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DECOLONISING KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION: THE PEDAGOGIC RELEVANCE OF GANDHIAN SATYAGRAHA TO SCHOOLING AND EDUCATION IN GHANA

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In this article, I examine how Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy of non-violent resistance (Satyagraha) can be applied to decolonize schooling and education practices in Ghana. Satyagraha consists of three fundamental elements: appeal to the oppressor, non-cooperation, and civil disobedience. Part of an anti-racist and anti-colonial discourse, Satyagraha is a strategy, epistemology, and methodology for creating spaces for inclusion of Ghanaian Indigenous knowledge and worldview in school curricula and pedagogy. This article is also informed by my lived experiences and observations as an Indigenous student from Ghana. I conclude the article with a discussion of the benefits and dangers inherent in such transformative work.

Key words: anti-racism, anti-colonial, non-violence, spirituality

Dans cet article, l'auteur montre comment la philosophie de non-violence (satyagraha) de Gandhi peut être mise à profit pour décoloniser l'école et les pratiques pédagogiques au Ghana. Le satyagraha comprend trois éléments essentiels : l'appel à l'oppresseur, la non-coopération et la désobéissance civile. Partie intégrante d'un discours antiraciste et anticolonial, le satyagraha est une stratégie, une épistémologie et une méthodologie visant à créer des espaces pour l'inclusion d'une vision du monde et d'un savoir proprement ghanéens quant aux programmes scolaires et à la pédagogie. Cet article repose aussi sur l'expérience personnelle et les observations de l'auteur en tant qu'étudiant ghanéen. L'article se termine par une discussion des bienfaits et des dangers inhérents à un tel travail de transformation.

Mots clés : antiracisme, anti-colonial, non-violence, spiritualité

Despite the attainment of political independence on March 6, 1957, Ghana's schooling and education system is still dominated by Euro-American canon, worldview, and epistemology. For this reason, Koney (2005) posed the following question: Should we equate Ghana's independence to an independent Ghana? The question suggests that although Ghana is said to be independent with its own national flag, anthem, currency, parliament, and education system, its institutions including education are under colonial domination and control.

In this article, I analyze selected texts of Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy of non-violent resistance (Satyagraha) and how it can be applied to decolonize schooling and education in Ghana. I interrogate and agitate for educational reforms that incorporate the material and spiritual realities of students in Ghana's schools. These critical questions guide the article:

- In what ways does Satyagraha as spirituality addresses issues of equity in education in Ghana?
- To what extent does resistance through the application of Satyagraha reflect basic tenets of humanity?
- Are there useful lessons and messages in Gandhi's Satyagraha for schooling and education in Ghana?

From my perspective, education confers knowledge and banishes ignorance. Because knowledge is power, education thus confers power. This saying gives practical, existential experience through the Latin adage, *Scientia est potestas* [knowledge is power] (cited in Ogbunwezeh 2005, n. p.). This adage implies that whoever controls education also controls power. By education, I mean the varied options, strategies, and ways through which people come to learn, know, and understand their world and act within it (Dei, 2000a). Schooling, on the other hand, refers to formal schools, colleges, and universities and their rules and norms.

Although some educational gains were made in Ghana after political independence, Western control over what constitutes valid knowledge became increasingly and worryingly noticeable as schools were structured and restructured to validate only Western knowledge. This knowledge became the cultural capital by which individuals could access

