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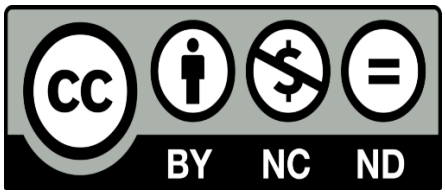

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EDITORIAL

Among the Senufos from the north of Côte d'Ivoire, the sacred grove is called "Sinzang". The first of these would date from the time of the patriarch and leader of Korhogo SORO Zouakagnon (1840-1894). It is the tutelary space of the initiatory institute of the secret society: the Poro. These sacred forests exist in all the villages of the region and are highly protected and managed. The proof is that in their midst, adolescents perform the rite of passage leading them to the age of maturity. The "Sinzang" is also the centre of intergenerational knowledge transmission. Thus, the teaching of ancestral knowledge, ontology and cosmogony-contributing to the future spiritual, moral and social formation of the Senufo elite-is associated with this pantheon.

In line with this pedagogical and academic logic, the SINZANG Journal aims to promote African and Western humanities in Literature, Language, Communication and Education Sciences. To do this, it is part of a process of promoting the reflections and studies conducted by Teachers-Researchers and Researchers for the sustainable development of society.

As distinctive signs of "Sinzang", Jacqueline DELANGE, in *Arts et peuple Sénoufo de l'Afrique noire*, identifies among others the huts, earth cones and statues (masks). The visual identity of this magazine presents two masks, one symbolizing ancestral knowledge and the other Western science. The two facing the entrance of a sacred hut express the encounter of diverse knowledge put at the service of humanity. *In fine*, they export to other horizons, hence the idea of huts in perspective.

SINZANG is a pluridisciplinary and biannual peer-reviewed scientific journal. It is published in English and French but also accepts work written in German and Spanish. Moreover, depending on the requests made at the discretion of its review committee, it may issue special thematic publications and conference proceedings.

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ÉDITORIAL

Chez les Sénoufos du nord de la Côte d'Ivoire, le bosquet sacré est communément appelé « Sinzang ». Les premiers du genre dateraient de l'époque du patriarche et chef de Korhogo SORO Zouakagnon (1840-1894). C'est l'espace tutélaire de l'institut initiatique de la société secrète : le Poro. Lieux fortement protégés et aménagés à l'envi, ces forêts sacrées existent dans tous les villages de la région. La preuve en est qu'en leur sein, les adolescents effectuent le rite de passage les amenant à l'âge de la maturité. Le « Sinzang » est aussi le haut lieu de la transmission de la connaissance intergénérationnelle. Ainsi, l'enseignement du savoir ancestral, de l'ontologie et la cosmogonie- contribuant à la formation spirituelle, morale et sociale de l'élite Sénoufo de demain-est associé à ce panthéon.

S'inscrivant dans cette logique pédagogique et académique, la Revue SINZANG ambitionne de faire la promotion des humanités tant africaine qu'occidentale dans le domaine de la Littérature, des Sciences du Langage, de la Communication et de l'Éducation. Pour ce faire, elle s'inscrit dans une démarche de vulgarisation des réflexions et des études menées par les Enseignants-Chercheurs et des Chercheurs pour le développement durable de la société.

Comme signes distinctifs du « Sinzang », Jacqueline DELANGE, dans *Arts et peuple Sénoufo de l'Afrique noire*, identifie entre autres les cases, les cônes en terre et les statues (masques). L'identité visuelle de cette revue présentant deux masques, l'un symbolisant le savoir ancestral et l'autre la science occidentale. Les deux se faisant face à l'entrée d'une case sacrée expriment la rencontre de connaissances diverses mis au service de l'humanité. In fine, elles s'exportent vers d'autres horizons ; d'où l'idée des cases en perspective.

SINZANG est une revue pluridisciplinaire à comité de lecture et scientifique. Elle est bilingue : éditée en anglais et en français. Mais elle accepte également les travaux écris en allemand et en espagnol. C'est une revue semestrielle, tenant deux parutions l'an. Au demeurant, elle peut

procéder, selon les demandes ou les sollicitations formulées à l'appréciation de son comité de lecture, à des parutions spéciales thématiques et à la diffusion d'actes de colloque.

