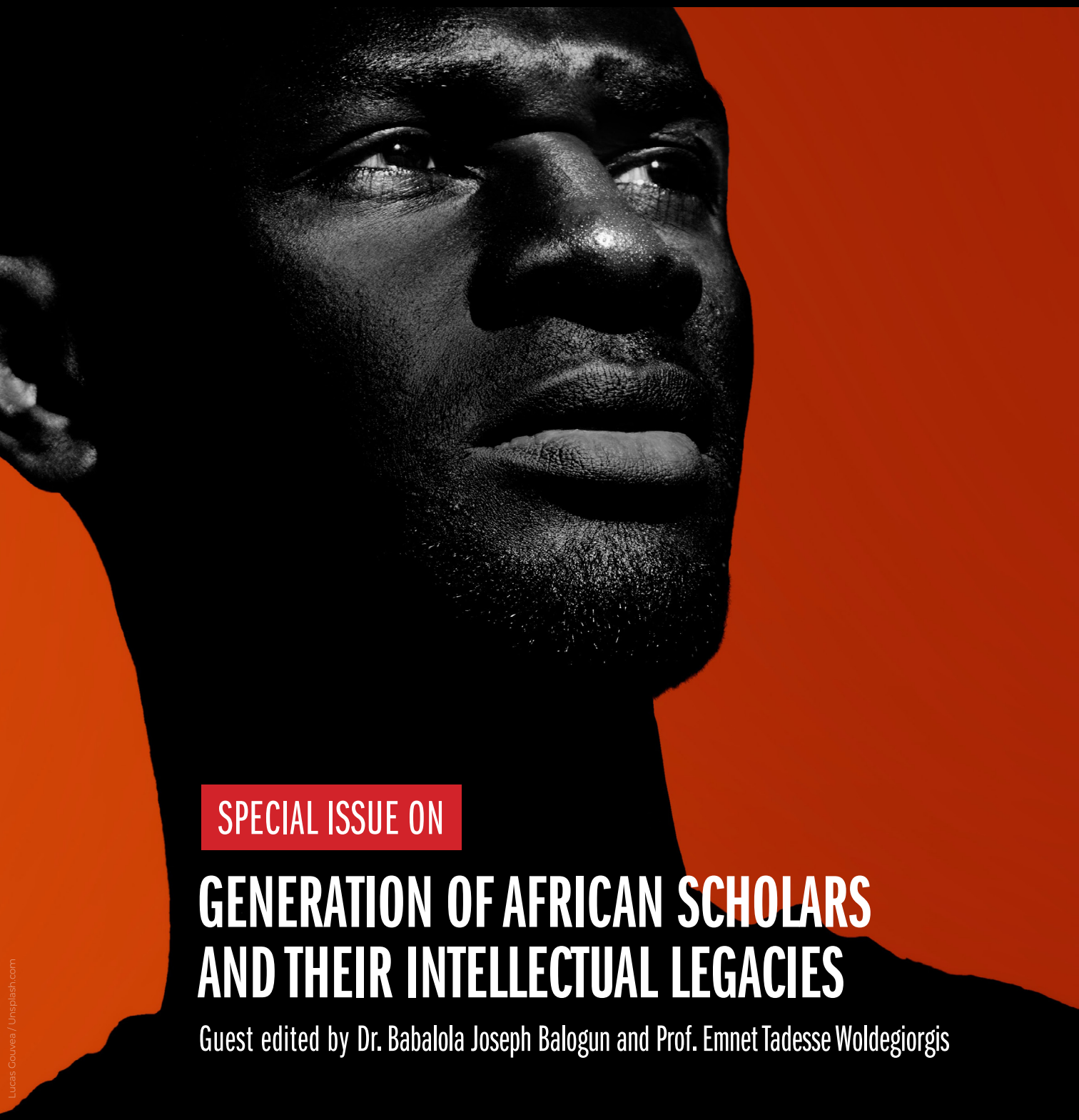
Quarter 2 2024 / VOLUME 99

The Thinker

A PAN-AFRICAN QUARTERLY FOR THOUGHT LEADERS

Journal ISSN: 2075 2458



SPECIAL ISSUE ON

GENERATION OF AFRICAN SCHOLARS AND THEIR INTELLECTUAL LEGACIES

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

The Thinker
A PAN-AFRICAN QUARTERLY FOR THOUGHT LEADERS
Journal ISSN: 2075 2458

CALL FOR PAPERS

AFRICA

Open submissions on any aspect

For further enquiries, please contact the editor, Prof Ronit Frenkel
thethinker@uj.ac.za

Journal ISSN: 2075 2458

Please note: *The Thinker* will be charging page fees from 1 July 2024 @ R1.30 a word in order to remain sustainable.

