

Example of critical thinking on definitional argument

[Parts of the World](#), [Europe](#)



Introduction

For this assignment I will be defining the term Afrocentric. Many people around the world have had a negative connotation in reference to this terminology. However, it is important to look at the structure of our world today. The international system lacks a global police who can be able to regulate the actions of states. This means that the world lacks a central authority that can act as a control of different facets of the world. Nations have used their economic and military might to conquer other nations in order to access the necessary resources as well as fulfill other desired interests. Based on this preamble regarding the structure of the international system, it is evident that the world has shifting power balances. Over the years, the West, the United States and Europe have been the dominant powers in terms of influencing global politics, economics, and social paradigms. These states in the West have used their military might to force other nations to conform to their interests. This paper is based on the central idea that Afrocentric thinkers seek to re-evaluate African history, by looking at historical events using the African lens as opposed to using the perspectives of the West.

Defining the idea of Afrocentric Thought

This argumentation is based on the idea that the instigators of colonization and human slavery were from the west. Through the colonization and enslavement process, the subjects involved were subjected to what scholars have referred to as the seasoning process. In this process the affected individuals who were mostly in the developing nations were stripped of their

culture, memory, and history. The colonizers and slave masters engrained on the minds of the victims the idea that their cultures were inferior. This meant that the colonized countries and slaves both in Europe and the Americas believed that their masters were superior to them. Considering that the periods through which colonization and enslavement took place were extensive, this notion was passed across generations. The offshoots of this mindset are evident in society today. Many people in the East believe that the ways of the West are superior. Using this context, it is important to look at Africa as a continent and the effects of colonization and slave trade to its people.

First it is important to know that before these gruesome acts befitted the continent, African people had their own culture, societies, and polities. However, all this was disbanded by the arrival of external powers into the continent. As a result of this, African history, culture, and polities have been viewed in the perspective of the west. However, this is not reflective of reality. Scholars have argued that they were not written languages at the time that Europeans arrived in the continent. This means that African history and culture was written and documented by the colonial powers that had literary capacities at the time. It is worth noting that the manner in which history was presented and the mode of delivery of Africa's history was in the perspective of the West. Considering that this was the case, it is plausible to argue that there was a bias towards structuring history in a way that colonial powers and other European powers were in the correct side of history. African perspectives regarding their own culture were arbitrarily excluded from the process of writing history.

The term Afrocentric has been confused for the term black supremacy, but this should not be the case. This is because Afrocentric thinkers take a different approach to how they view history. Instead of overwhelmingly agreeing with what current history has to present, these scholars have sought to conduct constructive criticism of the current history about Africa that was written by the West. One of the points of consensus that many of the proponents of Afrocentric thinking have had is the idea that the natives of Africa had a better understanding of the continent compared to the new arrivals. This means that despite the fact that the colonial masters viewed Africans as bearing a primitive culture, the fact remains that Africans had a rich culture.

However, colonialists and western powers were driven by ethnocentric egoism. They used their culture as a standard with which they would gauge the culture of African societies. The distinctiveness of the African culture made many European powers to be convinced that Africans were a people that needed to be 'civilized.' Civilization in the perspective of the colonial masters was the idea that Africans have to change their ways so that they are similar to those of the Europeans. Many questions have been asked regarding the genuineness of this supposition. Civilization is a relative term and is subject to bias. Receiving a western education and adopting the culture was the West was indeed not civilization. However, this notion resonated with many African communities, who sought to be like the Europeans. Based on this term of events and the eventual distortion of history in favor of the Western powers, Afrocentric thinks have sought to take history back to its course. The ideas and notions that we have deeply

cherished as being reality and conventional history are indeed distorted ideas. These are ideas written and composed in the lens and perspective of Western powers at the detriment of nation of the East and other third world regions. Afrocentric thinkers seek to reevaluate African history by using an African perspective when looking at history as opposed to relying on the Western perspectives.

Unique Perspective

Afrocentric thinkers have not only sought to re-evaluate history using the African perspective, but they have also began efforts to re-write African history based on archaeological and anthropological artifacts and evidence that they have found in the African continent. Among the key strands of emphasis that Afrocentric theorists have focused on is the role of Ancient Egypt to both the history of Africa and the rest of the world. European historians who wrote about ancient Egypt claimed that the ancient civilization was inhabited by light colored people. They argued that the white colored people were the initial inhabitants of this great civilization. However, Afrocentric theorists have vehemently resented this supposition arguing that the initial inhabitants of ancient Egypt were the Negroes or black people. Using African anthropology, Afrocentric theorists such as Diop and Molefi Asante have affirmed the fact that the ancient civilization was initially referred to as Kemet which was a word for the term black (Diop 44). These theorists have also ascertained the fact that ancient rulers of this great civilization were also black. The different paintings and architecture on ancient walls have been found to affirm this argument. One the key ideas

that Afrocentric theorists have argued is the idea that at the time that Ancient Egypt was established there were no other civilizations that were in place both in Asia and Europe. In fact, Diop argues that many scholars and theorists such as Pythagoras learned their art in ancient Egypt. This means that the western civilization that traces its roots in the Greco-Roman period also traces its roots in Ancient Egypt which was located in Africa. All these ideas were omitted by the Europeans who wrote African history. Africa was painted as being a primitive continent that needed to be developed. This assumption introduces bias and distortion to not only African history but also Western history.

Considering that Ancient Greece and Rome have been considered as the sources of rational thought, bringing in the idea that these notions might have been borrowed from Ancient Egypt civilization would completely distort Western history. Therefore, it is evident that the Afrocentric theory is not meant to paint the African culture as being superior but seeks to conduct a constructive criticism on modern history by using archaeological and anthropological evidence to explain the real trajectory of African history and culture.

Audience

The audience for this piece is scholars and readers who understand that hierarchical process that is involved in both the writing of history and the creation of different theories. This piece seeks to explain the dominant socio-political forces that arbitrarily excluded African perspective in the process of writing history. Therefore, the audiences who subscribe to the idea of

Afrocentric thinking agree with the idea that modern history regarding the African continent is not reflective of reality but illustrates the perspectives of the West.

How Audience are likely to feel about Afrocentric Argumentation

It is important to understand that any field in the academia provides room for criticism regarding a given argument. In the case of the Afrocentric perspective that is presented in this paper, readers and audiences have the freedom to either agree with the argumentation that has been laid out or they may differ. However, in order to effectively criticize this piece, it is worth noting that historical events are unalterable. The fact that historical events transpired means that there is no individual who can be able to change history. Scholars might try to distort history by presenting inaccurate facts and documentation but the fact remains that there is a reality in history that never fades away. The only leeway that remains in terms of history is the fact that scholars and audiences have the flexibility to interpret different happening differently. Different events might have different symbolisms to different people. This means that people might take a given strand of history and interpret the causal forces different. However, the mainstream event does not change at all. Therefore, audiences can either agree with the argument presented in this paper or disagree with it based on their interpretations of different historical events such colonization and slave trade.

Strategies employed in Argumentation

In order to enhance the credibility of the information presented in this paper, the use of evidence is essential. The use of examples helps illustrate the ideas that act as colonnades to support the argumentation. Concrete examples such as the case of the controversy over the role of Ancient Egypt in shaping Africa's history and that of the west are essential in the substantiation of the Afrocentric school of thought.

Works Cited

Diop, Cheikh Anta. *The African origin of civilization: myth or reality*. [1st ed. New York: L. Hill, 1974. Print.

Munford, Clarence J. *Race and reparations: a Black perspective for the 21st century*. Trenton, NJ. Africa World Press, 1996. Print.