employment in both state and private organizations in Ghana. Thus, education, which is needed to develop an individual's sense of "belonging to community with a history and a culture" (Dei, 2004, p. 9), is inappropriately sacrificed for knowledge that allows one to access wage-employment. For this reason, Dei (2004) warns that the threat of Western dominance over what constitutes valid knowledge in schools, in addition to marketing knowledge and culture, should call for greater concern among scholars and activists dedicated to the transformation of Indigenous education. Unfortunately, George Dei's warning has come too late for Ghana because the educational policies and practices under the dictates of World Bank and International Monetary Funds (IMF) have inappropriately structured school curricula to de-legitimize and de-privilege Indigenous knowledges that students bring with them to formal education (see Dei, 2004; Kwapong, 1992). Consequently, many Ghanaian students exposed to colonial education feel disenfranchised and disengaged from the knowledge that is being produced, validated, and disseminated in schools. The proverbial "chew and pour" (learning by memorizing) has become the order of learning in the schools in Ghana with little room left for critical thinking to interrogate these knowledges. It is, therefore, not surprising that local students continue to imbibe Western knowledges at the risk of being alienated from their environment, people, and culture. As Lawino, the wife of Ocol observed concerning her educated husband in the "Song of Lawino," "the reading has killed my man, in the ways of his people. He has become a stump. He abuses all things Acoli, he says ways of black people are black" (P'Bitek, 1986, p. 113). In other words, the inability of the school system in Ghana to contextualize standards and excellence to needs and conditions of the local people has resulted in an intelligentsia with little or no relevant skills and knowledge to address needs within their local communities. Gandhi (1993) rightly observes that colonial education is a citadel of slavery that denies learners object lessons in liberty and self-respect. He, therefore, set his mind to search and experiment with an alternative education system.

Gandhi's position on colonial education and his willingness to search and experiment with alternative ways of educating local learners has made his ideas relevant to decolonizing knowledge production in

Ghana. By decolonization, I imply rupturing and challenging "the political economy of knowledge production" (Dei, 2000a, p. 129) that accords certain privileges and legitimacy to certain forms of knowing while invalidating Indigenous knowledges. This thought includes reclaiming Indigenous Ghanaian cultures, languages, values, and worldviews and re-positioning them as an integral part of the education system.

DEFINING THE CENTRE: MY SUBJECTIVE LOCATION

My experiences with colonial schooling and education inform the analyses, arguments, and interpretation in the article. As an Indigenous student who went through colonial education in Ghana, I share many of the concerns and frustrations of Indigenous/Aboriginal students with the education system in North America, especially its colonizing tendencies to exclude the rich, cultural knowledges and experiences that they can bring into the classroom. Although I attended school in Ghana, which is my birthplace, my anger and frustration was not necessarily with the Eurocentric knowledge that was produced, validated, and disseminated in schools, but with the teachers who failed to include in the school curricula my Indigenous knowledge and culture. For instance, I grew up with the understanding that my ancestors still guard over me, and as custodians of the land, they expect me to follow certain traditions, customs, and moral values that serve the general interest of the community (Dei, 2004). I risk a severe spiritual punishment if I fail to do as expected. Long before the international environmentalists started their campaign against environmental degradation and deforestation, I had been informed through oral teachings such as proverbs, riddles, myths, and storytelling not to farm at river banks or in virgin forests because those are sacred habitats of gods and my ancestors.

Unfortunately, these Indigenous knowledges were not only ignored in schools, but were also systematically undermined and dismissed as fetishizing, primitive, and superstitious. In the education system in Ghana, I was taught about mountains, lakes, and rivers that were seven thousand miles away from Ghana, while rivers and lakes in my community, where I learnt my first swimming and fishing lessons, were left out of studies. The history lessons I received barely mentioned the

achievements and contributions of my Ghanaian ancestors to world civilization. Where references were made to them, they were done in demeaning and derogatory ways that made me ashamed to relate to them. Unfortunately, because the education system is closely tied to employment, privilege, and social prestige, I had to sacrifice the rich Indigenous knowledge I received from my grandparents and community for Western knowledge produced and disseminated in school. However, the more I consumed Western knowledge, the more I realized that I was being removed psychologically and cognitively from anything that had to do with my local upbringing and culture. This omission led to the loss of my identity, pride, and the heritage of my family and ancestors (Opini, forthcoming). Some (1994) also alludes to this severing of ancestral ties through the education she received.

> My life has been taken away from me because during the years I was there, this institution [inspired academy in Ghana] assumed that their goal was my goal. The result was, of course, the slow death of my identity and the understanding that I was in exile from everything I had held dear. (pp. 97-98)

Although my intention here is not to create "false binary or moral evaluation between (good) Indigenous knowledges and (bad) conventional/Western knowledge" (Dei, 2000a, p.113), I, nevertheless, contend that schools in Ghana cannot continue to reproduce students who are far removed from their local culture, knowledge, values, and worldview. I concede that because of material rewards that come with colonial education, it is quite difficult to ask local learners to abandon Western knowledge. In fact, Dei (2004) confirmed in his research in Ghana that many students he spoke to admitted that the biggest attraction to formal schooling was the cultural capital it gave them to access employment and other privileges in society. They did not want any reforms to the education system that would put them at a risk of losing those benefits. Given this fact, I advocate in this article for the integration of Indigenous and Western knowledges in school curricula. I believe that the integration of both Western and Indigenous knowledges in school curricula will go a long way to produce well-grounded students, who could address complex and sophisticated issues emerging from global relations and

how that knowledge relates to human growth and development in Ghana.

