

## The Ethics of Becoming: An Existentialist Approach to Amu Djoletto's *The Strange Man* and Richard Wright's *Black Boy*

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**Abstract:** Life dreams and prospects are often overtaken by unexpected tragedies and epiphanies which render human life unpredictable, and thwart both individual and social projects. This study delves into the ambivalences that suckle the educational trends and also examines the impacts of counter discourses on disciplinarian methods to educate the masses and raising the children in postcolonial contexts. The research props an existentialist view which rationalizes human relation and action in an unbridled setting in order to improve upon social life. The research has found that the postcolonial states and nations need a holistic approach to cope with social education taking into account individual personalities and social imperatives.

**Keywords:** education, rebellion, method, humanism, religion.

**Résumé:** Les rêves et les projets sont souvent bouleversés par des surprises tragiques et épiphaniques qui rendent la vie humaine imprévisible et impactent les projets individuels et sociaux. La présente étude explore les ambivalences qui nourrissent les tendances éducationnelles et analyse également les impacts des divergences d'approches disciplinaires utilisées pour éduquer les masses et les enfants dans le contexte postcolonial. L'étude se sert de l'approche existentialiste qui rationalise les relations et les actions humaines sur un fond de responsabilité accrue dans un environnement à cours d'humanisme afin d'améliorer la qualité de la vie sociale. La recherche a trouvé que dans le contexte postcolonial, les Etats et nations ont besoin d'une approche holistique pour la mise en œuvre l'éducation sociale en prenant en compte la personnalité individuelle des membres concernés et les impératifs sociaux qui s'imposent à eux.

**Mots clés:** éducation, rébellion, méthode, humanisme, religion.

### Introduction

“Moral strength and uprightness was one of the focal concerns of education in traditional Africa. Such education, [...] was not uniform throughout Africa, because it was not based on any formal syllabus” (Tangwa, 1995: 97). Such a statement takes us to the history of Africa and her diaspora to explore some educational currents in line with the discourses sustained in *The Strange Man*

and *Black Boy* to see in which way black peoples' experience, past and present, can contribute to upgrading a world social life. In fact, the discourses permeating the selected novels predicate disarrays in educational, relational, social and religious trends on the hybridity resulting from indirect encounters between the West and Africa. In Djoleto's *The Strange Man*, for instance, children are repressed from asserting their rights before any elder in the name and for the sake of alleged Christian religious values and Western formal education. This very attitude shatters their open mindedness, their self-assertion transforming them into docile and passive citizens unable to conquer. Wright's *Black Boy* emphasizes the rebellious attitude of the protagonist Richard who behaves contrary to the expectation of both his tamed black race and the wild white oppressive race.

It is an imperative to diagnose the various approaches to education in context and sort out the assets and the strategies needed to eliminate the resulting predicaments. Additionally, the study intends to show how the communities caricatured in the selected novels maintain old rules and traditions in a fast growing globalizing society and how this social *status quo* foils peace, mutual understanding and social schemes. The existentialist approach, which appraises individual efforts in the realization of life dreams and the construction of the overall social welfare, is used to rate religious, economic, racial, and mythic discourses that affect social development. The work explores reciprocal relationships between ethics and moral decadence, the deficits in the educational approaches and praxis of postmodern education.

### **1. Ethics and Moral Bankruptcy in *The Strange Man* and *Black Boy***

Ethics, as a branch of philosophy, is a set of moral principles, or a code of conduct that defines social, political, economic, religious and professional dos and the don'ts as far as human responsibilities are concerned (Deuter et al. eds., 2015: 523). Moral bankruptcy rather stresses the ills that set communities on the degenerating and decaying paths. In fact, the environments that constitute the geography of the corpus texts are ample evidences of the catharses that Djoleto and Wright decry. The Christian attitudes that prevail in the two narratives fit colonial rationality. The relationships that are developed between the masses and the representatives of God whether in the community or at school setting are nearly those of master and slave. In fact, the corpuses of this study suggest that the Ministers of God have established an unquestioned

legitimacy which perfectly works for them. Their authority is taken to be absolutely divine and not even a small finger can be raised for protest except the daring bold in the community. In *The Strange Man*, Mr. Lomo is charged with authority. He is the headmaster of the school which happens to be a Christian founded one. As such, his authority doubles because in addition to his status as head of the educational institution, allegiance is paid to him as a devout and upright Christian. As can be seen, it is this granted Christian leadership to the headmasters of Christian schools that sharply contrasts and ruins the reputation and quality of community life. Spencer and Lucas (2019: 30) define 'discipleship' as "an individual's own journey of following Jesus, trusting him, and learning from his example." To what extent can school leaders be good masters for their disciples, i.e. the school children if Mr. and Mrs. Lomo keep feeding their children with great satisfaction to the detriment of other people's children they raise under the same roof?

