

*SAFARA*

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***Peace Education: A critical examination of the nexus between  
fundamental freedoms and sustainable development in the Continent.***

**Ousmane BA\***

**Résumé**

La problématique du développement durable dans le Tiers-Monde, particulièrement en Afrique, ne peut être abordée sans mettre en exergue la question du respect des droits de l'homme et des libertés individuelles. Pour se faire, l'éducation a un rôle primordial à jouer pour relever et transcender les défis multiples qui s'opposent à l'avènement d'une société africaine libérée de tant d'obstacles redoutables qui menacent d'enfoncer ce grand continent dans une sous-catégorie de « Quart-Monde ». Ces fléaux, pour n'en citer que les plus accablants prennent la forme de phénomènes socio-économiques et politiques tels que la fuite des cerveaux, la mal-gouvernance, le chômage, l'immigration clandestine, l'analphabétisme, le changement climatique, les maladies endémiques, et les crimes. Il est à noter que ces facteurs sont interactifs et, de près ou de loin, relèvent de la mal-gouvernance et de politiques anti-démocratiques.

*Introduction*

Developmental progress and the fulfillment of the human potential in Africa have been impeded by conflicts and the violation of fundamental rights. Without the advent, promotion and protection of fundamental freedoms and basic rights, that all societies need to develop, the quest for stability and peace will remain elusive and unattainable (Sankore, 2004). While education's timeless mandate is to be positioned at the helm and leadership of change, it certainly goes without saying, in the case of Africa, that the magnitude of the challenge of development would require a

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broad-based approach that transcends conventional academic settings and traditional curricula (Tandon, 1988). Such holistic approach, according to Tandon, will require educational institutions to partner with their constituencies to vulgarize peace literacy and effect change in attitude and perception by building on traditional, indigenous values that are consistent with core notions of peace.

Paradoxically, (higher) education institutions, particularly teacher-colleges in the continent, have failed to assume leadership responsibility and accountability in fostering relevant reform by integrating peace curricula in their programs; consequently, they create unfavorable conditions for learners, future leaders of change, to be un-empowered in peace dynamics. More than ever before, urgency demands that momentous and sustained action be initiated by education decision-makers to bridge the peace skills-deficit gap and heighten awareness among stakeholders, civil society, and government to step up efforts at remediating this most compromising status-quo.

*Interdependency of Human Rights, and Development*

To highlight the interdependency between progress and rights, the UN Human Development Report (HDR) defines, “Human Rights as intrinsic part of Development, and Development as a means to realizing Human Rights; it shows how Human Rights bring principles of accountability and social justice to the process of human development” (2000). As indicated by the Human Development Index (HDI), out of 53 African nations, as part of 179 countries surveyed, 30 rank poorest at the bottom lowest and the rest in the bottom medium of the HDI (2008). Staggering data have now become but all too commonplace when it comes to descriptive statistics to quantify the development deficit of the Continent. Referring to Africa’s predicament in his address to the International Peace Academy Seminar, Amoako (1996) brings this urgency to act home, as he observes in indignation: “I do not need to stand before you today and cite a litany of cold, hard statistics to define the economic and social woes caused by conflict or to convince you we need urgent solutions” (Peace building, Peace Making, Peace Keeping, para.5).

*Impact of human rights violation on development*

When Africa's crises-ridden past and current notoriety as a continent ridden with "failed" states, still at grips with unresolved conflicts, economies in shamble, and impotent school systems, is carefully reviewed, one cannot help but conclude that Africa's is a lost cause. Even more dreadful are the far-reaching myriad implications triggered by these crises, which are observable through the phenomena of a) the *Brain Drain* (BD), b) bad governance, c) unemployment, d) the refugee crisis (internally and externally displaced people), e) illiteracy, f) environmental degradation, g) disease, and h) crime, to spotlight the most prominent.

