



## **Miseducation and the Subversion of Knowledge: Examining the Dangers of Teaching Unverified Data for Nation Building and Sustainable Development**

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### **Abstract**

*This article interrogates the dangers of miseducation and the teaching of unverified data to students, situating the discussion within the broader dynamics of knowledge suppression and distortion. Building upon the historical reality that the English word God is a late Germanic import imposed upon biblical texts, the study employs the concept of divine subversion as an analogy for how education can be manipulated to elevate certain narratives while marginalising others. Such practices of distortion, whether linguistic or pedagogical, reveal how systems of knowledge can be co-opted to serve ideological purposes rather than truth. The article argues that miseducation undermines nation-building by producing citizens who are unable to critically interrogate knowledge, thereby weakening democratic processes and civic responsibility. Furthermore, it compromises the sustainable development of human minds by cultivating intellectual passivity and dependence on unverified authorities. Drawing from translation studies, postcolonial theory, and critical pedagogy, the article demonstrates that teaching unverified data is not merely an academic error but a structural danger that shapes collective memory, political culture, and national development. It concludes that decolonial and evidence-based pedagogical frameworks are essential for building resilient societies capable of critical thought and sustainable human flourishing.*

**Keywords:** Miseducation, Subversion of Knowledge, Unverified Data, Nation-building.

## **Introduction**

Education has long been recognised as the foundation of social transformation, national identity, and sustainable development. When properly structured, it equips individuals with the critical tools necessary to interrogate knowledge, challenge assumptions, and participate meaningfully in society. Yet when education becomes a site of distortion—through the teaching of unverified data, suppression of alternative voices, or perpetuation of falsehoods—it becomes an instrument of miseducation. Such miseducation does not merely weaken individual learners; it destabilises the intellectual foundations of entire nations (Giroux 2020, 44).

The analogy with divine subversion is instructive. Just as the biblical world contained multiple divine names: Yahweh, Baal, Chemosh, Artemis, later translation practices collapsed this plurality into the singular abstraction “God,” a Germanic invention unknown to the original texts (Shaw 2011, 56). This act of linguistic conflation erased historical specificity and redefined cultural memory. Similarly, when unverified or ideologically filtered knowledge is taught in schools, it suppresses intellectual plurality and reshapes collective memory in the service of power rather than truth. In both cases, knowledge is subverted: deities become “gods” under a capitalised monopoly, and complex truths become simplified dogmas taught as unquestionable facts.

This article explores the dangers of such miseducation. It asks: What happens to nation-building when students are taught distorted or unverified data? How does the sustainable development of human minds suffer when education suppresses rather than liberates critical thought? And what pedagogical strategies might reverse this trajectory by decolonising curricula and affirming evidence-based knowledge?

The argument proceeds in five stages. First, the theoretical framework draws from translation studies, postcolonial critique, and critical pedagogy to conceptualise miseducation

as a subversion of knowledge. Second, the article examines historical and contemporary instances of teaching unverified data, demonstrating how miseducation functions as a structural phenomenon. Third, it analyses the implications of miseducation for nation-building, highlighting its impact on democratic participation and civic culture. Fourth, it evaluates the consequences for sustainable development, particularly the cultivation of resilient human minds capable of navigating complexity. Finally, it proposes strategies for decolonial and evidence-based pedagogy as pathways for resisting miseducation and strengthening educational development.

In doing so, the article situates itself within the global discourse on education, truth, and development. It contends that the stakes of miseducation are not confined to classrooms; they reverberate through political systems, cultural identities, and the intellectual capacities of entire societies. Education, rightly understood, is a site of liberation. But when corrupted by miseducation, it becomes an arena of suppression, distortion, and subversion.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The phenomenon of miseducation can be illuminated through three complementary frameworks: translation studies, postcolonial critique, and critical pedagogy. Together, they expose how knowledge is manipulated, suppressed, and distorted, and why such manipulation has devastating implications for nation-building and sustainable development.

#### **Translation Studies: The Erasure of Specificity**

Translation theory insists that proper names should be preserved in translation because they serve as markers of identity and cultural memory (Pym 2014). The historical collapse of divine names: Yahweh, Chemosh, Artemis, into the generic abstraction “God” demonstrates how translation can erase specificity and impose ideological hierarchies (Smith 2001). This practice was not an innocent linguistic choice but a theological strategy that privileged one narrative over others.

In the same way, education that teaches unverified or ideologically filtered data erases the specificity of knowledge. Complex histories are reduced to simplified dogmas; diverse perspectives are collapsed into a single narrative that serves political or institutional interests. Miseducation is thus analogous to mistranslation: both involve suppression of plurality and the elevation of one version of truth over others (Toury 2012). When students are taught unverified data, they inherit a distorted intellectual landscape in which names, facts, and realities are subordinated to power.

