Article

A Life of Integrity: The Maccabean Story

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Abstract: The experience of ontological and epistemological dominations made Africans lose their self-consciousness and become unfulfilled in life. Every human being has a life of integrity that must be lived. The Maccabees in the Bible were dominated by Antiochus IV, the King of Syria. He desecrated the Temple, changed their religion, politics, economy, and social life and above all made himself a god to be worshipped. He deprived the Jews of their identity and dominated them ontologically, but they had a life of integrity to live. Some of the Jews accepted the new way of life by Antiochus and helped to betray those few Jews who stood against this new system of Antiochus. Many of the pious Jews lost their lives, but with hope in Yahweh and persistent endurance they regained their identity and life of integrity. The plague of coloniality made Africans invariably lose their identity, and consequently their integrity as others determined their pace of life. The African story is like the Maccabean story; this article studies selected texts in Maccabees (1 Maccabees 2 and 3; 2 Maccabees 6 and 7) and suggests their regaining of identity and life of integrity to the African situation. The paper uses biblical exegesis and intercultural interpretations to unearth the buried African treasures for an integrity of life.

Keywords: African identity and integrity; African culture; African hermeneutics; Maccabean revolt; coloniality; ontological and epistemological dominance

1. Introduction

Human beings have a life of integrity to live. Situations sometimes compel people to become what they are not. To avoid suffering, torture, punishment, or to remain loyal and not to lose gentile opportunities, people turn to abandoning their real self for a "constructed self". Integrity is all about defending and maintaining one's real self regardless of any situation. The loss of integrity leads to non-fulfillment, failure, anger, unproductivity, and regret due to the self-abandonment. Hence, integrity is the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles that one will refuse to change. The Maccabees defended their integrity amidst the tortures; they defended the name of the Lord that stood for their integrity, even at the edge of death. The story of an elderly priest, Eleazar (2 Maccabees 6), a mother together with her seven sons (2 Maccabees 7), and the brave valiance demonstrated by Mattathias (1 Maccabees 2) and Judas Maccabeus (1 Maccabees 3) are all in defense of integrity.[1]

The Jews, to which the Maccabees belonged, were colonized by Antiochus IV Epiphanes, the King of Syria. Antiochus desecrated the Temple, changed their religion, politics, economy, and social life; he built a gymnasium and above all made himself a god to be worshipped. He stopped sacrifice to Yahweh, deprived the Jews of their identity, put a stop, and scrapped off their mark of circumcision. This vicious act against their integrity became real, when some of the Jews out of vileness and disrespect to their being, sold themselves out to Antiochus (1 Macc 1:13–15). The introduction of this new life had an ontological and psychological effect on them; but Israel has a life of integrity to live. Like in all spheres of life, some accepted the new way of life by Antiochus and thus betrayed those who stood against the new system. Many pious ones lost their lives in defense of their identity and integrity. But in pursuance of liberty and integrity, those who came to the knowledge of the evil behind the colonizers fought gallantly for their identity and

regained their life of integrity. The plague of coloniality and the birth of modernity made Africans invariably bury their identity and consequently become deprived of their integrity. Like Antiochus, their modernizers determine their pace of life; Africans are dominated ontologically and epistemologically, and the attitude is expressed psychologically in the loss of consciousness, and they now live an unfulfilled life. The African story is like the Maccabean story, although the Africans are not being tortured and killed physically as by Antiochus but mentally. This article studies selected texts in Maccabees and suggests to the Africans the need to see through the dark side of modernity and strive to regain their identity and life of integrity. The goal is epistemological warfare to regain integrity. The paper uses biblical analysis and intercultural interpretations to unearth the buried African treasures for an integrity of life.

The biblical analysis of the Maccabean situation is aimed at giving the awakening and to give the impetus to Africans to sit up like the Maccabees. The intercultural approach with its theoretical framework reinforces this study to show its relevance, that is, to understand the dark side of modernity. The approach maintains that: "It is impossible to capture the totality of any given social group's culture. It realizes also that dominant or powerful groups may deliberately or unwittingly seek to impose their culture and perspective upon all others, or else control and select what is to be allowed expression. Worse still, and yet most common, has been the attempt to universalize and 'normalize' a particular culture's experience and judge all others by that one's views" (Lartey 2003). This approach is envisaged to bring to light how unknowingly and knowingly Africans abandoned their rich cultural values for other values; and to expose the dark side of modernity, how it has turned Africans into robots who are being controlled by other humans. For holistic development, Africans must appreciate themselves as a people, see the richness in their cultural values, and have the confidence of a capable worthy life. These will enhance the good elements of its culture with special reference to politics, economics, and religion in their development. The paper explores the good motivation of the Maccabees, after which it studies coloniality and how it affects the African ontologically and epistemologically, and finally suggests ways to free oneself from the clutches of modernity.

