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SPECIAL ISSUE ON

GENERATION OF AFRICAN SCHOLARS AND THEIR INTELLECTUAL LEGACIES

Guest edited by Dr. Babalola Joseph Balogun and Prof. Emmet Tadesse Woldegiorgis

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The University of Johannesburg acquired *The Thinker* in April 2019 from Dr Essop Pahad. Over the last decade, *The Thinker* has gained a reputation as a journal that explores Pan-African issues across fields and times. Ronit Frenkel, as the incoming editor, plans on maintaining the pan-African scope of the journal while increasing its coverage into fields such as books, art, literature and popular cultures. *The Thinker* is a 'hybrid' journal, publishing both journalistic pieces with more academic articles and contributors can now opt to have their submissions peer reviewed. We welcome Africa-centred articles from diverse perspectives, in order to enrich both knowledge of the continent and of issues impacting the continent.

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Antigone". *International Journal of African Renaissance Studies*, 18(1): 24-46; and Balogun, B. J. (2023). "Building an Authentic African Philosophy of Education Based on the African Concept of Personhood". *Curriculum Perspective*, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s41297-023-00187-x>. Dr Balogun is currently a postdoctoral research fellow at the Ali Mazrui Centre for Higher Education Studies, University of Johannesburg, South Africa.

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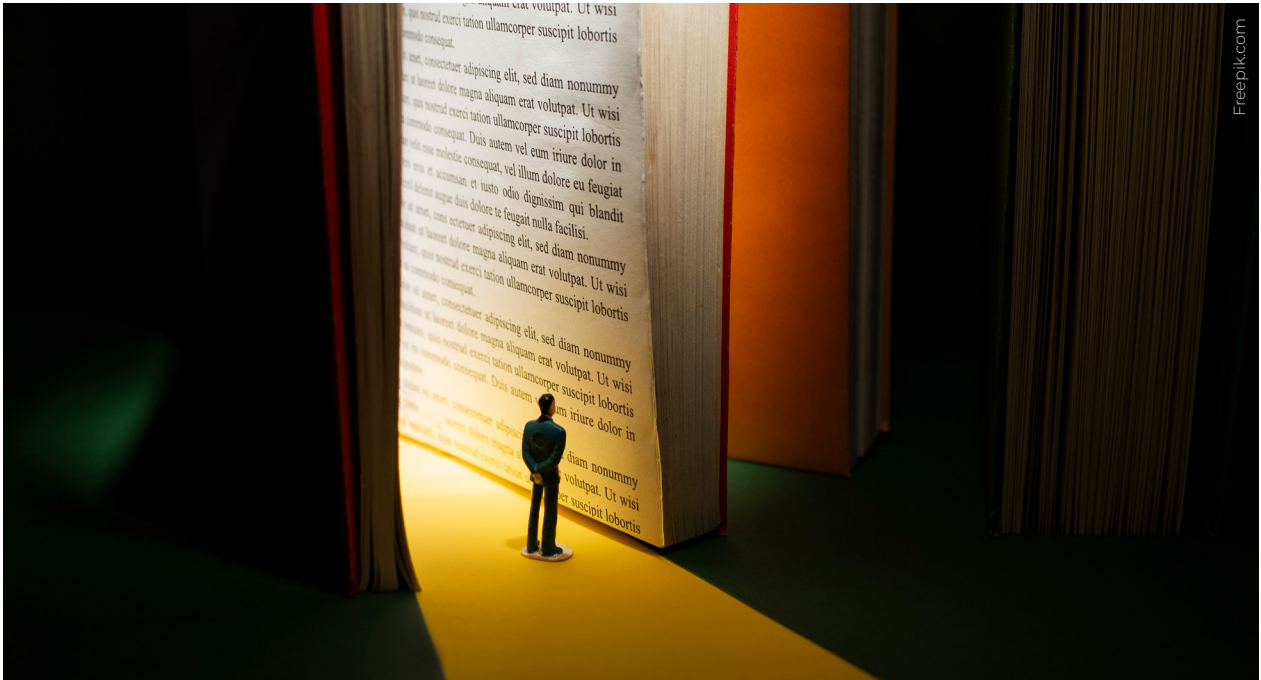
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FOREWORD



By the Guest Editors, Dr. Babalola Joseph Balogun and Prof. Emnet Tadesse Woldegiorgis, both of the Ali Mazrui Centre for Higher Education Studies, University of Johannesburg, South Africa.