### **Postcolonial Critique: Knowledge as an Instrument of Domination**

Postcolonial studies argue that colonisation operates not only through military conquest but also through the subjugation of knowledge systems (Spivak 1988). By suppressing indigenous deities, languages, and traditions, colonial powers rewrote cultural memory in ways that legitimised their dominance. The replacement of African, Asian, and American gods with the capitalised “God” of European Christianity is one example of how epistemic violence operates (Sanneh 2009).

Miseducation functions similarly within pedagogical contexts. When curricula perpetuate unverified or ideologically biased data, they enact epistemic violence by silencing alternative perspectives and preventing critical engagement. This produces generations of learners who accept dominant narratives without question, thereby perpetuating the structures of domination. As Linda(2021) observes, education often becomes “the most effective weapon of colonisation” because it shapes not only what people know but also how they think about themselves and their place in the world.

### **Critical Pedagogy: Education as Liberation or Suppression**

Critical pedagogy, particularly as articulated by Paulo Freire and later scholars, emphasises that education is never neutral. It either functions as an instrument of liberation, enabling learners to critically interrogate reality, or as a mechanism of domination, reinforcing



passivity and conformity (Giroux 2020). When students are taught unverified data, education shifts from liberation to suppression. Instead of cultivating critical inquiry, it conditions learners to accept authority without evidence.

This dynamic mirrors divine subversion: just as the elevation of Yahweh into “God” monopolised the sacred and suppressed rivals, miseducation monopolises knowledge and suppresses alternative voices. Critical pedagogy thus provides the conceptual tools for resisting miseducation by advocating for participatory learning, dialogical engagement, and evidence-based curricula (McLaren 2022).

### **Integrative Lens**

By integrating translation studies, postcolonial critique, and critical pedagogy, miseducation can be understood as a process of knowledge subversion. It involves the erasure of specificity (translation), the silencing of alternative perspectives (postcolonial critique), and the suppression of critical thought (critical pedagogy). These frameworks expose miseducation not as a series of isolated errors but as a systemic process with profound implications for nation building and sustainable development.

### **Miseducation and Unverified Data in Pedagogy**

Miseducation is not merely the result of accidental errors; it is a structured process by which falsehoods, distortions, and unverified data are embedded into curricula and transmitted as unquestioned truths. This section explores how miseducation operates historically and contemporarily in three domains: historical narratives, religious instruction, and civic education.

### **Historical Narratives and the Fabrication of Memory**

One of the most pervasive forms of miseducation occurs in the teaching of history. National curricula often construct glorified narratives of origin, erasing complexities, failures, or rival voices to present a unified image of national identity (Chidester 1996). For example,



colonial educational systems across Africa systematically downplayed the achievements of indigenous societies, portraying them as primitive and in need of European intervention (Falola 2001). By teaching such distortions, schools created generations of students who internalised inferiority complexes and accepted the legitimacy of colonial domination.

This is structurally analogous to the biblical translation of multiple divine names into “God.” Just as Chemosh, Baal, and Artemis were relegated to lowercase “gods,” African deities, kingdoms, and knowledge systems were relegated to footnotes in history textbooks. The result is the same: miseducation that fabricates memory by suppressing plurality.

### **Religious Instruction and the Dogmatisation of Knowledge**

Religious instruction has historically been another avenue for miseducation, especially when it presents unverified or ideological claims as uncontested truths. The imposition of European Christian categories in African and Asian schools often involved the systematic dismissal of indigenous religions as idolatry or superstition (Olupona 2014). Students were not encouraged to interrogate these claims; instead, they were taught to accept them as fact.

Theological conflation mirrors educational conflation: just as Yahweh became the singular “God” in translation, complex religious realities were collapsed into binary oppositions—true versus false, civilised versus primitive, God versus gods. Such pedagogical practices do not simply misinform; they cultivate intellectual dependency on unverified authorities and suppress learners' agency to question what they are told (Smith 2001).

### **Civic Education and the Politics of Unverified Claims**

Miseducation also extends into civic education, where students are often taught simplified or false accounts of governance, law, and citizenship. In authoritarian contexts, for example, curricula may present political leaders as infallible, erase histories of dissent, or glorify national achievements while ignoring corruption, repression, or structural inequalities

(Giroux 2020). Such civic miseducation fosters uncritical loyalty to the state rather than critical engagement with democratic processes.