MAPPING ANTI-RACIST AND ANTI-COLONIAL FRAMEWORKS IN DECOLONIZING EDUCATION IN GHANA

In this article, I draw on anti-colonial thought and anti-racist education to analyze and review Gandhi's Satyagraha to apply to issues of schooling and education in Ghana. Both anti-racist education and anti-colonial thought are relevant frameworks in analyzing Gandhi's Satyagraha because they celebrate indigeneity that opposes any dominant knowledge system. These theoretical frameworks also recognize marginalized groups as subjects of their own experiences, histories, and knowledges (Fanon, 1963; Foucault 1980; Memmi 1967); hence, they are relevant to any academic work that focuses on agencies and resistance practices of marginalized groups. Resistance politics and practices are required in today's academy to challenge colonial narratives that distort and derogate the history and experience of Indigenous/Aboriginal students. Fanon (1963) observes that the colonizer is not simply satisfied with holding the land and property of the colonized, but also engages in a kind of "perverted logic" that distorts, disfigures, and destroys the past of colonized people. It is this "perverted logic" that needs to be challenged in the academy. Dei (2000a) observes that one way to resist hegemonic knowledge is through decentring the school curricula and centring Indigenous knowledges. He further argues that if colonized educators fail to resist the continued marginalization and negation of local people's knowledge and experience, they also become accomplices to colonialism.

Fortunately for educators today, Mahatma Gandhi's Satyagraha offers practical ways and strategies to resist such oppressive structures and practices in education. As Jawaharlal Nehru concludes elsewhere (Tendulkar, 1951), Gandhi brought an entirely new dynamic into the political and social field. His ideals of truth and non-violence may be common to many moral and religious teachings; he, nevertheless, offers something utterly new to these concepts: practical ways to implement them on a large scale (Bok cited in Gandhi, 1993). It is this achievement

of Mahatma Gandhi that both anti-racist education and anti-colonial thought call for their celebration in the academy.

As a critical framework, anti-colonial education challenges Western paradigms that guide today's education systems and social diversity by agitating for more inclusive practices to incorporate varied local concerns about formal schooling. It allows educators to understand how these colonial remnants are being challenged in education today. Gandhi resisted colonial education in South Africa by offering to teach his children and children of Satyagrahi parents in Tolstoy farm instead of sending them to public school (Gandhi, 1993). Gandhi has shown educators a practical way to challenge colonial education in which schools fail to shape their curricula and pedagogical practices to suit local needs. Like anti-colonial thought, anti-racist education is also relevant in destabilizing colonial and re-colonial structures in knowledge production, validation, and dissemination.

I argue that colonialism festered in Ghana because it was highly motivated by racism. Memmi (1967) argues that racism could not be divorced from colonial structures because these structures always undergird racism in everyday power relations between the oppressor (colonizer) and the oppressed (colonized). This is how Memmi articulates it:

> Racism appears then, not as an incidental detail, but as a consubstantial part of colonialism. It is the highest expression of colonial system and one of the most significant features of colonialism. Not only does it establish a fundamental discrimination between colonizer and colonized, a sine qua non of colonial life, but it also lays the foundation for the immutability of this life. (p. 74)

By the power that the colonizers wield, they imposed their image of superiority on the psyche of the colonized. When Lamming (1991), alluding to Frantz Fanon (1967), laments: "Europe had trained black men [Ghanaians] to wear those white masks"(n. p.), he was invariably suggesting that colonial language could be an effective ideological weapon to disempower and disenfranchise colonized subjects from knowledge being produced and validated in their own environment. Consequently, when words prefixed with *black* (blackmail, black-sheep, black-magic, black-market, black-joke) are interpreted to mean something

negative; whereas when words prefixed with *white* (white-collar-jobs, white-magic, white-power) are coded to mean positive things, a subtle way to privilege whiteness and de-privilege blackness occurs. Little doubt, White superiority has been gradually internalized in Ghana to the extent that Ghanaian parents always refer to their successful children as *"me broni"* (my White child).