'Seniorship' cannot substitute morality or moral integrity; however, the established rules in the school of Mr. Lomo are in such a way that all the senior schoolchildren are, by principle right before any other schoolboy or girl that they are ahead of. Thus a freshman is by standard the most abused, followed by the sophomore, the junior and the senior who ranks first. Even deference is much valued. One has to acknowledge the Lomoan system is ethically disproportionate and lopsided. The world is moving fast and with technology and other modern facilities, it would be a great mess to maintain similar lifestyles which tend to confuse age with wisdom, knowledge and know-how. Nukunya (2003: 136-137) is of the opinion that with pre-figurative lifestyles, parents learn a lot from their children. And if so, how could a one-year-ahead student stand all authority and power before a whole lot of students.

Ethics is trampled down by the local headmasters who are vested with divine authority to train schoolchildren. As can be seen with the headmaster, Mr. Abossey, for instance, is the representative of God before the schoolchildren, their parents and the congregation of the local branch; however, his manners clash with the authority he is entrusted with. Instead of being a role-model, he is the one breaking the divine commandments and other laws established for the harmony and peace. Mr. Abossey is

fond of women especially widows of the local church and middle-aged women who for one reason or another were not living with their husbands. It happened that some of those women have their sons in the school and therefore got into contact with the man. He would invite one of them at a

time to his office in the late afternoon after classes. He kept some wine in the office and would try to get the woman drunk (Djoleto, 1967: 194).

Notwithstanding his socio-ethical status in the community, Mr. Abossey, the revered ‘devout’ Christian headmaster, is the epitome of the cunning and wily devil. He uses his heinous strategies to lure women into his office to benefit from their low grade pleasures.

Djoleto voices criticism against colonial education through the struggles of Old Anang and Mensa to distance themselves from the commonality of the old Ghanaian school education seasoned by hypocritical religious proclamations. As such, it is not surprising that they are regarded as outcasts in a setting where the majority prefers to go by the standards and norms established by the colonial system of education which, through missionary schools, sought to remold the colonially acceptable type of African. As a matter of fact, people have no esteem for indigenous talents and they firmly believe nothing could come from liberal schools. These very beliefs are in sharp contradiction with what Maieuticians revere as method in bringing up chaps. Maieutic approach encourages the teacher to elicit, provoke, stimulate, or arouse the learner’s intention so that the latter discovers the answer by himself/ herself. This pedagogical approach seeks to develop the individual’s capacities and capabilities. The school teachers of Mensa seem to ascertain that nothing can come from their ill-bread village children. Their vessels have to be cleaned and stuffed with whitish knowledge. Mr. Lomo, for instance, enforces a strategy to punish whichever child misbehaves. He teaches all the children to respond in chorus to his will to punish them without a slight protest, as if punishment is the best method of teaching. This question not only the surface procedural and pedagogic concerns of missionary education in Africa, but also the philosophical intent of that education founded on the primordial assumption that education sought to transform the savage African into a human.

The school authorities, in each of the narrative contexts, have narrowly defined frames that the schoolboys and girls have to go through hook and crook. The defined frames shutter the inborn talents of the young school children and affect them throughout their life. In *Black Boy*, graduation ceremonies are often crowned by the valedictorian speeches that the most promising schoolboys or girls are given to pronounce the D-day. Instead of boosting or igniting the flame in Richard by helping him prepare his speech, his headmaster decides to write the speech for him to read, as if Richard were unable to write. Richard prefers his own:

I had been talking to a ‘bought’ man and he had tried to ‘buy’ me. I felt that I had been dealing with something unclean. That night Griggs, a boy who had gone through many classes with me, came to the house. ‘Look, Dick, you’re throwing away your future here in Jackson,’ he said. ‘Go to the principal, talk to him, take his speech and say it [...].’ ‘No,’ I said [...]. ‘Why?’ ‘I know a hell of a little, but my speech is going to reflect that,’ I said. ‘Then you’re going to be blacklisted for teaching jobs,’ he said (Wright, 1980/1945: 195).