The danger here lies in substituting ideology for evidence. Just as translation created a theological monopoly through capitalisation, “God” versus “gods”, so miseducation in civic curricula creates political monopolies by presenting state narratives as the only legitimate truth. In both cases, learners are trained not to think critically but to accept unquestioned hierarchies.

### **The Reproduction of Miseducation**

Miseducation is self-perpetuating. Teachers who themselves were formed within distorted curricula often reproduce the same errors when they teach new generations (Tuhiwai Smith 2021). This cyclical process ensures that falsehoods remain embedded in cultural memory. Over time, miseducation becomes naturalised, making it exceedingly difficult for societies to distinguish between verified knowledge and ideological distortion.

The outcome is predictable: learners who lack the tools to verify information, citizens who are vulnerable to manipulation, and nations that struggle to build resilient democratic cultures. In this sense, miseducation is not simply an intellectual deficit but a structural danger to nation building and sustainable human development.

### **Implications for Nation Building**

Nation-building depends fundamentally on the capacity of citizens to critically engage with knowledge, participate in public life, and contribute to the collective good. When education is grounded in miseducation, through the teaching of unverified data or ideologically distorted narratives, it undermines these capacities. The effects are not merely academic but structural, shaping the political culture and stability of entire nations.

### **Weakening of Democratic Institutions**

Democracy thrives when citizens are informed, critical, and capable of questioning authority. Miseducation undermines these capacities by conditioning learners to accept unverified claims without interrogation. Giroux (2020) argues that “a pedagogy of conformity breeds political passivity,” leaving citizens vulnerable to authoritarian manipulation. If students are taught distorted versions of history or civics, they grow into adults who cannot hold leaders accountable or detect when their freedoms are being eroded.

In this sense, miseducation functions like the conflation of divine names into “God.” Just as translation elevated one deity while suppressing others, political miseducation elevates the state narrative while suppressing dissenting voices. The result is a culture where democracy becomes hollow, sustained more by myth than by genuine participation.

### **Destabilisation of Civic Culture**

Civic culture relies on shared truths, collective memory, and the ability to debate differences openly. Miseducation corrodes this culture by teaching selective or false information. For instance, when textbooks glorify certain ethnic or religious groups while diminishing others, they sow seeds of division rather than unity (Falola 2001). Similarly, when colonial systems taught that indigenous societies were primitive, they destabilised civic identity by embedding internalised inferiority among colonised peoples (Olupona 2014). The long-term consequence is fragmentation. Citizens who are miseducated struggle to find common ground because their understanding of history, identity, and society is already distorted. Nation-building thus becomes fragile, built on foundations of manipulated memory rather than shared truth.

### **Cultivation of Intellectual Dependency**

Miseducation fosters intellectual dependency, where learners become reliant on external authorities for validation of knowledge rather than cultivating independent thought. This dependency is dangerous for nation-building because it prevents the emergence of critical thinkers, innovators, and reformers who can drive national progress (Tuhiwai 2021). Nations built on intellectual dependency remain vulnerable to external manipulation, whether by colonial legacies, global powers, or domestic elites.

Theological conflation provides a parallel: by collapsing multiple divine names into “God,” translators created a theological dependency that conditioned believers to accept one name as ultimate. Similarly, miseducation trains students to accept singular narratives rather than engage with complexity. Both processes inhibit intellectual independence, which is essential for strong nation-building.

### **Entrenchment of Corruption and Authoritarianism**

When citizens lack the ability to interrogate knowledge critically, they are more susceptible to corrupt or authoritarian leadership. Leaders exploit miseducated populations by presenting distorted narratives that legitimise their power. Chidester (1996) notes that colonial regimes sustained themselves not only through force but through miseducating populations to believe in their own inferiority. In modern contexts, governments use educational curricula to sanitise histories of corruption, thereby entrenching authoritarian practices.

In this way, miseducation is not a neutral failure of pedagogy but an active tool of governance. By distorting what students know about their history, leaders secure political control while undermining the very foundations of nation-building.

The implications of miseducation for nation-building are profound. It weakens democratic institutions, destabilises civic culture, cultivates intellectual dependency, and entrenches corruption. Like the theological subversion of divine names, educational subversion



reshapes collective memory and redirects national identity. Sustainable nation-building cannot occur on the foundation of falsehood; it requires curricula rooted in verified, plural, and critically engaged knowledge.

### **Implications for Sustainable Development of Human Minds**

Sustainable development is not only about economics, infrastructure, or environmental stability; it also concerns the development of human minds capable of critical thought, creativity, and resilience. When education is corrupted by miseducation, the sustainable development of minds is compromised. Instead of producing citizens who can innovate, collaborate, and adapt, miseducation generates populations trapped in intellectual stagnation.