Critical anti-racist education calls on schools to shape their teaching methodologies (both in terms of pedagogy and curriculum strategies) to capture the wide body of knowledge students bring to the classroom (Dei, 1996; Erickson, 1987). This assertion implies that an anti-racist classroom ought to be a decolonizing space, where teachers and learners reject ways in which hegemonic cultural knowledges shape the reality and experience of local people (see hooks, 1994). An anti-racist education expects teachers to acknowledge and validate experiences and knowledge students bring into learning (see Dei, 1996, 2004). When teachers see learning as a process of sharing knowledge, Indigenous students become confident to ask critical questions concerning the conspicuous absence of certain forms of knowledge while others are constantly glorified.

As a transformative framework, anti-racist prism theorizes education beyond what happens in the classroom to issues emerging in the community (see Dei, 1996). Indeed, education potentially confers simultaneously two rewards on its graduates: a personal knowledgeability and an improvement in social status. Colonial education always negates knowledge of the self and shifts focus to its prestigious function. For instance, because the corporate and state organization in Ghana endorses only Western knowledge, Ghanaian students are reluctant to acquire Indigenous knowledges for fear they will not attain social privilege. But, as Gandhi (1993) reiterates, it is "far better for a learner to remain unlettered and break stones for the sake of liberty than to go in for a literary education [colonial education] in the chains of slaves" (p. 202). Knowledge of self is very important in education. Therefore, teachers and learners should look beyond material rewards of colonial education to seek knowledge to enhance the liberty and self-respect of learners.

Finally, both anti-colonial and anti-racist education warn activists of the risks and perils of doing anti-oppression work in the academy (Dei &

Kempf, 2006). The process of producing knowledge is also a process of making politics. If knowledge is power, then decolonizing knowledge production is also a process of challenging the dominant power. Therefore, individuals engaging in the project of decolonizing the academy need to assess themselves if they are ready to face the consequences of their actions. Spivak (1990) has rightly warned that the task of changing the academy is difficult and only when one begins to take a whack at shaking the structure, one sees how the opposition is well consolidated. Gandhi (1961) cautions individuals devoted to Satyagraha to be prepared to suffer and even to die in their quest to fight oppression and injustice. Probably, the relevant question is not simply who wants to use Satyagraha in decolonizing schooling and education, but who is ready to bear the costs or face the consequences?

SATYAGRAHA AS SPIRITUAL ACTIVISM: A MODEL FOR EQUITY ISSUES IN EDUCATION AND SCHOOLING

According to Dei (2002b), spirituality

> Is the building and rebuilding of human spirit to embrace gentleness, humility, and compassion in learning about others and ourselves. It is about a powerful force beyond the immediate and more physically observable culture, one that directs social action beyond the perspective of human control in terms of that which can be counted, measured, evaluated and physically grasped. (p. 38)

Spirituality borders on themes such as connectedness, love, commitment, transformation, humility, compassion, dedication, and openness. Spiritual activism in education is, therefore, a personal devotion to fight and question all forms of oppression within the education system with no intent of benefiting directly from it. Hindman (2002) challenges educators to work towards the spiritual development of students and inspire them to dedicate their lives towards the struggle against social injustices, inequity, and unfairness that affect every member of society. In such an understanding and conceptualization of spirituality, Gandhi's concept of Satyagraha becomes relevant.