2. Antiochus and the Maccabees

The Maccabees are a priestly family of Jews who organized a successful rebellion against the Seleucid ruler, Antiochus IV Epiphanes, in defense of their integrity; they fought to protect their faith and their land. The land defines the ontology and the epistemology of the Jews.

2.1. Antiochus

King Antiochus IV Epiphanes, a villain Seleucid ruler of Syria, was a Greek Hellenistic king, who ruled the Seleucid Empire from 175 BC until his death in 164 BC (Harrington 2009). He was a son of King Antiochus III, the Great. He conquered Palestine and, to establish his ideas and instill his culture, extirpated the faith of Israel; he attacked Israel's religious practices. He forbade the observance of the Sabbath and the traditional feasts. He stopped all sacrifices to Yahweh, forbade the reading of the Torah, and gave orders to search out and to burn any copy that could be found. He forbade the practice of circumcision, the identity that set the Jews apart from other peoples as the "One People of God". In place of these practices, Antiochus encouraged the development of cultural clubs called gymnasia, in which people gathered to study, to learn, and to enjoy each other's company (1 Macc 1:14). This reform was backed with torture and death for those who disobeyed the orders of the king, but those who accepted the new ways and defiled themselves were set free. Many Judeans obeyed out of fear; reversed their circumcision, abandoned the covenant and the Mosaic Laws, and renounced their identity as God's chosen people to live for Zeus (1 Macc 1:43–52). He set up the abomination of desolation upon the altar and built idol altars throughout the cities of Judah (1 Macc 1:54).

2.2. The Awakening

Awakening only comes when change in ontology has become real. A renowned elderly priest, Eleazar (2 Macc 6:18–31), proved his integrity when he refused to eat pork, meat that is against the dietary laws of the Jews, an abomination to his Jewish faith. In the interest of Antiochus, the executioners, in pretense, suggested to spare his life out of respect for his old age, to bring any meat of his own choice to substitute the pork and eat, in deceit of the onlookers who will take the meat for pork. Eleazer refused the corrupt proposal; he could not part with his integrity, he was a man of stature, he chalked excellent years as a high priest and has the honor of gray hairs; he could not stoop so low. He told his executioners he will not defy his soul for the king; in that strong conviction of faith, he maintained his integrity and exhibited an emulating character.

In another story, it is unthinkable for a woman to encourage her seven sons to undergo torture and death, instead of eating free meat (2 Macc 7:1–42). Free gifts are sometimes dangerous; meat is free but ontologically destroys the self and epistemologically diverts one's knowledge from what it used to be. The meat is unholy and against her religious faith. She reminded the sons of who "they are" and not to concede to any new way of life. The last of the sons was bribed by the king, but despite the promise of luxury, he courageously refused to eat. The story ends with a short note to the effect that after the death of her sons, she too died (2 Macc 7:41).

Mattathias, a priest in the town of Modein (1 Macc 2:1–14), having realized the dark side of the new life, and filled with zeal, smote a fellow Judean who out of fear moved forward to make the sacrifice and murdered the officials in charge of the sacrifice (1 Macc 2:24–25). It takes courage and determination to resist a change that is masked with pleasantness. Mattathias knew the consequences of resisting the gift, but he was compelled by integrity and his tradition. Together with his five sons, John Gaddi, Simon Thassi, Judas Maccabeus, Eleazar Avaran, and Jonathan Apphus, and those with the course of integrity fled to the mountains of Judah (1 Macc 2:26–28). He rallied an army and revolted against Antiochus and his army and even fought on the Sabbath (1 Macc 2:41); this began their agenda of protecting their integrity. Loyalty to the Word of God is their being; that even at the edge of death, they decided not to give up their integrity. They preferred to die and save their soul, to live eternally with God, than to save their body and lose the eternal reward from God. After the death of Mattathias, his son, Judas Maccabeus, assumed leadership and violently resisted Antiochus (1 Macc 3:1–9). Judas believed in the Lord and thus, the Lord was with him and made him victorious. He cleaned out the pagan presence from the Jerusalem temple and restored it to the worship of God. Undoubtedly, the effective and godly leadership of Mattathias and Judas Maccabeus was one motivational factor that made the Jews fight against Antiochus Epiphanes.

In conclusion, the Maccabees did not wait for Yahweh to defend them, they began the liberation process and were helped by Yahweh (1 Macc 3:19, 53). Their loyalty to the Torah is their defense of integrity. Those who see through the lens of Antiochus did not concede to his demands but those who did not see through it defiled themselves. In the end, Antiochus was defeated; and on his sick bed in his tent, he set Jerusalem free, mandated that the Jews be treated equally as citizens of Athens, restored the holy temple, and he himself was to become a Jew (2 Macc 9:1–29). All these happened because the Maccabees defended their integrity to the point of death. The feast of Hanukkah celebrates the victory of the Maccabees and the re-dedication of the Holy Temple.[2] The story of the Maccabees should inspire people around the world who are oppressed to fight injustice.