This excerpt reveals that the headmasters’ intention was not to ignite the natural talent embedded in Richard or any other youth; instead, his mission was rather to make sure he formatted them into something of his taste. Therefore, he strived to substitute Richard’s speech with his, as if he were the one entitled to say it. All the attempts he orchestrates to have Richard’s family and classmates to convince him denote insincerity. The lobbying that is orchestrated by the headmaster stands in opposition to the essence of education in the maieutic perspective and denotes in one way or another, moral decadence because he is trying to corrupt Richard to accept his proposal.

Ethics consists in developing in human beings the capacity to discern right from wrong as a way of equipping them with appropriate knowledge to respond to various social situations and contexts, along established or accepted norms, using their own imagination and sense of justice and fairness. However, it is dumbfounding to discover the disarrays and unorthodoxies that reign supreme in a Messianic Christian school in *The Strange Man*:

In this school, nobody seeks to know the meaning of words used in formulating for boys [...]. Once you’re charged under this head, no teacher or parent or God himself will look into the offense. A senior is a senior and once he says you’re altercating, it is enough. You’ve had it and punishment follows as the night the day! (Djoleto, 1967: 182-183)

What is being revealed here by the lame senior boy testifies the abject moral blindness and backwardness that is purposefully initiated by the staff to have total control and submissiveness of the schoolchildren. What is quite alarming in this specific case is that all these obscene rules are both initiated and nurtured by the representative of the church. It is much surprising to

discover how such a Christian school back-fires the code of conduct and represents thus the benchmark of moral wantonness.

Existentialism also premises on the philosophies of possibilities of self-realization and self-actualization in a world on a daily move. The discourse, the actions and conflicts that arise as a result of Richard's misconduct in his community indicates his will to change the strategies that have proven their barrenness and unproductivity in the environment they have been applied to for centuries. The destiny and the routes seem to have been traced for non-whites and they are but to take only these routes. Richard believes his existence and his achievements depend on his personal choices and endeavors. The theologies that build the theory of Black inferiority and the mysticisms about Whites supremacy have been fooled down by the protagonist Richard in the redefinition of his individual identity amidst protests, insults and rejection. He proves right only the skepticisms are disenchanted and saddened by his personal achievements in the African American scene through his literary genius. Thus, it stands to reason with that the performative power can never burgeon if we underrate "constructivism about values based on performativity" (Hackett, 2018: 28).

## **2. A Disciplinarian Defect in the Methodological Approach to Child Education**

An assessment of character interaction brings the reader to tag *Black Boy* as a literature of protest. It is a piece of creative production which disciplines human relations notwithstanding the commonly accepted race hierarchy and prescribed methods irrespective of individual talents and competence. The protagonist, Richard fools down the race barriers to meet Mr. Pinker and arrange for the card in order to access the library. In his attempts, he dares to go for the books proscribed for Blacks. This step forwards indicates how Richard, as a Black, ventures into the world exclusively reserved to the Whites. In his transgression of the institutionalized racism transpires a self-segregating attitude towards the prescriptions. Aware that in life, his choice and tastes ought not to be what society expects him to do; he has no esteem for these social prescriptions.

Contrary to social theorists such as Zhou and Brown (2017: 34) who argue that "attention should be given to student behavior and performance when engaged in a social situation," there is rather repression and joy in inflicting punishment to the school children. Average public schools seek

to redress the old system by bringing innovative channels to boost the talents and develop varieties of competence in the students whereas the Lomoan system, based on disguised Christian principles thwarts the student-centered approach to the educational process. This fallacious system, like the hypocritical race relations in the narrative of Wright, has to be banned from human sphere. In the recreated America of Wright, one can read: “‘You will never be a writer,’ she said. ‘Who on earth put such ideas into your nagger head?’” (Wright, 1980/1945: 162). Being a writer has to do with the natural disposition of an individual. Any human being who “denies the existence of faculties and emphasizes the unique role of subject matter in the development of mental and moral disposition” should not be taken into consideration at all (Dewey, 1916: 69).

One feature that characterizes Americans is the sensitivity in developing an individual exceptional character. The protagonist of *Black Boy* falls in line with that trend. He is an exception to the rule about writing as the reader can notice. The narrator distances himself from the common black psychology and does not even agree with the idea that as a Black, his loving career for writing is a waste. Rather, the protagonist’s writing ability, coupled with his rebellious attitude show his exceptionalism not in a mere rebellion but what he has been able to achieve thanks to that rebellious attitude. In perceiving education, as a “reconstruction or reorganization of experience which adds to the meaning of experience, and which increases the ability to direct the course of action of subsequent experience,” (Dewey, 1916: 76) pinpoints the necessity of putting altogether experience of practical life and what is offered outside the realm of individual experience. The daring courage of Richard is a pathway that is traced for the readers to learn. Part of Djoleto’s *The Strange Man* advocates the same daring capacity and avoiding a passage action towards life. Change cannot occur if human beings are not ready to face challenges and adopt constructive criticism to the existing realities. A “creative power” is instilled in the reader through the art of the writers and the callousness of some characters in their narratives.