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THOMAS PAINE'S COMMONSENSE AS AN INSPIRATIONAL AND HISTORICAL SOURCE FOR DECOLONIZING THE BLACK MIND

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Abstract

This paper seeks to demonstrate that Thomas Paine's *Commonsense,* which had played a decisive role in inspiring Americans to unity and independence, can also serve as an intellectual and historical model for Africans in this context of neocolonialism toward real mental and physical emancipation. In the current context of neocolonialism in Africa, this historical document can also be revisited and used as a source of inspiration for achieving authentic independence just like Americans earlier. This study adopted a qualitative approach within the framework of postcolonial theory. As for the findings, this study had demonstrated that *the Commonsense*, which once motivated Americans to claim complete independence from Britain, can equally be used to inspire Africans to chase after the real and sustainable freedom.

Keywords: Africa, America, Commonsense, neocolonialism, independence

COMMONSENSE DE THOMAS PAINE COMME SOURCE INSPIRANTE ET HISTORIQUE POUR DÉCOLONISER L'ESPRIT NOIR

Résumé:

Cet article vise à démontrer que le *Commonsense* de Thomas Paine qui a joué un rôle décisif dans l'unité des Américains menant à l'indépendance, peut aussi servir comme un modèle historique et intellectuel pour les Africains, dans cette période de néocolonialisme vers une véritable émancipation phtisique et mentale. Dans ce contexte de néocolonialisme en Afrique, ce document historique, *Commonsense,* peut être revisité et utilisé comme source d'inspiration afin d'obtenir la vraie indépendance tout comme les Américains quelques siècles plutôt. Cette étude adopte une approche qualitative. La psychanalyse est également mobilisée pour les analyses et l'interprétation des données. Les résultats ont montré que le *Commonsense* peut effectivement servir de modèle pour les Africains à lutter pour la vraie indépendance mentale et physique.

Mots-clés: Afrique, Amérique, Commonsense, indépendance, néocolonialisme

INTRODUCTION

Commonsense, is an engaged political work, written by Thomas Paine in 1776. This book had played a tremendous role during the American Revolutionary period. It was published in a period when the relationship between North American colonies and the Great Britain, was getting worse following some restricted laws adopted by Britain. In that, American colonists had started to interrogate the British authority over their land. With this regard, Paine's text had played a vital role in bringing together the colonies, stimulating them to revolt against the unfair oppressive distant British rule, by advocating the rights of Americans to self-management and complete freedom.

Many scholars have explore Paine's *Commonsense* from revolutionary, political and historical angles. S. Monahan (2015, para, 10) highlights that when the tension broke out the Britain and its North American colonies, Paine was solicited by Benjamin Rush "to write a *Pamphlet* in support of independence from Britain." and its systems, using mild and unoffending words. However, Monahan revealed that Paine agreed to publish the document but did not take into account Rush's advice of using a low tone. In that, the scholar sustained that the publication of Paine's document in 1776 was described by the historian Gordon S. Wood as «the most incendiary and popular Pamphlet of the entire revolutionary era,» (S. Monahan, 2015, Para,10) as it had a tremendous impact on the course the revolutionary struggle. In the same dynamic way, many postcolonial black scholars such as Ngugi wa Thiong'o, through *Decolonizing the mind: the politics of language in African literature* in 1986; Aboubacar S Coulibaly, through *Le monde Africain doit se reveiller* in 2024; and Frantz Fanon, through *Black Skin White Masks* in 1952 etc., have examined the persistence of the colonial domination in the contemporary Africa and the need for a real decolonization of the Africans' minds. Nevertheless, throughout the different works by African scholars, it has been remarked that little not to say no attention was paid to Paine's *Commonsense* as a relevant text to the contemporary African context, dominated by a recurrent political, economic and ideological interference of foreign countries. This article therefore seeks to establish a connection between Paine's political and revolutionary visions and the present realities of Africa.

The main concern of this study is that despite the official end of colonization several decades ago, many African nations are still not fully sovereign as they are dependent, politically, economically, culturally and ideologically, on the diktat of

former colonial powers. In the light of the foregoing concern, it is salient to examine whether the ideologies defended in *Commonsense* can serve in the contemporary African context as it had been for the American colonies of the 18th century.