UNIVERSITY OF JOHANNESBURG

@ujlibrary

IN THIS ISSUE

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.

Prof Ronit Frenkel

Nedine Moonsamy

Nedine Moonsamy is an associate professor in the English department at the University of Johannesburg. She is currently writing a monograph on contemporary South African Fiction and otherwise conducts research on science fiction in Africa. Her debut novel, The Unfamous Five (Modjaji Books, 2019) was shortlisted for the HSS Fiction Award (2021), and her poetry was shortlisted for the inaugural New Contrast National Poetry Award (2021).

Silindile Ngcobo

Silindile Ngcobo is the Editorial Assistant.

All contributing analysts write in their personal capacity

Julliet Munyaradzi completed her Ph.D (Ed) in 2022 at the University of South Africa. She is currently a postdoctoral fellow at Ali Mazrui Centre for Higher Education Studies, University of Johannesburg. Her research interests are centred on decolonisation and transformation in higher education, language policy and practice in education, social justices and access issues in higher education.

Kennedy Monari is an Education in Emergencies Specialist, a history teacher, and an early career researcher in the political economy of education in fragile, violent, and conflict contexts with over 6 years of experience in the field. He received a Master of Education in Emergencies from the University of Nairobi, Kenya. Kennedy has made a significant impact in the field by designing and implementing successful programs for children affected by conflict and natural disasters and teaching history at the secondary school level in the marginalized parts of Kenya. He is also a Rotary Peace Fellow alumnus of Makerere University Rotary Peace Center, where he conducted numerous field visits to post-conflict communities in Rwanda as well as Northern and Western Uganda. Kennedy is recognized for his unwavering dedication and passion for peace and conflict transformation, particularly in the context of education in emergencies. Additionally, he has successfully implemented a social change initiative focusing on visual artistic expression for social cohesion between urban refugees and the host community in Nairobi, Kenya.

Dr. Sifiso Ndlovu is a Political Science lecturer at the University of Mpumalanga. She previously held a postdoctoral research fellowship at the Johannesburg Institute for Advanced Studies (JIAS), University of Johannesburg and Public Affairs Research Institute (PARI). Her PhD project obtained from the University of the Witwatersrand broadly examined intersections and divergences in the articulations of belonging to ethnic identity and nation-building in post-apartheid South Africa in the culturally heterogeneous KwaMhlanga region. Ndlovu also holds an MA in Political Studies, an Honours degree in Political Studies and a BA in Political Studies and Sociology, all obtained from the University of the Witwatersrand. Her research interests include the state in Africa, African politics, public policy, democratization, social justice and the politics of nation-building, ethnic identities, as well as belonging and citizenship. She has published journal articles and book chapters on the politics of belonging, nation-building and Ndebele ethnicity. She has received academic awards and scholarships, including the Next Generation Social Sciences in Africa doctoral fellowship, University of the Witwatersrand's Council Postgraduate Merit Scholarship, National Research Foundation (NRF) bursary, as well as the University of the Witwatersrand's Postgraduate Merit Award Doctoral Scholarship.

David A. Oyedola (doyedola@oauife.edu.ng) is a doctoral student in the Department of Philosophy, University of Ibadan, Nigeria. He is a lecturer in the Department of Philosophy at the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria, where he teaches and researches in Ethics and African Philosophy. His research interests are multidisciplinary which include theoretical ethics, applied ethics, African philosophy, decolonisation, jurisprudential rights for people with disabilities, the relevance of cultural heritage, resolving moral conflict, the contribution of philosophy to Africa's quest for development as well as epistemology.