The articles in this Special Issue were selected from responses to a call for abstracts on the theme “Generation of African Scholars and the Intellectual Legacies”. The idea was originally conceived by the late Professor Michael Cross, pioneer Director of the Ali Mazrui Centre for Higher Education Studies (AMCHES), University of Johannesburg, South Africa, to be a flagship project of the budding centre. It aimed to bring together, outstanding scholars from diverse disciplinary backgrounds and perspectives to critically investigate, analyse and document the intellectual legacies of African scholars, leaders, and institutions. Its central objective was to analyse the nature of African scholars’ contributions to knowledge production with the specific goal of influencing and/or shaping the higher education landscape, discourses, policies, and practices in Africa. Using a multidisciplinary approach, the

Special Issue critically probes and document the main dimensions of African intellectual legacy such as the processes of emergence and development of African scholars within the broader national and international contexts; the biographies, identities and the knowledge contribution (e.g., epistemological, theoretical, policy-related and methodological) made by African scholars; critical institutional spaces within or outside universities that have significantly contributed to the production of African scholars, African scholarship and knowledge; and the leadership role played by African scholars in politics, policy-making process, academia, and society at large.

Within this broad interdisciplinary spectrum, the Special Issue focuses on the academic, intellectual, cultural and leadership legacies in higher education produced by the different generations of African scholars and institutions. The project

hopes thereby to pioneer the academic culture of documenting the historic past of generations of African scholars as well as the need to preserve the legacies of their intellectual capital, reviving the culture of scholarship legacy in African universities.

In contradistinction to the African reality, Europe and North America have both systematically documented their intellectual histories and succeeded in placing them, at global stage, as knowledge and experience reservoir, meant for addressing global educational, developmental, and socio-cultural challenges. Despite the rhetoric of 'reform', 'transition', 'transformation', 'decolonisation' or other change claims spread across the continent, Africa is still in the process of developing epistemological and theoretical foundations that are uniquely African and recognised as such, globally. While many efforts have been, and are still being, undertaken on the continent, no systematic and comprehensive project has taken place to address the gap opened by lack of adequate and intentional documentation of progress in African intellectual history. There is currently no systematic analysis and documentation of the intellectual contributions and impacts of the legacy of the African scholars as capable collaborators in the business of global knowledge production. Currently, little or nothing is known and taught in African universities about the intellectual legacies of African scholars. This Special Issue was originally conceived to address this omission in African intellectual history.

The Special Issue covers the main dimensions of the African intellectual legacy such as institutional impacts on African scholarship, individual contributions by African scholars, and leadership role in higher education with the aim of producing cutting-edge knowledge relevant to the future of the universities and other domains in the continent. In all, the Special Issue features eleven well-researched, clearly articulated articles by scholars with a wide disciplinary spread, and thematically structured to reflect the multiplicity of perspectives in African intellectual discourse.

The conversation is opened by Juliet Munyaradzi's very insightful article titled "A Historical Review of African Scholarship and the Decolonial Discourse: Challenges and Prospects" in which she thematically dissects the history of African

scholarship from the half of the last century till date. In the article, she explores the diverse realities that have characterised African scholarship drive within the timeframe of her focus, and in the light of developments, challenges and prospects experienced by African scholars in their pursuits of African knowledges and the decolonisation discourse in the higher education sector. This is an important contribution because, as a historical exercise, it acquaints scholars with the reality and contours of African scholarship, and will definitely stimulate further research geared towards covering yet uncovered terrain and strengthening areas in which African scholarship has thrived. The second article is titled "Exploring the Intellectual Legacies of Patrice Lumumba: An Analysis of his Contributions to the Decolonisation and Liberation of Africa". In the article, Kennedy Monari critically examines the contributions of one of the loudest African voices on decolonisation discourse through the analysis of his political and leadership roles, ideas and writings. By delving into Lumumba's thoughts on decolonisation, liberation of Africa, Pan-Africanism, African unity and other sundry issues, the author concludes that Lumumba's intellectual legacies transcend national boundaries and can be said to have continent-wide appeal in its application and implication.