a) *The Brain Drain: Statistical Overview and background.*

According to Zeleza (2002), the total number of international migrants, including Migrant refugees and asylum seekers, grew from 75 million in 1965 to 120 million in 1990, and as of the last estimates, 175 million in 2002. From 1960 to the 1980's, Canada, the UK, and the USA accepted over 500.000 specialists (health professionals, scientists, and engineers) from developing countries (Ushkalov & Malakha, 2001.). Of the 345,000 scientists and engineers with Ph.D.s, 101,000 were born abroad; that 15.5% of all scientists, engineers, and one in three Ph.D.s were also born abroad (Gwynne, 1999). Versi (2003) points out that five million African professionals and entrepreneurs are living in the diaspora and 40% of higher level managers and professionals are expatriates. In 1978, the Sudan, as a case in point, lost 17% of its doctors, 20% of university lecturers, and 30% of its engineers, owing primarily to *push factors* in the form of basic rights violation (Mclymont, 2001). This chaotic condition, in no uncertain terms, accounts for the morass prevailing in Africa's biggest country- Sudan.

Ong'wen (1994), quoting from the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and International Organization for Migration (IOM) experts, reports that since 1990 at least 20,000 people migrate from the continent yearly and that 60,000 professionals made up of doctors, university lecturers, engineers left between 1985 and 1990. He further reveals that 30,000 Africans with PhDs live outside the continent while there are 20,000 scientists, representing about 3.6% of the world's scientific population, for

Africa's 600 million people. There are more African-born scientists and engineers working in the USA than there are in Africa. An estimated 600 Ghanaian doctors work in New York city alone and 21,000 Nigerian doctors practice in the USA although there continues to be chronic shortage of health professionals in their countries.

According to the US Census Bureau report (2000), the African immigrant population is estimated at 881,300. As a group, they were not only more highly educated than their counterparts at home, but also represent one of the most highly educated migrant groups in the US; ironically, at a time when the Continent is in dire need of expert manpower with illiteracy being rampant. As affirmed by Carrington and Detragiache (1999), African immigrants to the United States, "...consist primarily of highly educated individuals...Migration of Africans with only a primary education is almost nil." (p. 48). The US Census Bureau (2001) outlines in its report that 49.3% of African immigrants aged 25 and over hold at least a Bachelor's degree, significantly higher than the national average of 25.6%.

One of the most invaluable and active resource reservoirs in the fight to reverse BD is the IOM whose many programs to assist Africans and other nationals to return to their countries of origin remain yet an uphill battle. Among its most notable programs are the Migration for Development in Africa (MIDA) which provides assistance to migrants on their way to new lives, facilitates labor migration, post emergency returns and reintegration programs, recruitment of highly qualified nationals for return in their respective countries, and aid to migrants in distress- to name a few of their functions. A host of smaller agencies in partnership with the African Union (AU), the African Development Bank, international funding organizations, the private sector, African government agencies, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), efforts to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), and other internal and external stakeholders as well have also emerged in an attempt to help quell this (BD) developmental crisis.

It is however important to note that these bodies despite their apparent zeal and enthusiasm are still nowhere near achieving the desired goals and closing the expansive gap; for, under the IOM's program, Return and Reintegration of Qualified African Nationals (RQAN), only 2,565 qualified Africans have been assisted to return

to take up jobs in their respective countries between 1983 and 1995. The largest program to date has helped only 1,500 people to return to six targeted countries, namely Ghana, Kenya, Somalia, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe (Ngunjiri, August 2001)

Arguably, it is certainly a legitimate claim that the *Brain Drain* is hailed by many experts in the field as the single most daunting challenge Third World countries face. The wealth of documentation to that effect unequivocally speaks volumes and is hard to dismiss.

The literature data that it evokes with respect to the massive loss of highly skilled professionals from developing countries to western richer nations is quite overwhelming (Kaba, 2004).

The drain on poorer nations has considerably exacerbated and widened the existing development gap between North and South, empowering the former while weakening the latter thereby increasing dependency of developing nations on costly developed nations' foreign consultants (MIDA, 2005). Reuters News Service reports that the Brain Drain costs Africa \$4 billion a year, the actual cost of western experts annually. In his article entitled, *Foreign Experts and National Development*, Akordor (2005) decries the extent of this paradox with respect to high consultancy fees paid to foreign experts, a fraction of which could have availed jobs to many a local expert and skilled expatriate, making a great difference in Africa's development efforts. He concludes thus, stating that ultimately "We cannot continue to lament the brain drain when we willingly pay foreigners handsomely to do a job that can be done better by local people at a lesser cost" (p. 1). Indeed Africans themselves must once and for all come to terms with these contradictions and inconsistencies.