Masilo Lepuru works as a Research Fellow at the Institute for Pan-African Thought and Conversation. He is also a philosophy lecturer at the University of South Africa. Mr Masilo has a BA in Philosophy, Politics and Economics (PPE) and an LLB (Law degree) from the University of Pretoria. He also obtained an Honours degree in Politics and International Relations from the University of Johannesburg. He has completed an MA in Development Studies at the University of Johannesburg and University of the West Indies in the Department of Politics and International Relations. Masilo is currently pursuing his Ph.D. studies in Political science at the University of Johannesburg. His research interests are broad and include African philosophy, Jurisprudence, the Black Radical Tradition, African history, literature, South African history, and politics.

Dr. Sibonokuhle Ndlovu is a lecturer at Ali Mazrui's Centre for Higher Education Studies at the University of Johannesburg, South Africa. She has published over 20 peer-reviewed publications and has presented her work in

national and international conferences. She holds a PhD in Inclusive Education from Wits School of Education and a Master's degree in Education, with First Class (Cum Laude) from the University of Cape Town. She is a recipient of the University of Johannesburg certificate of excellence award for outstanding achievement in research and academic citizenship in the postdoctoral research programme in 2019. She is the lead editor of the book, Social, Educational, and Cultural Perspectives of Disabilities in the Global South (2021), published by IGI Global publishers and a core-editor of the book, Transformative Curricular, Pedagogies and Epistemologies (2021) published by Brill Publishers. Her areas of interest include disability in higher education, disability and gender in the Global South, teaching and learning of students with disabilities in higher education, disability and policy in higher education, decolonisation and disability, disability, gender and rurality.

Rev. Simon Masiga (simon.masiga@makac.ug) is an Assistant Lecturer at the School of Liberal and Performing Arts, College of Humanities and Social Sciences, Makerere University. Masiga is teaching in the Department of Religion and Peace Studies and mentoring the Makerere Rotary Peace Fellows enrolled on the Peace and Conflict Transformation Programme under Rotary Peace Center. He is currently a PhD Fellow with CHUSS and Gerda Henkel Stiftung Fellowship at Makerere University, under the promotion and supervision of Assoc. Prof Helen Nkabala and Assoc. Prof Veneranda Mbabazi. His current research focus is on African Biblical Hermeneutics, Religious Ethics and Inter-religious dialogue to address the social-cultural and peace concerns. Masiga is a professional Training Facilitator and Translation Consultancy to Bible Society Uganda. ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8137-0446

Dr. Helen Nambalirwa Nkabala (nhnambalirwa@gmail.com) holds a PhD (Stavanger/Makerere), M.Phil. Theology (Bergen), Master of Arts in Peace and Reconciliation Studies (Coventry), PGDE/ME in Educational Technologies (University of Cape Town) and a BA (Makerere). She is an Associate Professor in the Department of Religion and Peace Studies, College of Humanities and Social Sciences, at Makerere University. She is well equipped with conflict resolution and management skillsets, relationship building, reconciliation, networking and interpersonal abilities relevant for interacting with different partners. She has won and managed grants with the Mellon Foundation, The Cambridge –Africa Alborada Research Fund, UN Women, Mastercard Foundation, United States Institute of Peace, The Elsie Fund and she is an AHP Fellow. Helen has extensively trained UNMISS staff in Conflict Transformation as well Social Cohesion and the Uganda Police in Conflict Transformation & amp; Peace building. She is the Inaugural Director of the first and so far, only Rotary Peace Center in Africa situated at Makerere University. Helen is a member of the Makerere University Council and Chairperson of the Student Affairs Committee. Helen also serves on the Makerere University Research and Innovations Funds as a Member of the Grants Management Committee, and she is the Vice Chairperson of the Steering Committee of the Makerere University Grants Management Support Unit. ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2992-2549

Dr. Sunday Layi Oladipupo is a senior lecturer in the Department of Philosophy, Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba - Akoko, Nigeria. His areas of competences and interests include African Philosophy, Moral and Socio-Political Philosophy. He has published articles in these areas in reputable peer-reviewed journals, locally and internationally. He has also presented scholarly papers in both local and international conferences. S. Layi Oladipupo, is a co-editor of The Polemics of an African Philosophy: Essays in Honour of Professor Segun Ogungbemi (2016) and an Editor of African Philosophy: Whose Past and Which Modernity (2021) as well as the author of Justice in Yoruba Culture (2024).