The forgoing statement therefore leads us to pose the following questions in order to guide and ensure the implementation of the study:

- How did *Commonsense* contribute to the galvanization of Americans during the Revolutionary period?
- Can Thomas Paine's revolutionary ideas be applied to the contemporary African context?
- How can African intellectuals and scholars use *Commonsense* as a roadmap for resisting and rejecting neo-colonial domination and promoting the true emancipation?

The Following hypotheses are formulated based on finding answers to the above research questions:

- *Commonsense* significantly contributed to the success of the American Revolution by awakening the consciousness of colonists towards achieving the real independence.
- Paine's ideologies advocating freedom, resistance to oppression and self-governance are relevant to contemporary African countries.
- African intellectuals can draw inspiration from *Commonsense* to galvanize Africans toward achieving the mental, political, and economic decolonization.

Hence, the objective of this paper is to show that Paine's *Commonsense*, which was crucial for the American independence, can also be used by African scholars and intellectuals as a roadmap for the contemporary Africans who are craving for the real mental and physical emancipation. Qualitative research method is adopted in the data collection and analyses of this study. As the study deals with legacy of colonialism, post colonialism is the appropriate theory needed for the analyses of the study's data. The paper is divided into two main sections. Firstly, the study strives to display the Revolutionary power of *Commonsense* on the American people of the 18th century. Then, the paper examines how this historical document can serve and inspire Africans towards the decolonization of mother Africa under modern form of colonialism.

1. THE REVOLUTIONARY POWER OF *COMMONSENSE*

This section accounts for the key principles promoted in *Commonsense* on the one hand; on the other hand, it strives to display their impacts on the American independence.

1-1 Historical Context and Key principles promoted in *Commonsense*

Paine was born and raised in Britain; he was a supporter a liberal world view. For that reason, Paine was regarded as radical in Britain. He was not in good terms with the British Crown, for he viewed the British style government unfair. He was also opposed to slavery and its practices. Paine used to work as an excise collector and was also involved in a movement that claimed the rights of his colleagues excise collectors. It was in that context that he had petitioned to the English parliament on behalf of colleagues excise collectors, requesting a salary rise. Their struggle for the rise in salary did not work the way they hoped, and he was sacked accordingly. Therefore, Paine had decided to move to America for personal freedom. Then he immigrated to America after meeting Benjamin Franklin in London in 1774. Since then Paine's grudge against the British authorities had amplified [26]

When set foot on the American soil, this coincided with a series of British restrictive laws imposed on American colonies, and more and more American dwellers had then started to voice their concern and objection to that situation. Hence. Following the foregoing event, Paine who was not fond of the British crown and their system of governance, had taken that opportunity to pose himself as a defender of the American cause. That is, since his arrival to the colonies coincided with a conflict between Britain and its colonies in America, he decided to take the bull by its horns by posing himself as the advocate of the colonies' cause. It is in that dynamics that, Paine published *Commonsense* in 1776 to stimulate and motivate American colonies to contest the hegemonic system of the British crown, advocating and promoting the principles of freedom, equality, and justice under a system of self-governance away from Britain as bright way.

[26] This notes are from the biography of the author by thewritedirection.net edition of Thomas Paine's *Commonsense*, 2004.

In the very introduction of Paine's historical document, he castigated that the situation prevailing in American colonies should not be considered as the American cause only, but a universal one. It means that a distant nation like Britain must not impose its visions and laws on other nations. In this regard, he upholds:

> The cause of America is in a great measure the cause of all mankind. Many circumstances have, and will arise, which are not local, but universal, and through which the principles of all Lovers of Mankind are affected, and in the Event of which, their Affections are interested. The laying of a Country desolate with Fire and Sword, declaring War against the natural rights of all Mankind, and extirpating the Defenders thereof from the Face of the Earth, is the Concern of every Man to whom Nature hath given the Power of feeling… (T. Paine, 2004, p.2)

In this excerpt, the author underlined and castigated the oppressive attitude of the British rule over the American colonies. He meant that the colonial rule was infringing the rights of Americans and even killing those Americans who dared to resist or denounce that encroachment. Therefore, he assumed that the unfair situation of the subjugated American people should be the concern of every human being who possesses humanity. Through the passage, the author was clearly trying to awaken or raise the awareness of the Americans to the importance of being free.