In the third article titled "The Politics of Knowledge and Decolonisation: An Appraisal of Mahmood Mamdani's Contribution", Sifiso Ndlovu recounts the much-talked about effects of colonialism on African intellectual landscape. Hidden behind the facades of universality, neutrality and objectivity of knowledge production, colonialism continues to dictate the direction of the African intellect, unabatedly. The author examines the theme of colonialism in the thoughts of Mahmood Mamdani, noting his contributions to African scholarship through the latter's use of historical analysis in underscoring the role of colonial consciousness in African knowledge production, consumption and economy. The article is a causal analysis of the seeming African intellectual despondency; hence, it provides a rich research resource for scholars interested in understanding the origin of dependence of African intellectuals on the model established in the colonial regime.

David Oyedola, in his "Rethinking Moses Oke on the Recolonisation Project" reconsiders the whole

gamut of decolonisation discourse in African scholarship with the view to making sense of Oke's thought-provoking position that "a people that continually looks back to its past that failed then, and could not sustain them for present salvation, must change their perception and attitude to that past or hold themselves ready for eventual recolonization." The author defends Oke in the light of possible misinterpretation of his thesis by arguing that Oke's attitude to decolonisation project does not imply a complete mockery of the phenomenon. However, as the author argues, rather than constituting a threat to the African decolonisation agitations, Oke's recolonisation project is a warning against the unhelpful interpretation of decolonisation as an act of going back to the African pre-colonial existence. This is not only because the much talked about African past is forever and irretrievably gone, but whatever feature of the past that Africans intend to go back to, cannot be institutionally sufficient to meet the vagaries of contemporary global realities.

"Afrika's Cause must Triumph: Towards the Hegemony of Lembede's "Afrika for Afrikans as a Political Philosophy of National Liberation in South Africa", authored by Masilo Lepuru, examines Lembede's political notion of Afrikanism, a sort of nationalist philosophy which prioritises Africa and Africans in its scheme of political affairs. In the specific context of South African liberation struggles, the article compares Lembede's 'Afrikanism' and Mda's 'broad nationalism' in pursuit of a central objective that the political and intellectual relationship between Lembede and Mda has eventuated in the epochal emergence of antagonism between two broad political philosophies, namely, Afrikanism and broad nationalism. Lamenting the marginalisation of Lembede's studies in South African scholarship, the author opines that Mda's idea of Afrika must triumph has contributed to the disastrous dominance of nonracialism in South Africa at the expense of the racial nationalism of Lembede. In conclusion, the author calls for the replacement of Mda's naïve and dangerous forms of nonracialism with the uncompromising racial nationalism of Lembede.

Sobonokulhe Ndlovu, in her article, "Rewriting the Disability Script from the Global South: Tsitsi Chataika's Contributions to Disability Studies

Scholarship in Africa" expresses discontent at the fact that, for many decades, discourse on African disability was characterised by the heavy presence of scholars from the Global North. Using the Decolonial Theory and systemic review methods, the author highlights the contributions of one of the Africa's leading scholars in disability studies, Tsitsi Chataika. The efforts of Chataika in disability scholarship, Ndlovu insists, is a noble cause as they help to realise the vision of correcting the falsehood long peddled by the Global North's conceptual mapping of African disability discourse. The rewriting of disability narrative, as the author notes, has significant impacts on disability conception, disability theory, disability policy and inclusion of persons with disabilities in society and of students with disabilities in higher education in African countries. In Simon Masiga and Helen Nkabila's article titled "A Contextual Interpretation of Disability Inclusion in 2 Samuel 9 and the Bamasaaba of Eastern Uganda", an attempt is made to domicile discourse of disability inclusion within the contexts of the Christian religion (as referenced in the Book of 2 Samuel, chapter 9) and the culture of Bamasaaba people of Eastern Uganda. With interpretative hermeneutics and historical-critical methods, the authors argue that in the aspects of identity, social status and perception, 2 Samuel 9 corresponds to how Bamasaaba construct disability phenomenon in their socio-religious contexts.