### **Suppression of Critical Thinking**

Critical thinking is the bedrock of intellectual sustainability. It equips learners to assess claims, weigh evidence, and discern between truth and falsehood. Miseducation undermines this by training students to accept unverified data as unquestionable truth. As Freire observed, the “banking model” of education deposits information into students without enabling them to question its validity (McLaren 2022). This pedagogy of passivity produces minds that are unable to resist manipulation or generate independent insights.

Theological conflation provides an instructive parallel. By collapsing Yahweh, Chemosh, and Artemis into “God,” translation eliminated the possibility of engaging with the complexity of divine plurality (Smith 2001, 45). Similarly, miseducation reduces complexity into simplified dogmas, depriving learners of the skills necessary for critical engagement. The sustainable development of minds cannot flourish in such an environment.

### **Stifling of Creativity and Innovation**

Innovation thrives in environments where knowledge is contested, tested, and expanded. Miseducation, by contrast, discourages questioning and suppresses creativity. Students taught distorted history or unverified science internalise limits on their imagination, believing that the



boundaries imposed by authority are immovable (Giroux 2020). Such stifling has long-term consequences for national development, as creativity is essential for addressing contemporary challenges in technology, governance, and sustainability.

Just as divine subversion created a monopoly of the sacred, miseducation creates a monopoly of thought. Both discourage plurality, experimentation, and the capacity to imagine alternatives. A society built on miseducation is thus doomed to repeat inherited errors rather than generating new solutions.

### **Psychological Impoverishment and Dependency**

The sustainable development of minds is not only intellectual but also psychological. Learners exposed to miseducation experience impoverishment in self-perception and agency. When colonial schools in Africa taught that indigenous religions were primitive and irrational, students internalised a sense of inferiority (Olupona, 2014). This psychological dependency persists into adulthood, where individuals continue to doubt their intellectual worth and defer to external authorities (Tuhiwai,2021).

This dependency damages sustainable development because it prevents societies from building confidence in their own knowledge systems. A nation cannot flourish if its people believe that their minds are inherently inferior or incapable of producing valid knowledge. The suppression of indigenous deities through translation and the suppression of indigenous knowledge through education are parallel acts of psychological disempowerment.

### **Intergenerational Transmission of Intellectual Weakness**

Miseducation is not confined to a single generation; it is reproduced through schools, families, and institutions. Teachers formed within distorted curricula reproduce the same errors, and parents pass on internalised inferiority to their children (Falola, 2001). Over time, this creates a cycle of intellectual weakness that becomes embedded in cultural memory.



Breaking this cycle requires intentional educational reform. Just as scholars of translation have sought to restore suppressed divine names to biblical discourse, educators must restore suppressed truths to curricula. Without such reclamation, the sustainable development of minds will remain compromised by intergenerational miseducation.

### **Global Vulnerability in the Age of Information**

In the digital age, the danger of miseducation intensifies. Students encounter a flood of information online, much of it unverified. If their educational foundations already discourage critical thinking, they are more likely to accept misinformation uncritically, making societies vulnerable to propaganda, extremism, and conspiracy theories (Moyaert, 2014). Sustainable development requires citizens who can navigate the complexities of the information age with discernment and resilience. Miseducation produces the opposite: individuals susceptible to manipulation in both religious and political spheres.

The implications of miseducation for the sustainable development of human minds are devastating. It suppresses critical thinking, stifles creativity, fosters psychological dependency, perpetuates intellectual weakness across generations, and heightens vulnerability to misinformation. Just as divine subversion reshaped cultural memory by erasing divine names, miseducation reshapes intellectual development by erasing truth and suppressing inquiry. Sustainable development cannot occur without reclaiming education as a space of verified knowledge, critical thought, and intellectual empowerment.

### **Towards a Decolonial and Critical Pedagogy**

If miseducation functions as a structural subversion of knowledge, then the task of educators, policymakers, and scholars is to resist such subversion through intentional strategies. Decolonial and critical pedagogies provide frameworks for reclaiming education as a site of liberation rather than suppression. This section outlines four strategies: curricular

decolonisation, evidence-based learning, dialogical pedagogy, and the restoration of suppressed knowledges.

### **Curricular Decolonisation**

Decolonial pedagogy begins with recognising that many curricula continue to reflect colonial epistemologies that privilege Western knowledge while marginalising indigenous systems. Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2021) insists that “to decolonise education is to make visible the hidden violence of imposed knowledge systems and to reclaim the suppressed voices of indigenous traditions.” In practical terms, this means re-evaluating curricula to ensure that history, literature, religion, and science are not presented through distorted hierarchies.