In that process of raising the Americans' awareness, Paine made a distinction between two systems of governance for Americans. He believed that some Americans of that epoch were confused about the notion of government as most of them were born under the British administration and their system. In doing so, Paine wrote some lines which gave the American readers the opportunity to judge by themselves the type of the governance system which was fair and logic which they would aspire. Thus, he stipulates as follows:

> SOME writers have so confounded society with government, as to leave little or no distinction between them; whereas they are not only different, but have different origins. Society is produced by our wants, and government by wickedness; the former promotes our happiness POSITIVELY by uniting our affections, the latter NEGATIVELY by restraining our vices. The one encourages intercourse, the other creates distinctions. The first is a patron, the last a punisher. (emphasis original) (T. Paine, 2004.p4)

This passage clearly questioned the position of some colonists, unequivocally the loyalists and the moderates of that period who seemed to approve of the hegemonic rule of Britain to some extent by not castigating or rejecting the distant oppressive British system in the American colonies. Thus, he described the British colonial government as a system of wickedness which punished and oppressed the colonists.

He also presented another system devoid of autocracy and tyranny which would be more positive as it would be produced by the wishes of the population, the American one particularly. The latter according to the passage promote happiness and create harmony and unity between Americans. Here, the author tried to inform Americans that the colonial rule was oppressive, negative and inhumane whereas the new model of government which is clearly democracy would serve positively all the Americans without making any distinction. According to the passage, the author was sure that through the new suggested model, American colonists would live in peace, happiness and unity.

In the same way, Paine sustained that some Americans believed that the British authority over their land was beneficial for Americans, for it was a guaranty of security. However, he continued that some Americans, the loyalists, had failed to realize that Britain administered Americans colonies for its interest not for love. The next extract corroborates this idea:

> We have boasted the protection of Great Britain, without considering, that her motive was INTEREST not ATTACHMENT; that she did not protect us from OUR ENEMIES on OUR ACCOUNT, but from HER ENEMIES on HER OWN ACCOUNT, from those who had no quarrel with us on any OTHER ACCOUNT, and who will always be our enemies on the SAME ACCOUNT. Let Britain wave her pretensions to the continent, or the continent throw off the dependence, and we should be at peace with France and Spain were they at war with Britain (emphasis original). (T. Paine, 2004. p.32)

Through the foregoing excerpt, Paine tried to remind Americans of the real intention of the Great Britain vis-à-vis their American colonies which was purely based on their interest rather than a supposed affection for the colonists. In doing so, Paine was intending to prepare Americans mentally for the war for independence. Accordingly, he told his fellow colonists to take their distance from the British foreign affairs, mainly the British territorial conflict with France and Spain. On this account, he appealed Americans to make peace with France and Spain who were the bitter enemies of the Great Britain at that period. He meant that the fact that France was the enemy of Britain did not mean that the former should have been the Americans' enemy. Through this passage, Paine proposed his brother Americans cooperation with other countries. That is, he insisted that alliance with other nations was the right path for them to face the British colonization.

Moreover, the pamphleteer was adamant to galvanize his fellow Americans, so he strongly rebuked the supporters of the British administration; especially, the loyalists and moderates who were against the war on the basis that Americans had to negotiate and reconcile with Britain. In that, he insisted that American colonies had not gotten any advantage from the British rule and that they could benefit from no future advantage under that system. With this regard, he asserted:

> I challenge the warmest advocate for reconciliation, to show, a single advantage that this continent can reap, by being connected with Great Britain. I repeat the challenge, not a single advantage is derived. Our corn will fetch its price in any market in Europe, and our imported goods must be paid for buy them where we will. (T. Paine, 2004, p.35)

Inferring from the foregoing, it can be understood that Paine was trying to persuade the opponents of the revolution to reconsider their position. Like in all revolutions, there would always some people who would go against the opinion of the majority. Thus, the writer posed himself the frontrunner of the revolutionary movement with his pen, tried to unite all the Americans against the common enemy, the Great Britain whose system he had always despised.

