expression in the genre of magical realism [Luburić-Cvijanović 2022], in the works of Okri [Okri 1991], Chris Abani (b. 1966) [Abani 2018], Obioma [Obioma 2015, 2019], and others.

In the visual arts, a brilliant—literally—image of postcolonial reality is presented in the work of E. Anatsui, in his "curtains"[16] of flattened aluminum caps, cans, and other metal objects. These enormous multicolored canvases, capable of covering the façade of the Doge's Palace in Venice and elsewhere, are woven like a spider's web using an Ashanti technique borrowed from the makers of traditional Kente[17] cloth, out of metal caps used in the production of whiskey, gin, rum, and other spirits first brought to Africa by Europeans. They demonstrate the diverse manifestations of transcultural transit, both positive and negative, and the enduring connotations within colonial and postcolonial history, illustrating the interconnectedness of sacred knowledge and everyday life and, of course, the past, present, and future.

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[16] Curtains, elegant coverings resembling cobwebs and fishing nets, are sacred symbols in Judaism and Christianity. Curtains were the fabrics that covered halfway up the walls in the courtyard of the Tabernacle (The Book of Exodus 27:9; The Book of Exodus 27:18). One of them, made of multicolored fabric decorated with embroidery, was attached to five acacia pillars at the entrance to the Tabernacle. In Judaism, a curtain was also the name for the veil separating the Holy of Holies (The Book of Exodus 35:12). In Ayurveda, there is a veil of oblivion (liberation of one's ego). In the Islamic tradition, it is the veil of secrecy, the veil of sensual joy, the veil of greatness, and among Sufis, the veil of vision. In everyday life, even today, curtains are traditionally used to block the entrance to tents by Bedouins and other nomads. The supreme Ashanti deity, Nyame (Onyame), whose name translates into Russian as "shining one," like his symbol (and emanation), the spider Anansi (also known as the Great Spider, Anansi Kokoroko), created (wove) his world like a web or a net, and exists at its center. This worldview is characteristic of the Ashanti and Ewe, and along with them, El Anatsui. For more details, see [Gavristova 2014: 133–134].

[17] Kente is a traditional ornamental fabric originally hand-woven by the Akan people.

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* Undesirable organization in Russian Federation.

Научная статья

АФРИКА: КОЛОНИАЛЬНАЯ МЕНТАЛЬНОСТЬ *VS* ПОСТКОЛОНИАЛЬНАЯ РЕАЛЬНОСТЬ

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Аннотация. Статья посвящена колониальной ментальности – феномену, в равной мере присущему и оказывающему влияние на современное социокультурное развитие как бывших колоний, так и бывших метрополий. Колониальная ментальность (или «коломентальность», как назвал ее в одной из своих композиций музыкант Фела Аникулапо Кути) представляет собой особую модель восприятия, статуса и поведения и основывается на системе иерархий и субординаций, в свою очередь предполагающей (со)существование доминирующих и подчиненных обществ и продуцируемых ими культур. Колониальная ментальность, определяющая формат взаимоотношений между условными «мы» и «они» (на деле – [псевдо] мы и [псевдо] они), выступает неотъемлемым элементом системного и очевидным проявлением интернализированного расизма, порождая в среде образованных африканцев, с одной стороны, целенаправленный протест, а с другой – намерения интеграции (вплоть до ассимиляции) в общество белых. В центре внимания авторов находится взаимодействие колониальной ментальности с проблемой идентичности в условиях постколониальной реальности. Особый акцент сделан на становление и развитие интеллектуальной истории в границах Африки и диаспоры, африканской и африкано-американской. На основе опыта нескольких поколений – от Уильяма Дюбуа и Леопольда Сенгора до Чигози Обиомы и Чики Эсиобу – авторы статьи прослеживают признаки колониальной ментальности в диапазоне от комплексов неполноценности до стремления к детальному подражанию европоцентричным стандартам. Авторы статьи рассматривают проявления колониальной ментальности в творческой и интеллектуальной среде. В поле их зрения находятся ученые, писатели, художники – те, кто сумел осмыслить феномен колониальной ментальности, превратив ее в инструмент борьбы со стереотипами в отношении Африки и африканцев, кто осознал важность транскультурного диалога и возвращения к традициям.

Ключевые слова: Африка, колониальная ментальность, идентичность, интернализированный расизм, деколонизация, постколониальность

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