Like in Wright’s 1945 novel, Djoleto’s *The Strange Man* is a compact novel that fuses the writer’s literary genius with ethical and innovating issues which captures the complexities of the postmodern man. It is true that Djoleto has reserves with regard to the modern type of education which reflects paths with thorns. Beyond the childhood complex relations through which transpire Mensa’s to detach himself from the masses, the altercations engendered among adults



and parents in this particular case fosters the reader's understanding of postmodern complex relations. The reader feels the need to have his/her say when Mensa righteously defends the case of his friend Torso who is unfairly punished by the administration. There is an ambivalent relation which brings the reader to agree, on the one hand, with the child and disagree with him on the other. The reader surely sympathizes with him in his critical attempt to liberate the village from the devastating effects of the destruction of the crops by the he-goat. All the same, the reader will disagree on the manners with which he dealt with the he-goat. It is important to note that "we are situated in our respective communities in different ways, not only by birth or occupational groups but by religion, economic status, extended family, cultural heritage etc." and as such, competences and different talents have to be put together for a constructive society (Tablan, 2018: 56).

From his literary genius, Djoleto problematizes a new conception of education in a hybrid context. Even if discipline is part and parcel of the process of upbringing of a child, it seems Mr. Lomo, the Catechist, the bell man and passionate moralizing teacher of Christian schools have failed on the methodological ground. In their attempt to discipline, as said earlier on, there is no manifestation of their will to foster child responsibility. They have a passion for caning children; they enjoy punishment which is totally devoid of any positive and genuine outcome in terms of expected change in the learner. This educational frame equates the old conservative frame, the "type of theory which denies the existence of faculties and emphasizes the unique role of subject matter in the development of mental and moral disposition" (Dewey, 1916: 69). The application of this theoretical frame to Mensa proves defective because his reflective and imaginative and even boldness in stating the truth thrives over all the attempts of the school to make a somber and shadowy story of what happens.

Like in the preceding, characters' interaction in Wright's novel indicates that the limitations of the radical perception that Richard could not achieve something given his educational and racial backgrounds foreshadow potential achievements. There are discourses that hung in the air and predict the failure of colored since racism acts as an institution. The only source of salvation lies in accepting humility and forgiveness anchored in the black religious settings. Nsamenang and Tchombe (1995: 11) postulate that a "contextually-oriented approach is the more desired because Africa's children are not socialized only in school; they also receive family education as they



develop as accredited participants in their cultural communities.” These two critics sustain that Africa has something to offer to the whole world. Thus, it makes sense to discredit the family and the community who attempt to shatter Richard’s dreams on the basis that he is a colored and could not achieve anything beyond the limits set by his racist environment. Similarly, it is no mistake to compliment Mensa in *The Strange Man* for his efforts and determination to make hay for his children in a totally corrupt educational system driven by hypocritical religious mannerisms. Having realized that his daughter Odole has been humiliated by the headmistress, he designs a course of action to inflict pain on the latter so as to bring all the staff to recede from their authoritative behaviors (Djoleto, 1967: 20-24).

In both *The Strange Man* and *Black Boy*, religion is, as Seguedeme, Towa-Sello and Bodohoui, (2019: 42) put it, “another point of discrimination.” The outrageous zeal about the new religion sustained in the school curriculum of the schoolchildren is like a sharp knife which cuts the traditional community into two: the Christian-ethos conservatism and the progressive traditional branch adepts who believe that even though school has something to offer, the Christian methodological approach would spoil things. If education is indeed a “reconstruction or reorganization of experience which adds to the meaning of experience, and which increases ability to direct the course of action of subsequent experience” (Dewey, 1916: 76), one would simply admit that the traditional progressive branch thrives over the Christian conservatism in the context of Djoleto’s narrative.

Like in the foregoing context, Wright’s narrative conjures the reader to concluding that education is a “process of accommodating the future to the past, or [...] utilization of the past for a resource in developing the future” (Dewey, 1916: 77). A strategy used by the colorist to encourage black defective and irresponsible attitudes reads in the following excerpt:

Yet, all about me, Negroes were stealing. More than once I had been called a ‘dumb nigger’ by black boys who discovered that I had not availed myself of a chance to snatch some petty piece of white property that had been carelessly left within my reach.