The writer went on to say that the failure of the first battles that opposed British army to American revolutionary army was due to those Americans, who were appealing for compromise. Hence, he warned the latter against any infringement that could affect the Americans' determination to continue the revolution up to the total satisfaction of their wish, that is, the independence. This idea is ascertained as follows:

> The next war may not turn out like the last, and should it not, the advocates for reconciliation now will be wishing for separation then, because, neutrality in that case, would be a safer convoy than a man of war. Everything that is right or natural pleads for separation. The blood of the slain, the weeping voice of nature cries, 'TIS TIME TO PART (emphasis original). (T. Paine, 2004, p.36)

In his endeavor to gain the adhesion of all Americans, the author revealed that all the sensible things had pleaded for a breakup; even God that created humanity was also for the separation of Britain and America. For that reason, he insisted that Britain should not have imposed its authority on America and that Americans must not accept that situation. In the end, he appealed Americans to reminisce about the blood of the murdered Americans of the colonial system and the lamentation of the nature, all of which believed that it was the right time to stand up for liberty, justice and self-government. This figure of speech which exanimates nature was purposefully used to emphasize the importance of the struggle against the British. All in all, Paine called on

all the colonies under the oppressive rule to join hands and fight together for the right cause, the independence.

1-2. Impact on American Independence

In the 18th century, a series of coercive measures passed by the British government against its American colonies had provoked growing dissatisfaction among the colonists. That popular discontent soon turned into demonstrations and protests leading to scuffles between the colonists and the colonial administration. However, there were divergence of opinions among Americans. Indeed, the loyalists and moderates were continuing to advocate negotiation, which showed that there were deep divisions among Americans regarding the response take vis-à-vis the British authority.

The publication of Thomas Paine's *Commonsense* on January 10th, 1776, had marked a significant turning point due to its impact on the colonists and the fight. As it was spread rapidly throughout the British America's colonies, the Pamphlet had impacted the public opinion by galvanizing them and intensifying the revolutionary feeling and spirit of the American people. To show the significance of Paine's work in the revolutionary period, Monahan (2015), para.13) asserts as follows:

> Before Paine's writing, the word "republic" was common associated with mob rule and anarchy in mainstream discussion. After *Commonsense* had soaked through colonial society, a republic seemed to be the only just form of government (…). Paine's work was crucial in winning over many to the cause of independence and republican government.

Through this passage, it can be construed that Paine's text helped unite and motivated the colonists; even some loyalists and moderates were impressed and inspired by his text. The same passage reveals that the publication of *Commonsense* had given a new form and meaning to the word republic as it had become associated with fair and just system of government. The following illustrative work, titled "Thomas Paine and His Importance in the History of the United States of America" provides further proof of the essential role of Paine's in the revolutionary period:

> Paine's writings, particularly Common Sense and The American Crisis, played a pivotal role in inspiring the American Revolution. His persuasive arguments helped to galvanize public opinion in favor of independence. Paine's clear and compelling prose made complex ideas accessible to the average colonist, effectively communicating the urgent need for independence from British rule. (J. Rosenhagen, 2019, p.2)

The passage confirms the previous statements relating the tremendous role of Thomas Paine's *Commonsense* in the American independence. To show that Paine's text had been influential, it should be noted that a few months after its publication, the American colonists had declared their independence on July 4th, 1776. The pertinence of the mentioned influence lies in the fact that some recommendations in Commonsense also appeared in the Declaration of Independence document. On the page 73, Paine declared: «First, That it is the interest of America to be separated from Britain».(emphasis original) This idea is manifest on the page 4 of the American Declaration of Independence as follow: «solemnly publish and declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States». The connection of these two passages is obvious as both place emphasis on the separation and independence. In addition to that, on the page 80 of *Commonsense*, Paine insisted: «We have it in our power to begin the world over again». The same idea is also repeated the Declaration of Independence, on the page 4, in the next lines: «as Free and Independent States, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do». These two passages are also related, both sustain that America is capable enough to take charge of itself. These different pieces of evidence demonstrate that Paine's work had exerted a considerable influence on the drafting of Declaration of Independence.