Mahatma Gandhi believes that the main, distinct quality of Satyagraha lies in the desire it inspires in individuals to challenge injustices and inequities in society even if they suffer in the process. A true

Satyagrahi (a person devoted to principles of non-violence) will not be silenced in the face of blatant oppression or injustice. Rather she or he will fight with all her or his might to ensure fairness and equitable treatment to every member of society. As Gandhi (1961) vividly states:

> [If a Satyagrahi] in this world finds him/herself up against evil, s/he cannot [keep quiet] but to resist. S/he comes across injustice, cruelty, exploitation, and oppresssion. These s/he has to oppose with all the resources at his/her command. In [this] crusade, his/her reliance is on Truth or God; and since the greatest truth is the unity of all life, Truth can be attained only by loving services of all, i.e. by non-violence. (p. iii)

Satyagraha demands individuals to advocate against injustice and inequity not because these injustices affect them, but because it is wrong for injustice to happen to anybody. The late Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., a great admirer of Mahatma Gandhi, observes that injustice allowed anywhere is a real threat to justice everywhere, and that the world is becoming a dangerous place to live, not because of the vitriolic words and actions of bad people, but the appalling silence of good people who watch those things happen. Indeed, the world today is filled with self-centred individuals who pretend blindness or apathy to issues that affect others. Consequently, injustices and iniquities have been allowed to flourish globally today.

One injustice that has attracted little attention, from even good people, is knowledge recolonization among Indigenous people. Thesee (2006) argues that colonial education has become the subtle and sophisticated garden in which seeds of colonization and neo-colonization are sown in the minds of girls and boys. Consequently, colonized students who are exposed to this type of education find themselves consciously and unconsciously removed from their local culture and worldview into a new and a different world that does not exist around them. Awoonor (1994) observed that colonial education has placed Ghanaian students in a limbo of cultural confusion, social incoherence, and moral purposelessness. Although Ghanaian students boast of their Indigenous values, they denounce them openly by their life styles. They know what they want to be, but have no knowledge of how they can achieve their goal because their intellectual masters (Europeans) have not yet told them how to do

that (Thairu, 1975). This knowledge colonization justifies the use of Gandhi's Satyagraha to decolonize schooling and education in Ghana. As a matter of fact, Satyagraha challenges Ghanaian educators and policy makers to look beyond the personal benefits they derive from the current colonial education to search for an alternative system of education that addresses local needs.

Like any spiritual activism, Gandhi's Satyagraha abhors and resists any form of oppression affecting individuals, including the weak in societies. "The first job of a Satyagrahi is to bring the real situation to light, even if s/he has to suffer and die in order that injustice will be unmasked and appeared for what it really is" (Merton, 1965, p. 10). According to Dei (1996), the current era of global economic restructuring and the "transnationalization of capital flows" calls for voices that will speak against human poverty, environmental abuse, and the denial of human rights through the process of the most powerful in the global world "designing futures" (p. 18) for others. All individuals have a collective responsibility as members of the global community to challenge their appointed and elected leaders to live up to the ideals of a just society. Dei (1996) concludes that every member of society has to listen and respond to the unheard voices, especially the less privileged in society, and those emerging from "under the sink." The most powerful in society should become concerned while knowledges, cultures, values, languages, and experiences of Indigenous people are being de-privileged and de-legitimized in education.

CENTRING HUMANITY IN RESISTANCE WORK: SATYAGRAHA AND ACTIVISM

The term Satyagraha comes from two Gujarati words: Satya (Truth) which is derived from *Sat* that means "being" and *Agraha*, which means "firmness" (Gandhi, 1993). Satyagraha, as articulated in the editorial note of "Non-Violent Resistance," literally connotes "clinging to the truth"; and Truth, to Gandhi is God. Thus, Satyagraha in the general sense of the word means the way of life of one who holds steadfastly to God and dedicates his or her life to Him (Gandhi, 1961, p. iii). Gandhi argues that Truth is the most important name of God and wherever there is Truth (God), there is also "true knowledge." Where there is "true knowledge,"

there is always "bliss" (*Ananda*) (Gandhi, 1961, p. 38). A true Satyagrahi always devotes his or her life in search for the Truth (Gandhi, 1951). Because "it is impossible for us to realize perfect Truth so long as we are imprisoned in this mortal frame" (Gandhi, 1951, p. 40), seekers of Truth should be guided by *ahimsa* (Gandhi, 1951). *Ahimsa* (non-violence), according to Gandhi, is the basic law of being. "That is why it can be used as the most effective principle for social action, since it is in deep accord with the truth of man's nature and corresponds to his/her innate desire for peace, justice, order, freedom, and personal dignity" (Merton, 1965, p. 23). Gandhi (1993) argues that