3. Unearthing the Buried Mind

A change in concept leads to a change in attitude. Today's world has become very subtle so one may not be aware of what one is doing to oneself. The plague of coloniality has penetrated the fabric of African life. The term coloniality evolved out of modernity and has become its gloomy outcome. Coloniality is constitutive of modernity; there is no modernity without coloniality (Escobar 2004); and modernity cannot exist without

colonialism. Mignolo, in his book, The Dark Side of Modernity, reflects in depth the correlation between modernity and colonialism (Mignolo 2007a). Modernity, however, is the period of European history that witnessed the most significant cultural and scientific achievements; and was a major turning point in European history. Unfortunately, it has a rationality of superiority that it inflicted on its colonies. Modernity, as an ideology, became the underlying source of coloniality and the tool for its persistence. This ideology dominates and assigns value to ideas based on specific standards, which results into a kind of epistemic hegemony that excludes and rejects other forms of knowledge (de Onrubia 2013). It is colonialism, which spearheaded modernity and evolved into a power mechanism—coloniality that works in a subtle manner through the rhetoric of modernity in terms of "development" and "progress". Mignolo refers to these terms "development" and "progress" as the oppressive logic of colonialism.[3] A trend which is still in force by economic and military giants through processes guided by experts from institutions or international organizations. With their technology, they begin developmental projects and finally shape these African countries in their own image and likeness dominating them ontologically and epistemologically.

> According to Mignolo,
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> The colonial difference operates by converting differences into values and establishing a hierarchy of human beings ontologically and epistemologically. Ontologically, it is assumed that there are inferior human beings. Epistemologically, it is assumed that inferior human beings are rational[ly] and aesthetically deficient.[4]

The colonial difference is a Western-imposed standard that judges what is to be accepted and what is to be excluded.[5] This difference creates perspectives of the feeling of inferiority imposed on human beings who do not fit the narrative of the predetermined model of Europe or America (Mignolo 2005). It creates the position of subordinate, and allows for indigenous knowledge to become subaltern "See note 5 above". The colonial difference established by modernity creates "coloniality", a term that is to be distinguished from "colonialism". Mignolo stresses this distinction on the basis that colonialism was the direct domination of the colonies by one imperial power for the extraction of resources, whereas coloniality is backed by a pursuit of ontological domination, based on the inferiority of the other.[6] Colonialism is a historical, visible relationship and coloniality implies a more subtle form of hegemonic control over a population "See note 5 above". In that regard, the coloniality of power produces, evaluates, and manages the colonial difference.

It has been observed that colonialism developed structures which were considered inhuman. There emerged de-colonial thinking and doing, as a response to these oppressive and imperial ideals of colonialism that the colonist enacted and inflicted on their colonies, since the sixteenth century "See note 4 above". Anthony Giddens, in *The Consequences of Modernity*, projects modernity as a purposeful project of the West. He sees the nation-state and the systematic capitalist production as the European anchor of modernity (Giddens 1990). The West has the authority and the control of the economy under the guise of the historical foundation of imperial Europe. Modernity is a Western project and has to take responsibility for coloniality and the crimes and violence justified in the name of modernity.[7] In fact, coloniality is one of the most tragic consequences of modernity and has called for a global march toward de-coloniality "See note 7 above". International law enforces modernity; for instance, it contributed to the scramble and partition of Africa.[8] It gave them power to do whatever they like with the African continent and to make them rational just as the Spanish Indians had to be conceived, whether they were humans and rational.[9] In epistemic assumptions and arguments, modernity decided and determined who was what. Thus, coloniality emerged under the inferior status of the invented inferior; giving rise to ontological and epistemic differences: the Indians are ontologically lesser human beings and epistemologically not fully rational (Maldonado-Torres 2007). The Indians like the Africans must be made rational and that made their ideas inferior and

consequently buried; this buried self can only be exhumed after the recognition of the imposed ontological and epistemological domination.

The regaining of the buried self is what Mignolo's de-colonial approach seeks to do. It dissociates the individual and the non-European realities from the European context, thus focusing on unique colonial histories. For this reason, he prefers to use the term de-colonial instead of postcolonial. De-colonial thinking departs from the idea of post colonialism.[10] De-colonial thought attempts to break with the imposed position of colonial difference ontologically and epistemologically and attempts to liberate any remaining ties with Europe through the process of border thinking "See note 10 above". In order to decolonize a being, says Mignolo, one must first decolonize perceptions, understanding, and actions (Mignolo 2007b). There are two theories[11] "dependency theory"[12] and "replacement theory"[13]; the knowledge and the understanding of the hidden agenda beneath these theories liberate one ontologically and epistemologically.

a.   *Dependency Theory*

Loans are given and interest are paid making the giver of the loan richer. Help is given with the intention that the recipient adopts their way of life; sometimes, in the name of human rights. Raw materials are taken away, processed, and sent back to the primary producers of the raw materials to buy at a high price. It is the way Africans keep the West in business and make them wealthier.

b.   *Replacement Theory*

Replacement of values, norms, habits, and beliefs. This is experienced in changes in power and authority, in worship, and in style of living. Africans now dress like Europeans or Americans; a particular dress is associated with a particular position or a situation and must be used; even if, "the weather" is not favorable. The traditional chief, the queen mother, and his councilors rule over the people, this has given way to Western government machinery. Worship today is seen in Christianity or Islam. Marriage must be performed in the Euro-American way, duplicating marriage rites and rendering the traditional marriage valueless. The result is broken homes, single parenting, and street children.