In his online article, *Turning Brain Drain into Brain Gain*, Wanjohi's (2004) following poignant lament brings home the pathetic plight of the Continent thus: Africa, and the Third World for that matter, would be far beyond most affluent nations had its sons and daughters who migrated for greener pastures and politically safer havens abroad, been given right employment opportunities, remuneration, and a secure socio-political environment. But the brains are being used to build the economies of other countries, a paradoxical situation that has put this continent in



a begging position; yet it has the resources required for development?”.  
<http://www.africasbraingain.org/newsletter/october/issue1/>

Indeed, this paradox takes on the contours of a double standard. While evidenced by Africa’s posture as the leading world recipient of these high profile programme proceeds (Sankore, 2005), these programmes irremediably undermine development efforts, nullify the modest gains achieved, and are central to the abysmal divide between developed and developing countries, particularly in SSA (Herbert, 2005). Analysts have sounded the alarm and warned international development organizations and human rights organization advocates of this growing menace to their accomplishments and efforts.

Education stakeholders, civil society leaders, the corporate sector, and liberal international development agencies worldwide, e.g. IOM, MIDA, RQAN, and Physicians for Human Rights (PHR) have all bemoaned this deterrence to progress dubbing it as “aid package” to the West; some even going as far as calling for compensation and reparations for investment wielded by developing countries to train these intellectuals, only for them to be co-opted and taken full advantage of by developed nations (Ntull, 2004).

To further exacerbate this bleak picture, hindering government initiatives such as the US Green Card Diversity Lottery (GCDL) and its counterpart the UK Highly Skilled Migrant Programme (HSMP), which, instead of participating and aiding in efforts at assisting in banishing poverty from the Third World, are instead exclusively targeting the highly skilled and best minds from the developing world in general, and Africa in particular, for sustenance of their development; thus, causing the achievement of Millenium Development Goals to be less likely.

Clearly, the developed world’s unfulfilled promises and commitments to helping alleviate the plight of poor developing nations is de facto punctuated by a blatant absence of good will, to say the least.

On the eve of the 13<sup>th</sup> ordinary session of the AU at Sirte, Libya, Shetty (2002), Director of the UN Millenium Campaign brings this pathetic paradox home in his address to the assembly, explaining that:

The stark contrast between the money disbursed to the desperately poor after years of painstaking summits and negotiations and the staggering sums found virtually overnight to bail out the creators of the global economic crisis makes it impossible for government to claim any longer that the world cannot find the money to help the 50.000 people who are dying of hunger and extreme poverty every day

Nobel Prize winning human rights organization, PHR (2004) recommended, through a released report, that western wealthy nations reimburse African states for the loss of their health professionals who leave their countries for the West after being trained by African universities at the expense of the people of the continent. Mazrui (2002) reinforces this claim, arguing that: “In effect, we are operating one-third of African universities to satisfy the manpower needs of Western nations. One-third of the African education budget is a supplement for the American education budget. In effect Africa is giving development assistance to the United States.” (pp. 86-87). It is estimated that an average of US\$50.000, is invested by poor countries, from their scarce resources, on each university graduate, only to see them depart to richer destinations; thus, the have-nots end up subsidizing the haves by exporting their human capital (Vaknin, 2002).

*From Brain Drain to Brain Gain: Reversing the Trend*

There exists, however, another “solution-oriented” school of thought that sees opportunity in every crisis; this non-traditional breed of forward-looking thinkers has coined the term *Brain Gain* (BG) as the solution to reverse the *Brain Drain* (BD), as the answer to a trend that appears unstoppable as long as underdevelopment conditions prevail. Most observers, abreast of the ongoing debate about ABD/ABG, would agree that it is unrealistic to expect the bulk of the emigrants to return home as many have established families, roots, and secured comfortable employment, a comfort zone, and high paying jobs that they are reluctant to trade with incertitudes associated with returning to the homeland (Emeagwali, April 2002).

The repatriation of talents can take on different forms; it can be executed through non-human ways such as through the return of invaluable talent, financial/material contributions, and expertise needed by developing countries to build capacity in areas found lacking. This will give expatriates the opportunity to participate in the development of their country without physically repatriating and would enable Africans everywhere to share their expertise by participating in projects at home (Wanjohi, 2004).