> A man and his deed are two distinct things. Whereas a good deed should call forth approbation and a wicked deed disapprobation, the doer of the deed, whether good or wicked, always deserves respect or pity as the case may be. 'Hate the sin and not the sinner'…. Ahimsa is the basis of the search for truth. I am realizing every day that the search is vain unless it is founded on ahimsa as the basis. It is quite proper to resist and attack system, but to resist and attack its author is tantamount to resisting and attacking oneself. (p. 276)

Explaining further the relationship between Satyagraha and ahimsa, Nelson (1975) notes that in Mahatma Gandhi's moral structure, there are "two basic pillars – truth and ahimsa that is non-violence or – as Gandhi called it – love. Truth is the end; non-violence is the means. But the end and the means are bound irrevocably to each other" (p. 57). Diwakar (1969) concludes that in Gandhi's Satyagraha, truth is the one supreme end and non-violence or love is the only means to attain it. These words (truth and non-violence/love) are the

> obverse and reverse of the same coin, but if at any time doubt arises as to which of them is the most important or primarily unquestionable, 'truth precedes'. However, if anyone is confused about truth any day, let him/her follow non-violence, the way of love, the path of suffering, and it will definitely lead him/her to truth. (p. 18)

Gandhi draws a demarcation line between Satyagraha and passive resistance. According to Gandhi (1961), the passive resister or the one who adopts non-violence as policy "is really not non-violent, for s/he would be violent if s/he could, and is non-violent only because s/he does

not for the time being have the means or the capacity for violence" (p. iv). In other words, passive resisters temporarily resort to non-violence because they do not have the means to resist violently. Whereas, Satyagrahis resort to non-violence, not because they do not have the means, but because they have love in their hearts and will not harm or want harm for anybody. "Non-violence is not a garment to be put on and off at will. Its seat is in the heart, and it must be an inseparable part of our very being" (Gandhi, 1958, p. 61). Thus, Gandhi's Satyagraha calls on social and political activists to centre their work on love and humanity. Oppressors or evil doers should feel safe throughout the struggle against their deeds not because they have the power to destroy resisters, but because the latter are peaceful and will never use violence. Being a non-violent activist does not suggest that the oppressor will also respond non-violently, but even if the oppressor acts violently, Gandhi (1958) believes it a true test for Satyagrahi: "the virtues of mercy, non-violence, love and truth in any man can be truly tested only when they are pitted against ruthlessness, violence, hate and untruth" (p. 31). In fact, it is only when resisters refuse to respond to violence with violence, hatred with hatred, and lies with lies that their human nature is well noted. King (1958) also alluded to the same point:

> As I delved deeper into the philosophy of Gandhi, my skepticism concerning the power of love gradually diminished, and I came to see for the first time that the Christian doctrine of love, operating through the Gandhian method of nonviolence, is one of the most potent weapons available to oppressed people in their struggle for freedom. (p. 21)

Mahatma Gandhi's Satyagraha offers relevant lessons in theorizing Ghanaian educational conditions. There is no doubt that education in Ghana needs to be decolonized. But, what are the terms and conditions under which decolonization should be achieved? What should be some of the possible actions and choices Ghanaians have to take if they want to use Gandhi's Satyagraha in decolonizing schooling and education? Whereas, this article may not carry all the answers, I have, however, noted that any true decolonization in schools and education in Ghana by means of Satyagraha should be centred on love. Sometimes, we Ghanaians' own historical and personal experience with colonialism can fill us

with such anger and vengeance against the colonizer that we tend to create counter knowledges that are distorted and sometimes romanticized.