Dr. Babalola J. Balogun obtained his PhD in Philosophy from the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria, where he teaches philosophy. His area of doctoral research is Philosophy of Mind, with special interest in the problem of other minds. His other areas of interest include epistemology, African philosophy, existentialism, social and political philosophy, and in recent time, philosophy of education and the decolonisation discourse. Dr. Balogun has well over twenty (20) publications in journals and edited volumes. His research outputs have appeared in reputable journals both locally and internationally. Some of his recent publications include Balogun, B. J. (2023). "In Search for Authentic Personhood: An Existentialist Reading of Femi Osofisan's Tegonni: An African

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.

Dr. Aderonke Ajiboro is a lecturer in the Department of Philosophy, Obafemi Awolowo University. She obtained her Ph.D in Philosophy from Rhodes University, Makhanda, South Africa. Her areas of research focus broadly on Social Epistemology with particular focus on the Epistemology of Testimony. She is interested in interrogating the epistemic implications of the transmission of knowledge among individuals with instances where anonymity of the source of knowledge is involved. Her other research interests and writings cut across other areas such as feminism in Africa, Philosophy of development, and African Philosophy.

Dr. Phefumula Nyoni is an anthropologist and sociologist currently teaching at the University of the Witwatersrand where he completed his Ph.D. on Economic Anthropology. His research interests are multidisciplinary and include higher education transformation amid the Covid-19 pandemic, policy, quality assurance and curriculum design in tertiary institutions, particularly from a culture-centric perspective, reconfiguration of urban spaces, and access to socio-economic amenities for marginalised communities, poverty alleviation and human rights, community development, urban artisanal mining, gender and entrepreneurship. Phefumula Nyoni is a former research fellow at the Ali Mazrui Centre for Higher Education Studies. Prior to joining the University of the Witwatersrand, Nyoni served as a lecturer at various South African universities as well as a research and policy consultant with several organisations.

Dr. Otilia Chiramba is a Research Fellow at the University of Johannesburg. She holds a Ph.D. in Educational Leadership, Management and Policy Studies from the University of the Witwatersrand. Her research contribution is in higher education specifically focusing on underprivileged groups of students such as refugees, international students, and students from marginalised communities in South African higher education and beyond. Her research work is informed by theories of organisational resilience, students' resilience, decolonisation and social justice. Dr. Otilia has published several publications in refereed journals and prestigious book chapters. Otilia is currently engaged in two significant funded projects: "The State of Internationalisation in Higher Education in South Africa" and "Epistemic Disruptions in Reconstituting Educational Pedagogy: The Student and Management Perspectives."

Nkululeko Motha is a doctoral student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Howard College) in English Studies. He is a lecturer in the Department of African Languages, Linguistics and Development. He holds a Bachelor of Arts (BA), B.A Honours, and a Masters degree in English Studies. He is a student and an academic activist working particularly in distributive and social justice. His research focus includes African literature, African-Black identities, African and Black diasporic literary history, the girl-child, and Childrenism (moral voices and agencies of children).

The Thinker

A PAN-AFRICAN QUARTERLY FOR THOUGHT LEADERS

Journal ISSN: 2075 2458

The Journal for Progressive Thought
www.thethinker.co.za

Publisher
English Department
University of Johannesburg (UJ)
Auckland Park Kingsway Campus,
Auckland Park
Johannesburg
Tel: +27 11 559 2553