According to Kaba (2004), the BD has a positive short and long term impact as well, when one considers the benefits and proceeds from remittances from expatriates working well paying jobs in the West. He reports that remittances to the developing world exceed foreign aid; and that in 2003, worldwide remittances to underdeveloped countries were in excess of \$100 billion. Based on the estimates of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the African Diaspora constitutes the largest group of foreign investors in the Continent.

The return of talents for the promotion of capacity-building could take several forms, including the establishment of educational/intellectual exchange partnerships between expatriates in the West and local (higher) education institutions in the Third World. Today, a small number of higher education institutions are in fact “timidly” engaged in such partnerships with counterparts within and without the African continent. The UNESCO (Studying Abroad-Brain Drain to Brain Gain) Mali project provides an innovative approach to the phenomenon of the “Brain Drain” and the extensive emigration of skilled professionals. The project capitalizes on the skills of nationals living abroad to promote international intellectual cooperation, via the donation of education supplies/materials through, say, Alumni Resource Centers- such as this researcher has initiated in a practicum proposal/report at Ashesi University college in Accra, Ghana (2003-2004). The transfer of knowledge through expatriate nationals programme at the university of Mali (Tokten Talmali) filled the urgent need for qualified teaching and research faculty in a number of key areas by bringing Malian scholars back home on short-term assignments (UNESCO, 2000, May).

While these proactive BG strategies are not geared to directly stopping the flight of intellectuals, they have the potential of

upgrading living and educational standards. Such enhancement in people's welfare could perhaps, indirectly, significantly reduce the expatriation rate of Third World intellectuals, gone to exile in search of secure environment and remunerative occupation. To the extent that these talent- repatriation strategies can perhaps foster capacity-building at home, BG initiatives hold the potential to mitigate the flight of intellectuals, thereby contribute to the promotion of *pull factors*

Clearly, it is about time that Third World countries learn lessons from the developed world's practices which entail scanning the globe to identify talents that they need for their institutions to grow and prosper at the expense of sending countries that fail to retain their "brains". Substantial effort commensurate to that wielded by the "first world" must be mobilized if Africa, and the Third World in general, is to attract the competencies of its diaspora back (Ndede-Amadi, March 2004).

Finally, it is key to note that the BD versus BG nexus is directly linked to fundamental freedoms and rights to dignified livelihood, a secure environment free of persecution and fear, equal access to education and government/public resources, and the enjoyment of democratic rights where overall human needs are met (UN Charter, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948). It is also paramount to register that the following sub-parts cannot be considered in isolation. A comprehensive, holistic approach to the phenomena of the BD/BG, Bad Governance, Unemployment, the Refugee Crisis, Illiteracy, and Crime is a pre-condition if we are to have the proper understanding of the interplay and interaction of these forces among themselves and vis-a-vis basic human rights/needs (Burton, 1997).

- b) *Bad governance* also ranks topmost on the challenge list. Good or bad governance involves the upholding or violation of democratic rights of the citizenry across a broad range of parameters, all describing an increase or deficit in the ability of a social organization to achieve the goals that are set by that organization. The more political power an organization or individual can wield, the higher level of capacity it has (Raines, 2004). Bad governance is characterized by a neglect

or, rather, failure to implement and enhance effective policies and programs to strengthen the capacity of government institutions and civil society organizations. A case in point is the example of the Organization of American States which, in order to strengthen its culture of peace, utilized diplomacy and dialogue processes (Soto, 2004). It is incumbent upon government to address challenges of human survival and welfare by helping people to achieve their own development objectives (Lusthaus, Adrien, & Perstinger, 1999).

Leaders in general, particularly African leaders, must grapple with the reality that lack of progress and stability, while oftentimes externally orchestrated, is also largely internally-driven as well. Human rights violation, election rigging, autocratic rule/dictatorship, economic mismanagement, undemocratic political systems and policies, nepotism, clientelism, xenophobia, and *structural violence*, to name the most salient, are responsible for much of the mayhem that undermines sustainable development and peace, especially in the African region. In highlighting the importance of conflict management, it is, unmistakably, when leaders and states fail to address primary vital concerns and basic needs of citizens that conflict/violence brews, escalates, and degenerates. The African leadership should take a second look at their behavior and policy choices, discouraging corruption, embracing transparency, and protecting fundamental freedoms and good governance (Irobi, 2005).