Although it is necessary to centre local knowledges, values, and cultures in the school curricula, we should do so bearing in mind that there are also inherent practices within Indigenous knowledge system that are oppressive and dominating. For instance, research in Ghana in education (see Dei 2002b, 2004) clearly shows that certain aspects of cultural beliefs and value system inherent in local knowledges disempower disabled persons, women, and same-sex relations. For instance, a disabled person in the Southern part of Ghana can never be enstooled as a chief. In fact, until recently, the disabled were traditionally forbidden to appear before a chief because their presence was considered a taboo (see Lax & Stern, *Emmanuel's Gift*, 2005). Although the issue of gender has received some political and academic attention, school enrolment still favours male domination because of Indigenous and patriarchal assumption that women's role is more in the kitchen than at the office. Other cultural practices such as the "Trokosi system" (a cultural practice that places a young virgin girl into slavery to atone for the sins of her relatives) are harmful to women (see Ahiable, 1995). Thus, Ghanaians cannot talk about a true decolonization if they are not willing to challenge all the oppressive ideology and practices hidden within Indigenous cultures, languages, beliefs, and values. In addition, decolonization based on Satyagraha also calls on resisters to question their own privileges and biases they bring to activism. We are all implicated in the site of oppression and privileges. Unfortunately, in our resistance works, we mostly cast our gaze only on areas where we feel oppressed while ignoring areas where we oppress others. Satyagraha calls on us to challenge the oppressive tendencies within us before attacking oppression in our environment.

LESSONS FROM MAHATMA GANDHI FOR SCHOOLING AND EDUCATION IN GHANA

Gandhi (1961) has shown that his non-violent strategies, based on the principles of Satyagraha, could be one practical way to decolonize schooling and education in Ghana. According to Gandhi (1961), Satya-

graha is an ideal way to resolve conflicts between two parties. Every conflict to Gandhi, is, at some level, a struggle between different angles of vision, illuminating the same truth. One should, therefore, approach a conflict with an open mind and willingness to reach compromise while adhering to the truth. Satyagraha, as a spiritual concept, advances three basic principles. They are appeal to an opponent's conscience, non-cooperation, and civil disobedience. According to Gandhi (1961):

> Satyagraha … takes many forms. Primarily it is a case of appealing to the reason and conscience of the opponent by inviting suffering on oneself. The motive is to convert the opponent and make him one's willing ally and friend. It is based on the idea that the moral appeal to the heart and conscience is, in the case of human being, more effective than an appeal based on threat of bodily pain or violence. (p. iii)

Thus, Satyagrahis negotiate with their opponents to address differences, while mobilising proper training for supporters and volunteers to lead the struggle if negotiations fail. Ideally, negotiation involves the following sequence: recognizing the truth and false elements in each side to form a new side, then through negotiation, each side continues to revise and redefine its position until both parties reach a compromised position.

Applying Satyagraha in the context of Ghana's education involves creating a small group of dedicated Indigenous scholars to study and document cases of misrepresentation of Indigenous values, cultures, and knowledges in school curricula/text. These individuals will lobby policy makers in education, teachers, and school administration to open up the school curricula for local knowledges, cultures, and values. They will also show through their research findings the strength and benefits in education of having multiple ways of knowing. As part of Gandhi's first stage of Satyagraha, Dei (2000a) articulates an action plan that Indigenous scholars agitating for alternative forms of schooling in the academy should initiative to achieve their goals.

> 1. First, developing an awareness of Indigenous knowledges (e.g., discussing the topic with students, use of Indigenous guest speakers, resources materials, posters, display and films; targeting Indigenous concerns and issues in classroom

discourses; undertaking research trips to Indigenous communities; planning cultural celebrations – all to be placed in appropriate histories and contexts) to serve as a form of decolonizing education, and also to speak of the atrocities of the colonial encounters between the subject and the colonizer.
2. Developing advocacy and support networks to promote hiring Indigenous faculty; helping the learner acquire critical thinking skills to question the absences from the syllabus of Indigenous writings/texts on the teaching and learning of Indigenous languages, myths legends and philosophies.
3. Developing a sustainable community action (e.g., memberships and linkages with Indigenous community groups; seeking guidance from Indigenous communities).
4. Finally, initiating political actions (e.g., protests, submissions to university administrations; rewarding communitarian approaches to learning and schooling; holistic and intuitive thought, as well as varied ways of decoding information). (p. 121)