‘How in hell you gonna git ahead?’ I had been asked when I had said that one ought not steal.

I knew the boys in the hotel filched whatever they could. I knew that Griggs, my friend who worked in the Capitol Street jewelry store, was stealing regularly and successfully (Wright, 1980/1945: 218-219).

Every attitude, discourse, action, and interaction suggests “tacit ‘theories’ about what counts as ‘normal’” (Gee, 2011: 5). The respect for self and other is the beginning of wisdom and human dignity. The trick that is put in place in this stance is much deeper than it actually appears. Trivial may be the attempts by the black boys to steal but there is no other way to engineer moral bankruptcy and black backwardness. A poor black person with his/her moral integrity and human dignity is far better than any other man or woman who prospers basing on theft.

To bring about revolution in the monolithic setting, Djoleto introduces a character that has a different appreciation of the educational system which is settled in the village. He has Old Anang complain:

[...]. I know I’m insignificant. I know there are one or two others in this country who know and think what I’m telling you now [but what] can they do? The machine which runs the social processes is indifferent, powerful and insensitive. It cannot hear the insignificant. It grinds them, pulverizes them destroys them. One of my children should remove a nut in this machine. He may be hurt. I don’t care. I’ve been hurt already and I know I’ll bleed to death!’ (Djoleto, 1967: 62)

From the excerpt, it is obvious that change can take place even if just a minority is ready to endure pain as is the case with Richard in *Black Boy*. Our existence and achievement are only the result of our social programming and enduring action. The character, Old Anang, denounces evil operations of the social system at the time and plans to have his offspring bring revolution in the recreated space life. Meyer (2001: 82) argues that the postmodern space is a geographic setting of battles on civilizations, cultures and of material values and it would be much stunning to still encounter societies which try to resist the temptation of change.

### **3. Currents and Praxis of Postmodern Education**

The postcolonial context and postcolonial criticism as new ways of doing, perceiving, evaluating, assessing, and even implementing life prospects give a turn to human relations in the selected narrative contexts. Under the banner of Said, Spivak, Bhabha and many postcolonial critics, many changes have found their ways in challenging the existing canons. If traditionally, the world was perceived from the camera of the master, the changes would like the camera to shift so that the world could be perceived from the Subaltern’s camera. This new tradition finds

its way in Wright's vision from his protagonist, Richard, in *Black Boy* and Old Anang and Mensa, in Djoletto's *The Strange Man*.

A gist into the West African traditional initiation rites discloses the ethico-existentialist principles in community life. Leaning on *hiling*<sup>1</sup> traditional rite, there is acute evidence that the rite intends to make of the initiated a name out of his fame that is to be acquired through his performance. In fact, the rite consists in having the youth being initiated to confront others in pairs using their whips to inflict pain to the opponent; however, when the turn of the opponent comes, the protagonist is encouraged to use every technique to escape the whip of the opponent and resist the physical pain. The endurance, resistance, courage, bravery and toughness of every young man indicate the extent to which he can face the enemy during war times or assailments. This rite is obviously a means to tell every young initiated that his body is his primary asset he has to use to defend himself, his community and above all yearn for a living for his family. It is not a mere whipping but a step ahead which charges the initiated with individual and collective responsibility. And the argument which stands here is that it is not the Christian schools or Christian educational system which has brought discipline in the West African. The attitudes of all the people who lurk behind Christianity to gain fame are the very people who compromise Christian ethics and tradition.

There is no way for Wright's created African Americans to challenge racism, classism and gender imbalances. As can be inferred from a modern mind, some African American characters are tired of racism and would like things to be the way they can be with the final words of the masters. Unlike Richard in *Black Boy*, this connotes abdication and subjugation of black people. The empowered protagonist, Richard, does not want everything to be dictated onto him like his community would be. His attitudes go hand in hand with the existentialist view. He deeply believes that everything can be challenged. His relations with the world indicate that he has no esteem for people who are followers. He endeavors to create a space for himself in a seemingly tumultuous space. His existentialist view coheres with the key ideas that inspired Pan Africanism:

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<sup>1</sup> *Hiling* is part and parcel of the traditional ceremonies that the youngsters have to go through in the process of their initiation rites. It is practiced in the district of Pagouda, eastern part of Kara region in Togo.