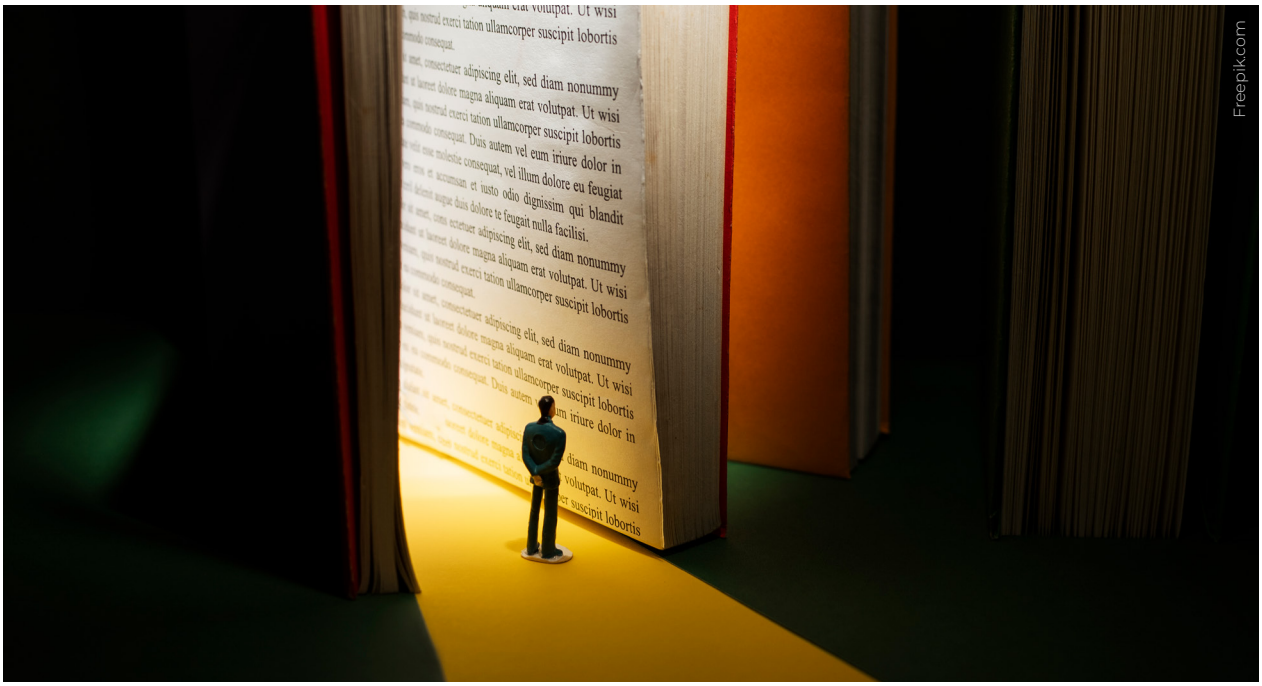
Editor
Prof Ronit Frenkel
thethinker@uj.ac.za

Assistant Editor
Silindile Ngcobo
thethinker@uj.ac.za

Design Direction
UJ Graphic Design Studio
+27 11 559 2805

UNIVERSITY OF JOHANNESBURG

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 realties.

"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 cetral 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 Chataila 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 Nkabala'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