Just as biblical translation erased divine names by collapsing them into “God,” colonial curricula erased the complexity of African, Asian, and indigenous knowledge. Decolonial pedagogy requires educators to reverse this subversion by restoring plurality, acknowledging cultural contributions, and situating knowledge within diverse epistemologies.

### **Evidence-Based Learning**

Miseducation thrives when assertions are presented without verification. A critical pedagogy must therefore anchor itself in evidence-based learning. This involves teaching students to demand sources, interrogate data, and evaluate claims. McLaren (2022) argues that evidence-based pedagogy empowers learners “to move from passive recipients of dogma to active co-constructors of knowledge.”

This approach does not mean rejecting tradition but testing it against evidence. Just as translation studies demonstrate that divine names can be philologically verified, so educational data must be scrutinised. Students should be equipped with tools of historical criticism, scientific method, and critical reasoning that enable them to separate truth from distortion.

### **Dialogical Pedagogy**

Paulo Freire's insistence on dialogical pedagogy remains crucial for resisting miseducation. Education must be participatory, encouraging learners to question, debate, and co-create knowledge with teachers (Giroux 2020). Dialogical pedagogy subverts authoritarian forms of teaching that perpetuate unverified data by privileging memorisation over interrogation.

This dialogical approach is especially vital for nation-building, since democratic societies require citizens who can listen to others, engage with differences, and form independent judgments. In contrast, monological pedagogy produces conformist citizens vulnerable to manipulation. By institutionalising dialogue, education nurtures the sustainable development of minds capable of participating in complex political and cultural conversations.

### **Restoration of Suppressed Knowledges**

Finally, critical pedagogy must intentionally restore suppressed knowledges. This includes indigenous histories, local spiritual traditions, and marginalised perspectives that were erased through colonial or doctrinal subversion (Olupona 2014). Restoring this knowledge does not mean uncritically accepting it; it means granting it recognition as a valid contributor to the intellectual commons.

In the same way that restoring divine names to biblical interpretation reveals the plural theatre of the ancient world, restoring suppressed knowledge to curricula reveals the complexity of human history and culture. This restoration strengthens students' intellectual self-confidence, disrupts inherited inferiority complexes, and empowers societies to build resilient and sustainable futures.

A decolonial and critical pedagogy resists miseducation by decolonising curricula, grounding teaching in evidence, promoting dialogical engagement, and restoring suppressed knowledges. Such strategies transform education from a site of subversion into a space of



liberation. The sustainable development of human minds depends on this transformation. Without it, miseducation will continue to reproduce cycles of dependency, distortion, and fragility.

## **Conclusion**

This article has argued that miseducation, understood as the teaching of unverified data and ideologically distorted knowledge, functions as a subversion of truth with profound implications for nation-building and the sustainable development of human minds. Drawing from the analogy of divine subversion, where translation collapsed multiple divine names into the singular abstraction “God,” the study demonstrated how education can similarly erase plurality, distort memory, and reshape intellectual development in service of power.

Through translation studies, miseducation was shown to involve the erasure of specificity, reducing complexity to simplified dogmas. Through postcolonial critique, it was framed as an act of epistemic violence that silences alternative perspectives and legitimises domination. Through critical pedagogy, it was exposed as the suppression of critical thought, transforming education into a tool of conformity rather than liberation.

The dangers of miseducation are not confined to the classroom. They reverberate across the structures of society. For nation-building, miseducation weakens democracy, destabilises civic culture, cultivates intellectual dependency, and entrenches authoritarianism. For sustainable development, it suppresses critical thinking, stifles creativity, impoverishes psychological agency, perpetuates intergenerational weakness, and heightens vulnerability to misinformation in the digital age.

Yet education also holds the promise of reversal. A decolonial and critical pedagogy can resist miseducation by decolonising curricula, grounding learning in evidence, institutionalising dialogical methods, and restoring suppressed knowledges. Such reforms



transform education from an arena of suppression into a space of liberation, equipping learners not only with facts but with the intellectual resilience to interrogate, innovate, and imagine.

The stakes are urgent. In a world fractured by misinformation, ideological manipulation, and global inequalities, the sustainable development of nations depends on the sustainable development of minds. Education must become a site of truth, plurality, and critical empowerment. Anything less perpetuates miseducation, leaving societies vulnerable to fragility and distortion. The future of nation-building requires nothing less than an uncompromising commitment to verified knowledge and critical pedagogy.

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