The Maccabees faced similar situations, imposition of civil leaders, stopping and scraping of circumcision, worshipping of Zeus, and eating of free pork (1 Maccabees 1). Antiochus came with free pork that the Jews did not have to work for, just to lure them to depart from their way of life. Some were converted by it, while others resisted. Today, there are promises of money for development with strings attached to them; by accepting them, they compel one to sell off integrity. They gave the money but managed the money. The African is incapable, he or she is inferior, not "up to that rational management". With this, Africans will forever depend on them. To come out of this web is to understand the logic of coloniality, its structure, how it changes hands, transforms, adapts to new circumstances, maintains its spheres, its interrelations in management and control of authority, economy, and how it keeps people in its grips. By people, this implies subjectivity, gender, sexuality, and knowledge.[14] An African thought; the Maccabees, those who thought through the thought of Antiochus and saw the danger, sacrificed themselves despite the betrayal of their own kind.

4. Towards a Dialogic Hermeneutic Path

There are concepts that have come to stay because they dialogued with existing concepts. In any system, the best and the ideal manner is to dialogue and arrive at a mutual agreement that suits both parties; and in this case, it will represent the people of whom modernity poses to help. Western civilization brought many good things to Africa: literate education, improved health facilities, ease in communication, and an alternative basis for raising leaders, good families, for a better society and a good economic development (Darko 2001; Amanor 2009). Today, leadership goes with the Western form of governmental system. Prior to that, the chiefs were the leaders of the communities with the help of the queen mothers and their counsellors. Matters concerning the economy, well-being,

and religious affairs were his responsibility; but this position has been taken over by the Western governmental system. Most of the leaders put there by the Western system are devoid of cultural human values. African values have come under derision; leadership is identified with corruption, greed, extortion, murder, torture, terror, and selfishness. The family, the kernel of society, has become a mockery; marriage is in shambles. With the entry of Western culture, some of its values and practices in Africa have been characterized by conflict with the African culture and ethos (Mbiti 1991; Lartey 2001; Wild-Wood 2019). The consequences from clashes with preexisting traditional beliefs and practices in Africa is enormous (Onyima 2014); just like Antiochus in Palestine. Lartey asserts the transmission was performed as it existed in Europe.[15] Their concentration was to instill and, hence, they placed a lot of emphasis on how to civilize, that is, to Europeanize and to inculcate European values into the local people (ontological and epistemological dominations) and thus, gradually but uncompromisingly, they replaced the African customs and practices.[16]

Regrettably, most of the West regarded the African culture, the tradition, beliefs, norms, habits, and values they came across as "fetish and superstitions" and had no place in what they have brought to the Africans.[17] In pursuit of that, they used certain deceptive terms such as primitive, savage, fetishism, juju, heathenism, paganism, animism, idolatry, and polytheism, in describing the belief of the African people (Awolalu 1976). Consequently, they misrepresented Africa and ill-advisedly undermined the ethos and traditions of the African people ontologically and epistemologically. Three human factors that strongly affected the integrity of the Africans are: economy, politics, and religion.

a.　The Economy

According to Armstrong, Western achievements are due to two salient spheres: economy and epistemology. In the sphere of the economy, Armstrong points out, the new society of Europe and its American colonies had a different economic basis that consisted in reinvesting the surplus in other to increase production: capitalism. This allows the West to reproduce its resources indefinitely and this is colonial intent (Armstrong 2000). The second sphere, epistemology, is associated with the European Renaissance. This epistemology comprises the different sciences, knowledge, arts, and meaning. This transformation Armstrong locates in the domain of the sixteenth century, when Europe achieved a scientific revolution that gave them the edge over other continents.[18] The economy, today, is capitalism and the scientific revolution is still on-going within the sphere of media, health, and agriculture, just to mention but a few. Therefore, capitalism and the scientific revolution both fit and correspond to the celebratory rhetoric of modernity, that is, the rhetoric of salvation and newness "See note 11 above".