This historical document had spread very powerful lessons throughout the colonies and had achieved three main goals during that period. First, it acted as an ideological force to structure a common ideology for all the American colonists to reject the British monarchical government system. In that, Paine castigates the political system of England which many Americans regarded as balanced and fair. He asserts as follows:

> To say that the constitution of England is a UNION of three powers reciprocally CHECKING each other, is farcical, either the words have no meaning, or they are flat contradictions. (…)But as the same constitution which gives the commons a power to check the king by withholding the supplies, gives afterwards the king a power to check the commons, by empowering him to reject their other bills; it again supposes that the king is wiser than those whom it has already supposed to be wiser than him. A mere absurdity! (T. Paine, 2004, pp.9-10) (emphasis original)

From the passage, the author argues that the British system was contradictory and ridiculous because it was said that British political power was divided into three parts, each was supposed to check the others. However, he implies that the king was

endowed with the power to reject or block laws passed by the Commons. For that, Paine interprets that system as a contradictory absurdity and tries to teach his fellow Americans to reconsider their vision as far as the Great Britain and its political system were concerned. Trough that rebuking remark, he means to ignite an ideological upheaval in every American against the British rule.

The Second goal Paine achieved through the *Commonsense* was political. Ever since it was published, American political mechanisms had taken shape gradually as more and more political leaders were starting to believe in the American cause, even some of the most reluctant ones, namely the loyalists. With this regard, Monahan (2015), para.13) insists: "Not only Paine's work reach a much broader audience than the previous attempts had, inspiring many to revolt, he succeeded in changing the very language of politics itself." In fact, it added an extra political force to the revolutionary fight for independence. The foregoing implies that Paine's text had given a new dimension to politics, different from the traditional perception.

Finally, it helped create and consolidate an American identity. Indeed, Paine has hailed the American in his Pamphlet as a person who does not deserve to be under other people's domination. In doing so, he postulates that Americans should not regard the British as super humans because they are on the similar footing:

> We shall then too, be on a proper footing, to treat with Britain; for there is reason to conclude, that the pride of that court, will be less hurt by treating with the American states for terms of peace, than with those, whom she denominates, "rebellious subjects," for terms of accommodation. It is our delaying it that encourages her to hope for conquest. (T. Paine, 2004, p.81)

From the extract, Paine tried to strengthen the mindset of Americans by showing them that they should not think inferior to British; however, they urged them to overcome fears and face the British like people similar to them. It means that colonists should not feel any inferiority complexes as far as relationship between the two people were concerned. Through the same passage, the Pamphleteer tried to shape a new American citizen who would never bow or kowtow to other people out of fear.

2. *COMMONSENSE* AS AN INSPIRATION FOR AFRICANS

The section scrutinizes the ongoing struggle for the real independence in Africa. Then it also accounts for the inspirations that can be drawn from Paine's *Commonsense*.

2-1. Neocolonialism and the Need for Real Independence in Africa

Despite the formal end of colonialism several decades ago, many African countries in the 21st century remain deeply influenced by former colonial powers. This influence often limits their ability to exert their own policies and take autonomous decisions. The legacy of colonial ideology is still a reality in Africa. It refrains African politicians and even intellectuals to affirm themselves without any complex. The enrooted inferiority complex which shaped colonial Africans is still present in the mindset of many Africans. Nyikal (2005, p.1) corroborates the above statements, implying that Africa is under a new form of colonialism in the following passage:

> I painfully agree that living conditions are worse now, but reiterate that colonialism is not over as such. There is merely a new form of colonialism, by the same western countries, masked under the pretext of economic support for Africa, directly enforced or institutionalized in the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Many African leaders and population still bear an inferiority mentality vis-à-vis the former colonial powers. That is why nowadays Africa is impoverished economically and politically. In this framework, the developed countries have implanted all kind of NGOs or other related world organizations in Africa just to ensure that Africa remains subjected to them politically and economically.

In addition to that, they also cover the training and education of prominent African youth through the grant of scholarships or through the integration of some westerners' oriented school curricula in Africans' formal education. In relation to that Coulibaly in his book, *Le monde Africain doit se reveiller,* argues: «Before realizing the glorious history of black people, the school system inherited from colonialism had totally alienated my mindset because it had taught me to reject my world.»(A. S. Coulibaly, 2024, p.10, *My translation*)) Inferring from the foregoing, it can be construed that those black Africans who graduate from the mentioned school are likely to be at the disposal of the Europeans whenever they need them. The latter would grow some cravings for western civilization to detriment of their African one and became like marionettes. All is done to maintain Africa and its people in the position of subordination.