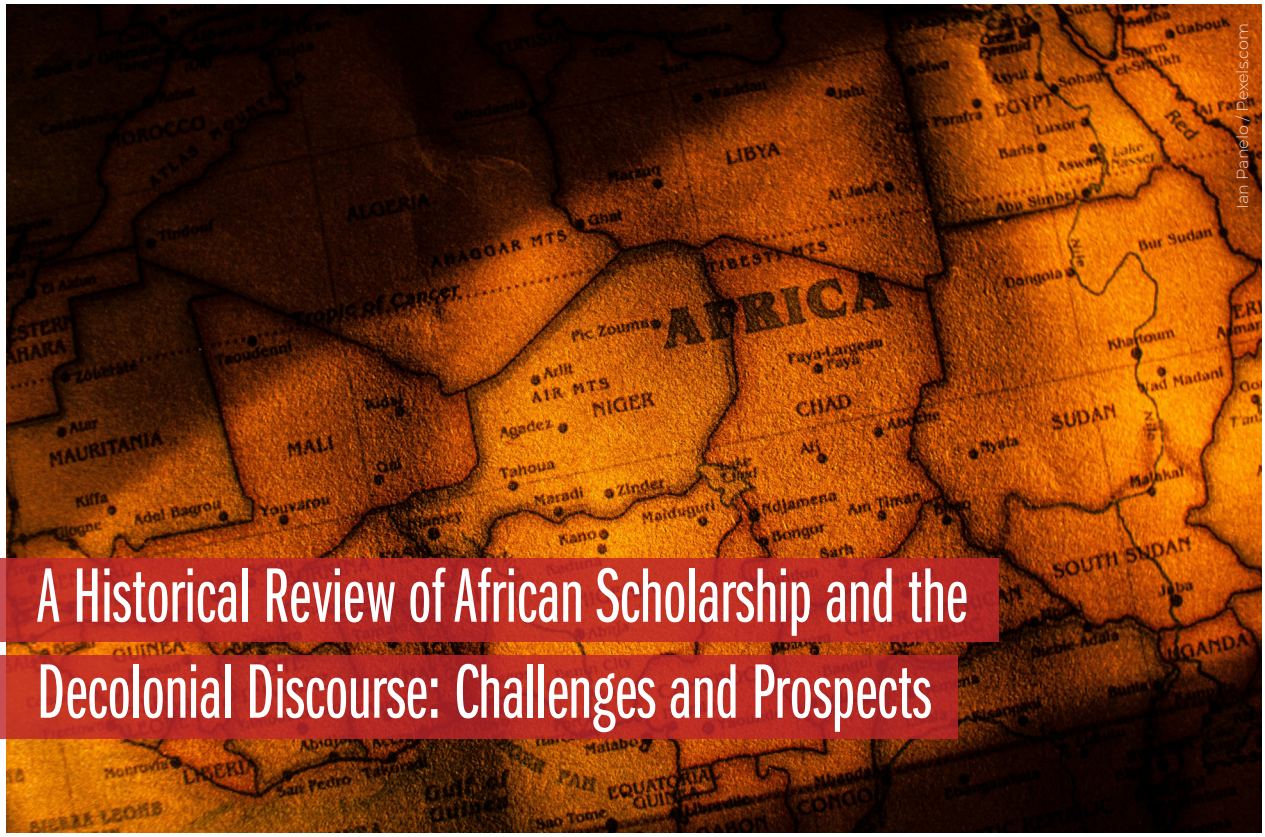
African cultural milieu, and demonstrating that it can only be attributed to the Western influence on Ogungbemi's scholarship.

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 Otillia 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 Blacksurbian Identities", written by Nkululeko Motha. In the article, the author identifies two groups of black people, namely, the Ghetto-Rural Blacks and the Blacksurbian, 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 Blacksurbian 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.



A Historical Review of African Scholarship and the Decolonial Discourse: Challenges and Prospects

By Dr. Juliet Munyaradzi

Abstract

African scholarship plays an important role in asserting the value of African epistemologies and those of the global South in the knowledge economy. This is pertinent to higher education in postcolonial Africa, whose indigenous knowledge systems and intellectual legacies have played peripheral roles because of coloniality and the global neoliberal trends. This paper presents a historical review of a generation of African scholarship that spans from the last half of the twentieth century to date. It does so with the view of exploring the developments, challenges and prospects experienced by African scholars in their pursuit of African knowledges and the decolonisation discourse in the higher education sector. The first part of the paper provides a backdrop through an analysis of some selected major research on the nature of African scholarship published in the last half of the twentieth century, and its contributions to the decolonisation discourse on the continent. The second part examines the nature of contribution of African scholarship to knowledge production in the twenty-first century. That section critically analyses the challenges and opportunities which have been encountered in reshaping the discourses of knowledge production and decolonisation in theory and practice. It is concluded that in its distinctiveness in asserting African and marginalised knowledge systems as valid and relevant, and operating in spaces of struggle, the African scholarship should continue to contribute to the interrogation of the objectivity of Eurocentric, neoliberal thought. The paper recommends the promotion of African scholarship in shaping the decolonisation of knowledge production.

Keywords: African scholarship, Decolonisation, Historical review, Intellectual legacies, Knowledge production.