The hidden dimension at the onset of both spheres of the economy and epistemology is the slave trade. The slaves were used as a work force for production and since then, human life has been exploited. Thus, from the Industrial Revolution until now, the twenty-first century involves the exploitation of "inferior human beings".[19] Williams described this situation as one of the most important consequences of the "Glorious Revolution" of 1688 and was the impetus that gave the principle of free trade in which the commodity involved was human beings.[20] Thus, until today, hidden behind the rhetoric of modernity, human lives have become expendable to the benefit of increasing wealth and such expendability was justified by the naturalization of the racial ranking of human beings. In addition, today, there is brain drain, which is another form of slavery. The best brains are given scholarship and are enticed to stay on and not to return to Africa. The good intention would have been to develop Africa for these brains to remain. Everything about the West is conceived to be the best: education, health, economy, industrialization, and social life. And the African is ready to pay so much for these services in the West. This is how the idea of modernity lingers on with its dark side of coloniality that conceptualizes the Renaissance (Dagenais 2004).

Africans benefit little from their natural resources.[21] Their raw materials are exported to the West for processing; raw gold, bauxite, crude oil, coffee, cocoa, and many more and

the finished products are sold to Africans, the original home of the raw materials, at a high price. Africans were convinced (in their inferior mind) that the price of the finished product will be cheaper if they are processed outside, since Africans do not have the facilities to process. To build a processing plant in Africa will make theirs in the West redundant; thus, the best solution is for Africans to feed their plants in the West, to keep them in business, and thus generate work for them. Africans can have adequate institutions of their own, if only they can see through the lens of coloniality as the Maccabees did with Antiochus. It should be consciously known that capitalism is profit-making under the cover of greed and profiteering. The epistemological outshoot of coloniality made Africans think themselves incapable of managing their economy and so they are unable to do so. The IMF must teach Africans how to maintain their economy; and coloniality helps to put incompetent personnel at the helm of affairs. Their incompetence is engulfed in corruption, extortion, terrorism, and looting and "the system" helps them to steal and dump in the West.[22] If it involves money, the West do business with it and gain interest; and sometimes, Africans borrow their own money and pay interest on their own stolen money.

b.   Politics

　　The scramble and the partition of Africa destabilizes the different cultures in Africa. The colonizers divided people with the same language into different countries or political zones, making them estranged from each other; and some, even now, fight each other. Before the colonizers, the chiefs were the political heads of the people. Chieftaincy is one of the revered and oldest leadership institutions in the history of Ghana. The chiefs were the custodians of the land, the apex of political relations of their people. As custodians, they unite the various lineages, become the symbol of their identity, and the embodiment of their spiritual values.[23] In this regard, they are the military, religious, economic, legislative, and administrative heads; they maintained law and order. Their people looked up to them for protection, counseling, and direction; before their people embarked on any social, economic, or any other life ventures, they sought their blessings (Effa-Ababio 2015). The chiefs provided the needs of their people. Their roles were clearly defined, known, and respected by their subjects. With the introduction of colonialism, with its constituents: modern political institutions, socioeconomic development, Christian and Islamic influences, formal education, urbanization, modern commercial trade practices, modern transportation, and information communication technology; chiefs have been silenced, and their roles disregarded. They have become subsidiaries to the leadership rule of the West-introduced government. Their level of influence, control, and social impact dwindled. They were left unattended and became less important because the colonial masters manipulated and convinced the citizens to follow them. This action took away the attention of the people from their chiefs to the newly introduced leadership. The new leadership has political titles like: Chief Executive Officer, Chief Justice, Chief of Staff, Chief Imam, Chief of Defense Staff, and Chief Information Officer; however, these are not traditional chiefs and are not covered by the 1992 Constitution (Asamoah 2012).

　　Even with the event of Ghanaian independence, the state machinery did not recognize the position of the chiefs. It was the 1992 Constitution of Ghana, Article 277 defines a chief "as a person who, hailing from the appropriate family and lineage, has been validly nominated, elected or selected and enstooled, enskinned or installed as a chief or queen mother in accordance with the relevant customary law and usage". Thus, a chief is a person nominated, elected, or chosen from a royal lineage and enstooled in accordance with customs and traditions. These elements are necessary for a person to be recognized by the constitution as a chief. In recent times, some have called for the abolishment of the institution of chieftaincy,[24] due to the numerous unresolved and protracted litigations within the institution "See note 24 above". Notwithstanding, the chiefs play crucial cultural and religious roles in their community and gaining a position within the government machinery will enhance development. Thus, a purposeful effort should be made to reshape the institution to give it a modern outlook to play a more useful role; because a chief wields

authority over his people; he is regarded as a political and a religious head. He is the link between the dead and the living, an embodiment of the beliefs, hopes, fears, and aspirations of his people. These traits will enhance good governance towards development because the people still look at their chiefs as sacred and as a leader. The chiefs managed their communities without borrowing, stealing, and dumping in other communities.