Indeed, Gandhi acknowledges the limitation of using only appeals in Satyagraha. He, therefore, recommends that if appealing to the conscience and heart of the oppressor fails to produce the desired results, the oppressed should use non-cooperation as another form of resistance. The non-cooperation is not about denying the oppressor any form of cooperation; rather the intent of non-cooperation is limiting cooperation to only the good deeds of the oppressors while fighting against their evil deeds. The Satyagrahis cooperate with evildoers in what is good, because they have no hatred for them. In other words, the oppressed can cooperate with the oppressor on issues that can address power differences, while maintaining the struggle against oppressive issues. Non-cooperation includes renunciation of any benefits one could personally gain from the oppressive structure if those benefits will not be in the general interest of the struggle. Renunciation as a non-cooperative tool in decolonizing knowledge could mean rejecting and renouncing any academic awards and certificates gained in the colonial classroom in Ghana until legitimate space is given to local knowledges. It may also include boycott, strike, peaceful disruption, blockade, and even refusing to attend or participate in classes that use only Western language or curricula/text.

If these steps fail to produce a settlement (that is, fair and accurate representation of Indigenous knowledges in schooling and education in

Ghana), then the final stage, civil disobedience, has to be applied. Here again, the distinction should be drawn between laws that are good and those that are bad. As much as it is important for any citizen to obey just laws, it equally beholds on groups devoted to Satyagraha to collectively disobey unjust laws. In his letter from Birmingham City Jail, King (1963) wrote:

> One may well ask, how can you advocate breaking some laws and obeying others? The answer is found in the fact that here are two types of laws; there are JUST laws and UNJUST laws.… One has not only a legal but also a moral responsibility to obey just laws. Conversely, one has a moral responsibility to disobey unjust laws. I would agree with St. Augustine that 'an unjust law is no law at al.l' (p. 80)

Applying civil disobedience to education and schooling in Ghana could mean disobeying school laws such as the compulsory use of only English language as the medium of communication within school premises and literature works (wa Thiong'o, 1986). One could also refuse to participate in history and geography classes that concentrate on only the achievements of Western intellectuals: mountains and rivers that exist in the West. In this case, when Owens (2001) laments that Aboriginal/ Indigenous students in a Western academy are compelled to master European and Euro-American literature and they fail to be familiar with Shakespeare, Chaucer, and other Eurocentric scholars, they will not be taken seriously and probably will not earn a university degree. A Satyagrahi applying civil disobedience will refuse to conform to such academic demands and accept the consequences. Like the late Steve Biko of South Africa, a Satyagrahi will write what he or she likes without bothering about penalties. Applying civil disobedience in research work could also imply using Indigenous methodologies to research (Smith, 1999), instead of the positivist methodology and epistemology recommended by the academy. Finally, civil disobedience could also include creating a parallel institution to the dominant ones. This act means setting up independent schools that include Indigenous knowledges, cultures, languages, values, and curricular/texts along with the dominant ones.

Mahatma Gandhi believed that if students and scholars of decolonization will be humbled, determined, disciplined, and courageous in these approaches, they would be able to transform education for justice, freedom, and democracy.

GANDHI'S SATYAGRAHA BEYOND SCHOOLING AND EDUCATION IN GHANA: MY FINAL THOUGHT

I have based the recommendations suggested in this article on historical and contemporary conditions in Ghana. These recommendations do not in any way suggest that the ideas informed from this article cannot be utilized in other areas of human struggle. For some time now, educators and scholars through research have expressed concerns about Indigenous/Aboriginal students' disengagement in schools in North America. In view of this issue, many have suggested the need to broaden the current curricula to accommodate alternative forms of knowing. According to Semali (1999), the inclusion of Indigenous knowledges in the Western-inspired academy opens Western students and teachers to understand that their ways of seeing the world are but one of many cultural perspectives. Such understanding opens up conversation on differences and how they should be treated in society. Semali further maintains that "engaging in difference is more empowering than a narrow focus on homogenous cultural traditions" (p. 47). There is, therefore, a need for further research on the possibilities and implications of utilizing Gandhi's Satyagraha to create space for Indigenous knowledges in Western schooling.

Furthermore Gandhi's Satyagraha has a lot to offer humanity, given the global issues of colonization, poverty, cruelty, racial discrimination, religious tensions, inequities, human degradation, and erosion of values. Probably, the words of Adam Fairclough (1990) sum up everything: "if humanity is to progress, Gandhi is inescapable. He lived, thought, and acted, inspired by the vision of humanity evolving toward a world of peace and harmony. We may ignore him at our own risk" (p. 1).

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