The New Partnership for African Development's (NEPAD) African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), under the auspices of the African Union (AU) is established to review, monitor and assist AU member states in observing and complying with good governance indicators using a set of benchmarks as evaluation criteria to determine to what degree good governance standards are being met (Mbeki, 2003). Though a monitoring entity, the APRM's intent is not punitive but rather collegial, working only with those countries that voluntarily choose to be members and share commitment to the democratic ideals articulated in the Rome Declaration.

The third Heads of State Implementation Committee (HSIC) meeting in Rome (2002), that adopted the Declaration on Democratic, Political, Economic, and Corporate governance, defined the APRM, as an instrument voluntarily acceded to by

African members of the African Union for the purpose of self-monitoring...will foster the adoption of policies, standards, and practices that will lead to political stability, high economic growth, sustainable growth, and accelerated regional integration of the African Continent". (HSIC, as quoted by Cilliers in *The Development of the APRM*, Para. 2).

As the most creative aspect of NEPAD, the APRM, cued after the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in Europe, represents an ambitious attempt by African countries to lever themselves out of the cycle of instability and poverty to which the Continent has been condemned (Cilliers, 2002). APRM is premised on the urgency of improving democratic, political, economic, and corporate governance, with strong commitment to end conflict for the advent of sustainable economic growth. It encourages African countries to analyze and assess their own progress and performance, and develop their own responses.

- c) Unemployment, instrumental in triggering the refugee crisis, the BD and crime, is directly linked to poor financial mismanagement and bad governance policies. While the BD is concerned with emigrating intellectuals and the loss of vital talent, unemployment or/and underemployment set off growing waves of illegal migrants, most of whom belong to underprivileged low classes with relatively low or no level of formal education. These clandestine risk-taking migrants' "iron will" determination to expatriate at any cost, is indicative of the harsh and adverse living conditions faced at home. A case in point is the tragic capsizing of a boat headed to Italy, with over 300 illegal migrants on board, off the coast of Libya. Former Portuguese Prime Minister Guterres's (2009) poignant remarks in the wake of this tragedy speak volumes about the extreme ripple effects triggered by untenable substandard living conditions in the Continent; he describes the catastrophe as, "the latest tragic example of a global phenomenon in which desperate people take desperate measures to escape conflicts, persecution and poverty in search of a better life." (Reuters Newspaper, 2009, March 31).

High unemployment rates account for *structural violence* by also compounding poverty and crime, thus encouraging illegal activity in addition to illegal immigration. Gainful employment is known to make for “whole” human beings with high self-esteem, moral ethics, and dignity who can be trusted in nation building. In sum, endowed with these inalienable rights, the individual will very likely transform into a full citizen and agent of positive change and development.

The current global economic recession presages an even bleaker picture for the underdeveloped world; eventhough orchestrated by developed nations, poor countries stand to bear the brunt of this financial downturn. This global crisis has direct implication on unemployment and welfare, thus exacerbating an already desperate and bleak status-quo in Third World nations (International Monetary Fund, BBC TV Broadcast, 2009, June 21). Verily, Africa’s predicament seems hopeless when one factors into the economic dearth it is entrenched in the double jeopardy of domestic and external inimical factors that inhibit its overall recovery and sustained progress.

- d) The refugee crisis (internally and externally displaced people), partially discussed earlier in the unemployment section, is an issue that cannot be dealt with in isolation from the foregone and upcoming discussion. This crisis has also weathered the impact of the economic meltdown which has compounded it considerably. While the causes of the refugee crisis are multiform, ranging from war and conflict to environmental degradation, the global financial recession has worsened and hampered ongoing initiatives aimed at containing this unprecedented humanitarian challenge.

According to a 2004 UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) report (2005), the world refugee population reached 9.2 million people, a formidable challenge to humanitarian organizations, particularly the UNHCR. Human rights protection, food aid, and health care represent the main preoccupations and overriding needs of both the internally and externally displaced.