c.　Religion

Religion deals with the sacred and becomes the source of moral life for the people. It comes with values, rules, norms, rites, and beliefs. Proverbs, fables, and taboos are associated with religion, but were considered as devilish and abandoned. Today, there is a need to understand the reasons behind some of the taboos, proverbs, and folklores. Marriage, one of the values of African culture, is the source of family life and the fabric of the society. The performance of its rite has been taken over by capitalism. Its sacred nature has given way to a display of wealth and selfish interest. At a marriage ceremony, a drone delivered the rings for the couples; there are several kinds of photo shots (pre, main, and post), limousine rentals, hotel accommodation, dishes of all kinds, and many more; they end up forgetting the essential elements of marriage. Marriage is a covenant that unites a man and a woman. Christianity holds that marriage is holy and instituted by God (Gen 1:27; 2:25; Matt 19:5–6). African traditional marriage, according to Mbiti in his book, *Love and Marriage in Africa*, "is a melding of two families and its survival is ensured by both families" (Mbiti 1977) Africans cherished marriage as an important integral part of sustaining the family and the society. It marks the beginning of families, community of people, and nations. Therefore, marriage, as an institution in Africa, is not merely between husband and wife, but between their families and the community as it creates a social relationship. Therefore, "as Africans, each of the two partners in marriage is a social being, and by getting married, the partners establish a social relationship."[25] Unfortunately, the ontological and epistemological influences have made Ghanaians refer to their traditional marriage as "engagement" in the definition of the West. They degraded their own form of marriage for what is not yet marriage and the result is a high rate of divorce, broken homes, and single parenting as observed in the West.

A critical look at why African cultural marriage has less regard may be due to polyandry or polygamy as it is normally put.[26] Rock, in his book, *Marriage and Family*, states "polygamy was not the divine intention and that those who practised it suffered from its effects" (Rock 2000). Well, most Christians in the West regard polygamy as both sinful and illegal, a cultural heritage which influenced Rock's conclusion that the principles of Christianity and the practice of polygamy are mutually exclusive.[27] Not all Africans practice polyandry or polygamy; but this has devalued African traditional marriage and so, Christian marriage or Islamic marriage has to be performed, even if African traditional marriage has been performed. This practice duplicates marriage rites. The duplication of marriage rites is the phenomenon whereby Ghanaian Christians who marry under customary marriage rites go through another marriage rite of the Ordinance marriage or Church blessing to show that their marriage is Christian, even though each of the two rites is complete.[28]

In Africa, a customary marriage ceremony is a rite of several days.[29] In A. Hastings' own words, "marriage did not take place at one single moment of time, but it came into being across a series of meetings, negotiations, and ceremonies" (Hastings 1973). It unites the two families for the expected good life, it engages the society through inquiries into the background of each prospective spouse. This contrasts with marriage in the West. Dominique Meekers says, "in contrast to the marriage ceremony as a discrete event in Western societies, African marriage is a complex institution that generally proceeds by stages, most of which are characterised by the performance of prescribed rites" (Meekers 1992). The commitments made at each stage of the various rites bind the spouses together. Meekers opines "African marriage, is a process composed of several stages between the preliminary rites and the full acceptance of the couple as a social unit."[30] It starts from

the day the idea to marry was conceived and the information given to one's parents and siblings; if accepted, then the wife-to-be's family is investigated and with satisfaction, they reveal the decision of their son to the woman's family, "the knocking". The woman's family having heard the desire, if accepted, then they in turn investigate the husband-to-be's family. With satisfaction, they send their consent to the man's family. It is after this that the man's family will be allowed to obtain the necessary things for the marriage and with the acceptance of the bride wealth by the woman's family, marriage is performed. Bride wealth refers to "marriage payments from the prospective husband and his kin to the bride's kin" (Keesing 1981). In other words, bride wealth is a "payment remit-ted in some form to the bride's family in order to officialise a marriage."[31] All these steps involve rites, which are missing in the Western form of marriage. These rich cultural values give meaning and solidify marriage but are now either abandoned or performed in the so-called "civilized" manner and the result is divorce, broken homes, single parenting, and street children with its consequences of violence in society. Fortunately, the awakening although at a snail pace is dawning; some have seen what they have abandoned as a people.

5. The Resilience

To regain integrity is to reconstruct the mind and free it from those ideologies that have been assimilated over the years and have affected and shaped the ontology and the epistemology of the African. Africans need a new sense of vision to create a new world that resonates with their own rhythm of life. This demands an epistemic shift, a rejection of the status quo to a discovery of the self.[32] Comparison is good, I have no problem with it, but it is only good when it respects the human essence in the other. Economic development only becomes well-being when it takes into consideration the worth of the human being it is supposed to help. One only speaks of prosperity when the person who prospers can smile. Well-being means enjoying the basic needs of life and living a life of dignity with happiness.[33] This well-being advocates an equitable distribution of wealth and resources and not production and consumption that neglects the source of the wealth and the resources "See note 33 above". What should be envisaged is a world that respect equal value, yet pertains to different geo-political spaces, and not a world that is seen as an inferior compared to a world of standards and judged by its value system as an absolute.