Furthermore, the same author insists that since the independence of Africa, many Africans, including himself, are still mentally colonized, for they are still continuing to regard the white people as superior beings, mainly because of the colonial inherited school curricula in some African nations. That is why, Coulibaly (2024, p.10, *My translation*)) in *Le monde Africain doit se reveiller*, reveals:

> At white man's school, I and my other classmates learnt that the white man is like a demigod who is in control or who can decide the course of everything that my grandmother used to tell us about our people and our history longtime before the advent of the white people in Africa under the cover of colonialism.

In the passage, Coulibaly unveils that the white people were implicitly presented in postcolonial African schools, as demigods. This situation is due to the fact the curriculums taught in the schools of the ex-French colonies, were the legacy of colonialism or influenced by it. That situation creates a kind of dependency on the former colonial powers.

As a matter of fact, several black intellectuals, most notably Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Leopold cedar Senghor, Chinua Achebe, Franz Fanon, David Diop etc., have used their pens as weapons to raise the awareness of Africans concerning fight for real independence. Ngugi wa Thiong'o, for instance is known for his pan Africanism, especially through several of his works. In this context, he argues that African nations are still experiencing a new form of colonialism several decades after the official announcement of their independence. So he castigates the continual neocolonialism in Africa, and call for a real process of decolonization of Africans in his essay, *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature* in 1986. Ngugi's concept of "decolonizing the mind" calls for a true mental change which requires the dismantlement of the colonial enrooted legacy in Africans' mentalities, on one hand. On the other hand, with this essay, he tries to revive African cultural values, and ignites self-confidence and determination in every African throughout the continent. In the following passage, Ngugi explicates how the neocolonialism is operating in Africa under a new shape:

> The imperialist tradition in Africa is today maintained by the international bourgeoisie using the multinational and of course the flag-waving native ruling classes. The economic and political dependence of this African neo-colonial bourgeoisie is reflected in its culture of apemanship and parrotry enforced on a restive population through police boots, barbed wire, a gowned clergy and judiciary; their ideas are spread by a corpus of state intellectuals, the academic and journalistic laureates of the neo-colonial establishment. (Ngugi, 1986, p.2)

The passage sheds light on the way the former colonial powers influence Africans so that the latter would linger under their domination. That is, to maintain Africans dependent politically, mentally and economically on the Western nations, the imperialists place their grappling irons on the African bourgeoisie and ruling classes through the service multinationals. Subsequently, Africans, although considered free officially, are still trapped by the phenomenon of mental colonialism. This mental colonialism is an obstacle for the development of African nations.

Several decades later, it must be acknowledged that Africans are still not fully decolonized; they tend to be interested more in the white man's values than their African ones despite the publication of the works like *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature* in 1986, by Ngugi and the others. This situation shows that Africans still need a new mechanism that could trigger the freedom spirit in each African for a real mental decolonization like it happened in America in the 18th century. Therefore, this survey seeks to present Paine's *Commonsense* as a motivational document that can pave the way for a sustainable and a long term decolonization of the mindset of the black man like it did longtime ago during American Revolution.

2-2. Inspiring from Commonsense

For the real and sustainable decolonization the African mind, Thomas Paine's *Commonsense* is the appropriate paradigm for African intellectual and ideological emancipation. Although it was written for 18th century American colonists, Paine's messages for unity, self-determination, and resistance to external domination have an international dimension. Any country that is subjected to another country may take *Commonsense* as a model for the real mental revival. So, the situation prevailing in contemporary Africa means that *Commonsense* is adapted to African context since Africans still need mental revival which can lead to the actual freedom. African scholars should take the example of Paine and try to critically reinterpret this historical text. This would surely ignite a collective consciousness in Africans leading to political autonomy which goes with the rejection of foreign interference in African domestic affairs.

The principles of solidarity, determination, and the pursuit of unconditional freedom that proved decisive during the American Revolution, were central themes

displayed and promoted by Paine in *Commonsense*. The following lines substantiate the aforementioned principles:

> Tis not the affair of a city, a country, a province, or a kingdom, but of a continent (…)'Tis not the concern of a day, a year, or an age; posterity are virtually involved in the contest, and will be more or less affected, even to the end of time, by the proceedings now. Now is the seed time of continental union, faith and honor. (T. Paine, 2004, p.30)

Through the above extract, the author show the significance for all the colonies to work together for the same goal. It means that they could succeed only when they give hands in communion and determination throughout the struggle.