People were socio-culturally differentiated as a Jew, barbarian, Christian, heathen, pagan, or citizen. What this means is that at this time in history, anyone can be a slave or a master depending on his or her status just as Ovid reminisced in the antiquities (Eze, 2013: 664).

This quote indicates that at a particular time in history of human beings, regardless of the background, some people became slaves or masters because of their status. If social, political, economic, and material statuses are the results of constant efforts and hard work so as to step off poverty and need, it is then sound to back up the tenets of Existentialism which predicate success or failure on both individual and collective endeavors.

The becoming of a human being, a class, a gender, or a race is the result of constant adaptations to up-to-date social imperatives. On this ground, one cannot admit an essentialist view that life is an all made up. Life is itself a constant struggle for survival; and man has to make his own way, choices, and endeavor to live up his and his community standards. With this existentialist perception, Richard would say: “Each new school meant a new area of life to be conquered” (Wright, 1980/1945: 101). The discourse sustained by the protagonist in this excerpt premises his achievements on his own efforts as would recommend existentialists. And within this frame, I share the opinion of Dewey (1916: 67) who argues: “As conditions change, certain factors are subordinated, and others which had been of minor importance come to the front. There is constant redistribution of the focus on the action.”

The ontological rationale which brings Richard to distance himself from both the whites and the Blacks lies in the unreliable, faulty and hypocritical relations. The becoming of a person is a socialization process. And when existentialists argue that society “should help the child to achieve self-realization,” (Kauka, 2018: 230) it is a means to build self-confidence in them. As the title reveals, the power of imagination of Mensa appears strange. As very young as he is, Mensa calls his friends and decides to remove the teste of the he-goat that gives a serious headache to the community. With his naivety, he simply cuts the teste without any procedural measures that would spare the life of the goat. This very strange act, spread all over the village, brings the Catechist and the bell man to insist that the child be placed under their guard in the missionary school for them to discipline and train him according to the standards of the Bible. Additionally, the teachers of the so-called Christian schools are interesting in molesting the pupils. They even rejoice when they realize the effectiveness of their whips on the children. The

energy they deploy in beating the school children is translated in the zeal that average Christians rejoice in giving lessons of good conduct and behavior, as if they were the best qualified in training the children. The irony that culminates in these practices is that there is not even a single biblical precept that is taught to the children. There is a peril in the practices put in action in these sorts of schools. The danger with this is that having no good qualification, these teachers enjoy a double status: that of a teacher and that of a Man of God. Their interests in gaining more fame and reputation in the area land average of them in exerting power over the students to show their powers to these students' parents to what extent they stand above the community, an attitude that is to be proscribed for the Christian status they enjoy.

The ideology in the above, far from denying the quality of eclectic approach, questions the quality of the education provided by the educators. In fact, these schoolteachers are vested with too much authority that they misread and misinterpret biblical precepts. They tend to enforce their authority by dumping down both people and the quality of education. Dewey objects to ill-equipped teaching-training with double standards when he clarifies: "One may be an authority in a particular field and yet of more than usually poor judgments in matters not closely allied, unless the training in the special field has been a kind to ramify into the subject matter of other fields" (Dewey, 1916: 66). As can be seen, it is not sound to vest all authority in people to train others when they are, themselves, poorly equipped to do so. They would simply jeopardize the lives of the schoolchildren.

## **Conclusion**

The purpose of this paper has been to probe into the postcolonial discourses that shape the postmodern character in both the African and the African American narrative contexts. Even though the selected narratives have been a great support to changing the paradigmatic choices in the setting of new foundations for African and African American character building through the predispositions of each individual person, it has also been obvious that the existentialist approach has but an improving outlook in the raising and education the children and adults.

The end results of the protagonists in the two novels conjure into saying that despite the fact that the White racists are not always present wherever Blacks are they have been successful in the

operational system they put in place to enslave the colonized. The study endeavored in dismantling this system and advocating a new educational framework that can be beneficiary for all. Specifically, the study postulated that given the postmodern status and relationship, only a redefined educational and moralistic system can help the African and the African American to revolutionize their environment.

The study has also found that the educational systems of the colored in *Black Boy* and that of the indigenous people in *The Strange Man* heavily dwell on morality; however, this very moral system decried in the system has been misappropriated first by the white racists and the acolytes of the colonizer in the postcolonial environment of Djoleto. The study has suggested an accurate strengthening of the moral and ethical system for all the participants regardless of race, social status and or socio-religious appurtenance.

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