To achieve integrity is to gain self-consciousness and to appreciate one's identity with confidence and sincerity. In this, unity is essential to take what seems lost. However, there are times that full unity may not be achieved as happens to the Maccabees, but they were not perturbed; they went ahead to do what they must do. They rely on their capabilities, and with the help of stones and mountains, they started their journey to freedom. Today's corporate world is about economic development with numerous ideas on modernization; Africans need strong intellectual opposition to scrutinize these ideas of its human objectives. The ideas must be discerned because many are like nice buildings with marble floors that have deep hidden holes underneath. In this regard, it is expedient to consider the analysis of conflictive scenarios that confront arguments in defense of those who want to become modern and to develop, with those who engage in radical criticisms of modernity and development (Escobar 1994). Many are not conscious that there are other factors that enhance economic development. Take, for instance, the fact that religion was a leading contributing factor to the rise of capitalism.[34] In Africa, and in Ghana in particular, before modernization there was respect and adherence to African values and marriage. There were elements of eligibility for a person to live a married life; unfortunately, modernization claimed most rites as fetish and unholy, leading to a disregard, duplication of marriage rite and a drain on the pocket. Customary marriage is very economical, has sound moral value, and saves time. Cultural influence is appreciated but to throw away one's own culture, or to duplicate, is retrogression. There is no need for extremism; there is no need to abandon Western dresses and there is nothing wrong with wearing African prints; there is no need to abandon foreign names and there is nothing wrong with taking African native names; it is not a fight back, but the regaining of oneself.

Help from endowed Western countries comes with strings in the name of human rights that infringe the culture of Africans; Africans are forced to accept help with the notion of coming out of poverty; yet their state becomes worse because they remain poor, if not poorer, and devaluate their culture. Africans' integrity is being bought with money in the name of economic growth. Some African countries stood against some of these offers, but others did just the case of the lousy Jews by eating the free pork. There was a Western presence in China, yet today they are different. It is a question of the reinforcement of sovereignty. The same was true with India and South America, they have their own share of modernity. The inspiring energy of Malaysia, the Philippines, and Rwanda are positive responses to the effect of coloniality. Thus, there is need to observe carefully where one steps; there are non-governmental transnational organizations questioning capitalism, globalization, and modernity. They also open global but non-capitalist horizons and de-link the idea that it is single, and that the main modernity is surrounded by peripheral or alternative ones. Their move is not to reject modernity but makes it clear that modernity goes hand in hand with coloniality and, therefore, modernity must be assumed in both its glories and its crimes; what is termed de-colonial cosmopolitanism.[35] Each and every form has its own vested interest; Africans must lean wisely. The best way is to shut one's own door and engage oneself and proceed from the conceived knowledge of the self; a national policy, a vision that must be fulfilled.

Africans must learn to develop within its local potentials instead of copying and relying on imported models to shape their economy, politics, and development. This is far from saying no good has come out of modernity and that Africans cannot learn from others, but the idea for some to believe that theirs is the best and must decide for others is wrong (Mignolo 2009). Coloniality enforces differences to the neglect of essentials. Its profitable energy on personality issues and particular goals like classism and ethnic and religious differences should be channeled towards clean air, good education with classrooms filled with tables and chairs for pupils, potable water, abundant food, and good health for all: eradicating child mortality, good hospitals with beds, medicines, and equipment that will provide the needs of all class, sex, race, and age. Each of these class, sex, race, and age demographics have potentials that must be enhanced and not allowed to be buried.

6. Conclusions

The Maccabees did not identify with Antiochus because he was a foreign ruler who sought to impose Hellenistic culture and religion on the Jewish people. The Maccabees saw themselves as defenders of Jewish identity, sovereignty, and independence. Antiochus' policies were not only culturally oppressive but also politically motivated, aimed at erasing Jewish autonomy and assimilating them into the Seleucid Empire (1 Macc 1:49). The Maccabees, therefore, saw themselves as fighting not for the rejection of foreign culture but for their political freedom and the preservation of their national identity (1 Macc 3:21). Antiochus' attempt was to end their self-governing life and impose Greek traditions on them as is the case with modernity. They saw Antiochus as a tyrant who was trying to destroy their way of life. They were willing to fight and die for their faith, and they saw their rebellion as a righteous struggle against ontological and epistemological oppression.

The path for Africa is knowledge, meaning, and subjectivity. Africa must understand what today's economic development is about, what western democracy is about, and what Africa must do to help itself. Africa must help itself to come out of this nightmare. International law legalized the economic appropriation of land, natural resources, and non-European labor of which outsourcing today shows the independence of the economic sector. The nationalist arguments of developed states warranted the accumulation of money, technological institutes, and free global communication—the mass media. The accumulation of money, technology, and media are seen as saviors to progress and development; as good as they look, they turn to enslave the mind, dominate, and sustain the narratives of modernity. With that, coloniality will continue to raise its ugly head. Africans have a project of de-coloniality to regain themselves, but the path to this liberation is not an

easy one because many barriers must be broken; this demands self-sacrifice devoid of selfishness and greed, determination, collaboration, understanding, and focus. Using the Indians and the Spaniards, Anthony Anghie gave a succinct analysis of colonial difference from its historical foundation: the Indians and the Spaniards are equal but misconstrued by "the doctrine" that assumed the existence of sovereign states and made them different (Anghie 1999). That is the knowledge; in a nutshell, modernity is a Western invention, so too is coloniality. Therefore, it will be very difficult to overcome coloniality from a Western modern perspective.