These principles, when integrated in African educational programs and civic discourses efficiently, would contribute significantly to the deconstruction of neocolonial ideologies still persistent in the mindset of many Africans as discussed the previous section. It is thus the duty of African scholars, teachers or intellectuals in general, to take Thomas Paine as a model and his *Commonsense* as an instructive tool to raise the awareness of the African people who are not totally independent in the true meaning of the words.

The contemporary Africans should learn from *Commonsense* to be free of all the complexes, be it inferiority or racial that are preventing them from affirming themselves as sovereign on the one hand. On the other hand, Paine's text can help spare Africans from being manipulated against their nations for the cause of the neocolonialists. To corroborate the vulnerability of some Africans to western manipulation, Kwame Nkrumah (1965, p.37) argues:

> Neo-colonialists (…) use the old colonialist methods of religious, educational and cultural infiltration. For example, in the independent States, many expatriate teachers and 'cultural ambassadors' influence the minds of the young against their own country and people. They do this by undermining confidence in the national government and social system (…).

Kwame Nkrumah exposes the malicious methods used by some former colonizing western countries in Africa which are undermining Africans' real emancipation. The use of manipulation has a lot of influence on Africans exposing them to inferiority complexes as they are losing their self-confidence.

The American people underwent approximately the similar domination situation, but able to break away from their colonizers with the help of Paine and other important figures. They should be cognizant of the fact that the former colonial

powers like France and England, are not supposed to give any orders or instructions to African leaders since they are officially independent several decades ago. Another reason why Westerners should not interfere in African domestic affairs is the geographical position exiting between Africa and Europe on the one hand, and America and Africa on the other hand. This idea is underscored by Paine as follows: "Even the distance at which the Almighty hath placed England and America, is a strong and natural proof, that the authority of the one, over the other, was never the design of Heaven." (T. Paine. 2004. p.36) It means that the geographical position that separates the two continents, namely America and Europe was the proof that Britain did not have the holy right to exercise its hegemony over people of America. The same situation is a reality in Africa as well. Modern Africans should not tolerate being told what to do by distant power. This passage from Paine's work can motivate Africans to have courage and say no to foreign interference.

Furthermore, for the sake of above assertion, it can be understood that Africa which stands hundreds of miles away from Europe and America, must not take orders from them like colonial America was urged to do. As discussed previously, the colonial Americans were under the dictates and calls of the Great Britain, and they sometime said enough is enough. If this was true at that period, modern Africans should not accept any orders from Westerners either. And this ideology must be promoted by African scholars both through their works and at school.

CONCLUSION

In sum, there is a close resemblance between the American colonists' struggle of the eighteenth century and the current situation of African countries. American people revolted against the domination of a distant Britain which they considered unfair and unacceptable. However, black African nations are still subjected to the domination of American and European powers several decades after their official independence. Furthermore, these powers continue to deny Africans the opportunity to fully enjoy their political, economic, and cultural freedom despite the end of formal colonialism in the 1960s.

The objective of this study was to demonstrate that *Commonsense*, which played a crucial role in the American independence, can also serve as a roadmap for contemporary Africans seeking mental, political, and economic emancipation. The study has revealed that the publication of *Commonsense* in 1776 was decisive in

unifying the British American colonies and encouraging them to collectively resist British domination in order to achieve independence.

Indeed, the investigation has shown that Paine transformed the American struggle into a universal call for human freedom by encouraging the colonists to reject British colonial oppression. This eventually contributed to the success of the American Revolution. In the same perspective, this research argues that African intellectuals and scholars can draw inspiration from Paine's revolutionary ideas to awaken African consciousness and mobilize people against the new forms of modern colonization.

Therefore, the hypotheses formulated in this study have been all validated. Firstly, *Commonsense* significantly contributed to the success of the American Revolution by awakening the consciousness of the colonists toward the necessity of liberty and self-governance. Secondly, Paine's ideologies advocating freedom, resistance to oppression, and self-determination remain highly relevant to the contemporary African context. Finally, African intellectuals can use Paine's ideas as a source of inspiration to galvanize Africans toward achieving true decolonization and authentic sovereignty.

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