Sunday L. Oladipupo's article titled "Wither Individualism? A Rereading of Segun Ogungbemi's Scholarship on Individuality-Community Debate in African Philosophy" and B. J. Balogun and A. A. Ajiboro's article titled "Obscuring Our Sense of Morality: Barry Hallen's Moral Epistemology and the Problem of Character Indeterminacy" are written by philosophers. In the former, the author re-examines the individualist-communitarian debate in the light of the scholarship of a Nigeria-born African philosopher, Segun Ogungbemi. The scholarship of Ogungbemi is worth rereading because of its denial, contrary to the prevalent opinion on the matter, that African are communalistic in social orientation. In his article, Oladipupo rejects this radical individualist position of Ogungbemi, arguing that such position is unsustainable within the

African cultural milieu, and demonstrating that it can only be attributed to the Western influence on Ogungbemi's scholarship.

On their own, Balogun and Ajiboro critically assess Yoruba theory of propositional knowledge using Hallen's Yoruba moral epistemology prism. Justifying the inclusion of Hallen (an American by birth) in African intellectual legacies on the ground of his quality contributions to African philosophical scholarship, the authors argue that Hallen's representation of knowledge acquired through secondhand means does not adequately capture the Yoruba view on the matter. With arguments ranging from a simple observation that Hallen's thesis is founded on a wrong assumption, to a, perhaps, more sophisticated metaphysical argument that the thesis suffers the problem of other minds, the article concluded that "although it is flawed, Hallen's Yoruba moral epistemology thesis is an important contribution to African philosophy as it stimulates fruitful discussions around the subject matters of epistemology and ethics, and the connection between them within a traditional intellectual discourse of the Yoruba of Southwestern Nigeria."

Phefumula Nyoni and Otilia Chiramba's paper with the title "Embracing Plural Curricula amid Neoliberalism in Contemporary Universities in Africa: Asante's Afrocentric Idea Revisited" focuses on how Asante's idea of Afrocentricity could assist in the understanding of the main challenges and opportunities associated with curricula in Africa's post-colonial universities." In achieving this central aim, the authors, using a combination of an extensive review of empirical cases and the authors' experiences of the extended curriculum programmes in diverse South African universities, explore the complex nature of pedagogic transformation mainly due to the persistence of Western ideals under a resurgent neoliberal philosophy that shapes practices in contemporary university spaces. Hence, the aim of revisiting the Asante's idea of Afrocentricity is to show how it constitutes a decolonial force for resisting the onslaught of western hegemony against identities, ideals, aspirations, and values of African students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Given the centrality of inclusiveness to Afrocentricity, the article concludes that it presents a better option of curricular development for the post-colonial

African universities that the existing neoliberal tradition based on power and privileges of one group over another.

The last but not the least is an article titled "In Comes the New Black': The Ghetto-Rural Black versus Blacksuburban Identities", written by Nkululeko Motha. In the article, the author identifies two groups of black people, namely, the Ghetto-Rural Blacks and the Blacksuburban, the former being black people in rural spaces while the latter are black people in the urban spaces. These two groups were created by the consciousness of colonial hierarchisation or inequalities prevalent in contemporary urban spaces, especially in South Africa and the United States of America. Such perceived inequalities, argues the author, has the tendencies of destroying the unity that should ideally exist among black people by polarising them along spurious lines of dichotomy created by colonial history. The article raises fundamental and troubling questions about races, identities, power, privileges, and perceptions among blacks. The author concludes the article by noting the unsustainability of the Blacksuburban black identity on the ground that it helps to further the exploitative or oppressive regime of colonialism in Africa's post-colonial era.

In all, the eleven articles that make up this Special Issue are highly ambitious, and promise to make a strong impression on those interested in African scholarship, for a long time. Each of the articles has the capacity to inspire further conversation not only on the subject matter of its discussions, but also on other allied matters that may arise as fall-outs of the current discourse. Hopefully, the academic community will find this compendium of ideas useful for further research and for the purpose of personal edification. This is besides its ultimate aim of historicizing, documenting and appreciating the contributions of African scholars and properly situating their intellectual legacies in the scheme of global intellectual affairs.