Eleazar rejected pork, free meat, even with the diabolic idea of using meat of his own choice. Unlike Eleazar, many of the African elites sold themselves out; they have eaten the free pork. Furthermore, the Maccabees had a strong sense of national identity and pride in their history and traditions, that even though they conceived and accepted the fact that they were being oppressed because of their sins (2 Macc 7:18, 32–38), they still cherished their Jewish identity and existence and would not compromise it. Africans should embrace their so-called poverty and strive from within. Africa is not poor! The Jews believed God would have mercy on them when they persevered and obeyed his commandments in those dire situations. They would rather die than disobey God's law and will again (2 Macc 7:2). Thus, Africans, although made poor economically by modernity, can build themselves up to regain their integrity and to persevere with determination. The formation of individual conscience is a recovery of the link between freedom and truth. This truth is found in education; that is the acknowledgement of a person's inherent condition as a creature of God, as one with the value of life that can change the value system and lifestyle, and with a stern mobilization of a culture of life, which respects family life and acts as the educator of families and the mass media.

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Notes

1.   For the full story read the First and the Second Books of Maccabees in the Bible.
2.   Harrington, The Maccabean Revolt, 12.
3.   Onrubia, Shifting Paradigms, 10–11.
4.   Mignolo, "Coloniality: The Darker Side of Modernity", 39.
5.   Onrubia, Shifting Paradigms, 11.
6.   Mignolo, The Idea of Latin America, 7.
7.   Mignolo "Coloniality: The Darker Side of Modernity", 44.
8.   The Berlin Conference of 1884–1885, also known as the Congo Conference or West African Conference, met on 15th November 1884, and after an adjournment concluded on 26 February 1885, with the signature of a General Act, regulating the European colonization and trade in Africa during the New Imperialism period.
9.   Thus, it is not surprising to find today growing concerns, and several scholars, working on the de-colonization of international law. See (Jones 2006).
10.   Onrubia, Shifting Paradigms, 6.
11.   Mignolo, "Coloniality: The Darker Side of Modernity", 41.
12.   Dependency theory is the flow of resources from a "periphery" of poor and underdeveloped states to a "core" of wealthy states, enriching the latter at the expense of the former; https://en.m.wikipedia.org (accessed on 30 August 2023).
13.   Replacement Theory is a conspiracy theory of attempting to replace one race with another; https://www.britannica.com (accessed on 30 August 2023).
14.   Mignolo, "Coloniality: The Darker Side of Modernity", 48.
15.   Lartey, "Of Formulae, Fear and Faith", 5; Wild-Wood, "Missionary Archives on Africa," 62.
16.   Lartey, "Of Formulae, Fear and Faith", 5.
17.   Onyima, "Marriage Ceremony", 171.
18.   Armstrong, Islam: A Short Story, 142.

19 Inferior because they thought of them as inferior and made them believe that they are inferior, and they accepted and believe that they are inferior.

20 See the Afro-Trinidadian politician and intellectual (Williams 1944).

21 Africa's move from raw material exports toward mineral value addition: Historical background and implications | MRS Bulletin. https://link.springer.com/article/10.1557/s43577-023-00534-3

22 Abacha's loot: US to return $23 million stashed funds to Nigeria—CNN. https://www.cnn.com/2022/08/24/africa/us-returns-abacha-loot-intl/index.html (accessed on 20 October 2023).

23 The Chief is the intermediary between the living and the dead. At his installation, he assumes a sacred body; and in case of any accident or dangers to his body, sacrifices are performed to check any danger that is likely to befall any of his subjects. See also (Asante 2007).

24 Asamoah, "A qualitative Study of Chieftaincy", 90–95.

25 Mbiti, Love and Marriage in Africa, 45.

26 (McConnell 2001). See also (Mondal n.d.).

27 Rock, "Marriage and Family," 736.

28 (Quashie 2014); Amanor, "Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches in Ghana," 123–140; Lartey, "Of Formulae, Fear and Faith," 5–15.

29 Mbiti, Love and Marriage in Africa, 63.

30 Meekers, "The Process of Marriage," 61.

31 Keesing, Cultural Anthropology, 508.

32 Mignolo "Coloniality: The Darker Side of Modernity," 47.

33 Onrubia, Shifting Paradigms, 5.

34 Religion controls attitude to work be it hard work or laziness, for example western capitalism. See Secher's introduction in (Weber 1962).

35 Mignolo "Coloniality: The Darker Side of Modernity," 41.

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