Introduction and Background

African scholarship contributes pivotally to the intellectual legacies in knowledge production at the national, continental and global levels. It equally plays a key role in elevating the African philosophies and epistemologies in a world where producers of epistemologies of the global South are confronting the coloniality of knowledge, power and being. It is imperative to provide conceptual understanding of African scholarship.

Delineating the concept of African scholarship remains a conundrum as there are myriads of definitions depending on where one is located and what influences one to take a particular definition instead of the others. This paper shares similar views with Mapaya (2016) who says that an African scholar should historically originate from the African continent. The paper, however, extends the conceptualisation of African scholarship to include knowledge producers and production processes by the African Diaspora and non-African scholars rooted in African philosophies, who write in support of the decolonisation of Africa and the global South. Knowledge production about Africa should be informed by Afro-centred lenses that are undiluted by the mythologised, biased and incomplete views about African histories and ways of being and knowing. African scholarship should be framed in the context of Africa's economic, socio-cultural, socio-political, and historical contexts in the broader global context of the knowledge economy.

After discovering the unity and richness of the knowledge system of the African people, colonialists dis-membered the wellsprings of this knowledge through eliminating the fountains of knowledges from their roots (Datta, 1984; Falola, 2005; Koma, 1976; Mosweunyane, 2013; wa Thiong'o, 2009). The physical violence of the battlefield in which "the prominent African indigenous knowledge experts got killed was followed by the psychological violence which followed the African child in form of formal education in the classrooms of missionaries" (wa Thiong'o, 1986: 9) which effectually made the African indigenous students believe that their value systems, identities and histories were inferior, and should be looked down upon as barbaric. Thus, formal education during colonialism was intended to train and produce learners in basic education, university graduates or educated elite who would implement the policies of the colonial administration (Ashby, 1961; Woldegorgis & Doevenspeck, 2013).

> "African scholarship plays an important role in asserting the value of African epistemologies and those of the global South in the knowledge economy."

The African scholarship and decolonisation discourse has been shaping up against a background where the concepts of schooling and university had been manipulated by the colonial administrations to produce graduates and scholars who would spearhead and project the Western canons of knowledge as the excellent universal truths (Mamdani 1990). The discourse is also active in contexts where scholars are struggling with a lot to be rewritten, especially concerning African histories and identities. These should be considered as valid systems and should be treated as equal in the global scholarship scenario. Against this background, this paper presents a historical overview of selected African scholarship and decolonisation discourse dating back to the second half of the twentieth century to the present. The first part of the paper provides an overview of some of the major research outputs, which typify African scholarship from the last half of the twentieth century and its contributions to the decolonisation discourse in the continent and beyond. The second part examines the contribution of African knowledge production in the twenty-first century. It also analyses the challenges and

opportunities which have been encountered in reshaping the discourses of decolonisation in theory and practice. The research questions for this paper are framed as follows:

- How does African scholarship from the second half of the 20th century to date contribute to decolonisation discourse and global knowledge economy?
- What challenges and prospects have been encountered in African scholarship and to what extent have the African scholars navigated their research trajectories?

A synopsis of the major research covering the nature of African scholarship on decolonisation in the last half of 20th century is provided as a context to illuminate the motive of research and scholarship on decolonisation thus far. The paper also includes snapshots of research contributions which legitimate African epistemologies as valid knowledge systems in the global knowledge production system. This is despite the difficulties faced by scholars from the global South, especially African scholars. The paper concludes with a discussion on how African epistemological, theoretical and methodological orientations could be further developed.

The Second Half of the 20th Century

Since the invasion of Africa by Europe, three epochal shifts have been noticed concerning knowledge production and intellectual legacies (Cross & Govender, 2021; Mkandawire, 1998). To begin with, the first generation of African scholarship was produced abroad out of those African students who had been enrolled to take up African Studies in North American and European universities. This group included scholars such as Mahmood Mamdani, Chinweizu Ibekwe, Sam Moyo and Ali A. Mazrui (Mkandawire, 1995; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018). During the 1950s, African scholarship was characteristically anti-white by 'Africanists' who criticised the Eurocentric portrayal of Africa as uncivilised, without history and without its own writing. The Nigerian historian, Dike (1952) vehemently argued that most of the negative research work about Africa was based on preconceived notions and assumptions of backward Africa. Dike (1952) further advanced that European standards could not be used as basis to compare African culture, progress and development with another culture, say European. According to him each culture is a product of its environment, which should be understood in relation to the context which it serves. This first generation of African researchers was responsible for establishing the Pan-African research networks such as the Council for Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA), a data bank which promotes social science research in Africa.