In essence, there is a plethora of refugees (from internal/external refugees, to political and climate refugees); this section, however, is mainly concerned with the internally and externally displaced whose basic rights are violated; these refugees

are the direct result of conflict (i.e. civil wars and unrest) and “non-human” orchestrated crises (i.e. drought, flood, soil degradation, and other environmental disasters). For the most part, ethnic conflict is responsible for most of both the internally and externally displaced; and in addition to leaving widespread chaos in infrastructural destruction, it creates famine, homelessness, not to mention the human physical and psychological toll that comes with it. Often, women and children are its primary victims as they represent the most vulnerable group of society.

- e) Illiteracy in mainstream education is a measure of denial of rights. As far back as the XIX Century, Mann’s (1848) assessment of education echoes timelessly through the ages to the XXI Century, relevant as ever, as he captured the essence of education describing it as the “great equalizer” of the conditions of men and the balanced wheel of the social machinery. Illiteracy is certainly a threat to the future of developing nations in many respects and is a seed of tension and conflict; alarming figures abound in the literature to raise awareness about the need to stem this rising trend and keep up with population growth in Third World countries. Developing nations can hardly afford current conditions of skills-deficit, let alone a dwindling shrinking pool of talent at a time of even greater demand.

Undoubtedly, it is when citizens are literate that they are empowered to access information critically, initiate action based on their own decision, and articulate their demands for social change; this makes an educated citizenry a requirement for a democracy (Aithal, 2007). Indeed all criteria of involvement in good institutional governance, e.g. consensus building, public/ election participation, negotiation, are all predicated on banishing illiteracy (Nicaraguan Community Movement, 2007)

- f) Environmental degradation, a result of human activity, is now commanding world leaders’ attention in an unprecedented way; a solution to the stalemate is urgently warranted if climate change is to be reversed or kept in check. The frequency and potency of natural disasters, increase in the earth temperature and melting of polar



icebergs have already set off a domino-effect causing unspeakable damage through the rise of ocean water levels, flooding of coastal and low-lying areas and soil erosion, resulting in large population displacement and tens of thousands of climate refugees. Consensus-building through a cooperative approach to tackle this *non-human enemy*, global warming, is direly and imperatively needed to curb this threat. As bad luck would have it, Third World countries are up to now the ones bearing the brunt, with armies of internally displaced (i.e. Indonesia) searching for safer and more livable conditions.

Competing for scarce resources in foreign territory is in itself an act which carries the potential for conflict and adversity.

- g) Disease and epidemics find their ideal grooming ground in poverty and unsanitary living conditions such as is found in refugee camps and ghettos. Having low, or no, level of literacy worsens the vulnerability and susceptibility of the disenfranchised to disease/epidemics, the like of malaria, aids, and cholera. The crowded conditions and promiscuity in refugee camps and shanties (ghettos) also increase the likelihood of the spread of disease during an outbreak.
- h) As it is often rightfully claimed, poverty breeds crime and violence. If people's fundamental freedoms and rights are violated as a result of being chronically unemployed and when they are denied the right to be self-sufficient and live in dignity because of the lack of practical skills, training, and access to basic educational opportunities, one may expect them to resort to illegal behavior and crime for their survival. It is therefore no coincidence that the crime statistics generally recorded in poor neighborhoods far exceed crime rates in more affluent areas.

Kritz (1996) contends that it is of essence to maintain the rule of law to devise rules, regulations, and procedures that constrain the powers of all parties and hold them accountable for their deeds. This can potentially lessen the likelihood of further tension and crime/conflict. It is however key to give focal priority to root-causes of crime that can only be overturned permanently when people are guaranteed their basic rights and their vital needs are

restored. Lund (2001) supports and further elaborates on Kritz's point by noting that the provision of economic opportunities to ensure that citizens basic needs are met is critical; because economic factors that put society at risk include lack of employment opportunities food scarcity, and lack of access to natural resources

To conclude, it is of essence to call attention on the interconnectedness of the far-reaching implications of human rights violation as they are mutually inclusive. A comprehensive holistic understanding of this interrelationship is key to a proper comprehension of the complex reaches and ramifications of human rights violation. Development in the Continent will continue to be a vain and nihilistic pursuit as long as fundamental human freedoms and a paradigm shift are dismissed.

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