African scholarship of the 1960s into the 1970s remained preoccupied with their search for a new epistemic base which centred African identities, values and histories in African discourses (Appiah, 1992; Mudimbe, 1988). In the same vein, scholars such as Hountondji (1996), Mazrui (1978), and Nyerere (1967) counteracted the Westernised view which claimed that African canons of knowledge were characteristically pure repetitions of practices without any theoretical backing. These African scholars argued that such a perspective was conspicuously limited in its conceptualisation of scholarly and scientific work as distinctively theoretical. Nyerere (1967) further questioned the role of higher education in the development of countries. He pointed out that if academics remained preoccupied with theoretical knowledge at the expense of the needs of the local people poverty and inequality would not be eradicated (Nyerere, 1967). Research should lead to the provision of sustainable development and solutions to Africa's problems. Therefore, true African scholarship between the 1960s and 1980s was guided by the principles of sensitivity to developmental challenges encountered in African communities.

The second generation of African scholarship is characterised by Pan Africanism, Negritudism, Afrocentricism, Black Consciousness and sentiments which fed into the struggle for political independence in the various African countries in the twentieth century. In their desire to uphold African thought systems, Nkwame Nkrumah and Julius Nyerere clearly explained that the role of the university in postcolonial Africa was to uphold African values by shifting to new African-centred ways and systems (Nkrumah, 1967; Nyerere, 1967). Nkrumah and Nyerere are examples of African scholars who had a common vision. They believed that education in Africa should focus on the welfare of the society by being relevant to people's experiences and by recognising applicable knowledges produced elsewhere (Nkrumah,

1941; Nyerere, 1967; 1985). There were noticeable developments in Nkrumah's perspectives regarding education. In his earlier works Nkrumah focused on the link between education and culture, but he later developed a theoretical/conceptual orientation for conceptual decolonisation (Ajei, 2018). Post 1965, Nkrumah endorsed violent revolution as a means for transformation (Ajei, 2018; Ani, 2014). To date, some of Nkrumah's progressive philosophical and transformative ideas are still appreciated by institutions such as the African Union (AU). For instance, the AU 2063 agenda exhorts the continent to commit itself to put Africa on the move by promoting African scholarship for sustainable development. Institutions such as University of Ibadan in Nigeria, Makerere University in Uganda, University of Dar-es-Salaam in Tanzania, Legon in Ghana and IFAN in Senegal have been recognised in scholarship as the cutting edge of enthusiasm in centring Africa in thought and deed.

Among the well-known Negritude scholars were South African Steve Biko (1987) and Senegalese Leopold Sedar Senghor, who in their writings celebrated Blackness and Africanness. For Senghor, negritudism was a movement which emerged as a reaction to slavery and French colonialism in Africa as well as to the French cultural assimilation policy. As for Biko, writing targeted the discriminatory apartheid policy in apartheid South Africa. Anglophone scholarship and literary culture are also evidently influenced by negritudism. Literary works such as Ngugi wa Thiong'o's (1967) *A Grain of Wheat*, Chinua Achebe's (1958) *Things Fall Apart* and Wole Soyinka's (1965) *The Interpreters*, among others, are examples of negritude-flavoured literature in which the authors reacted to the derogatory representations, myths and peripherisation of African cultures and capabilities. In their writing, these authors valorise African cultures, languages and identities.

Although Negritude scholarship is an African discourse which aimed to counteract the existing Western discourses about Africa, it was heavily criticised by scholars such as Appiah (1992) and Hountondji (1996). These critics felt that negritudism was a failed theory, which glorified emotions at the expense of centring the essence of Africa in the scholarship against Eurocentricism. Negritude scholarship was further critiqued as too focused on blackness. This was interpreted as a mere collection of narcissist philosophies propagated by colonial thinking. For example, despite *The Interpreters* being a valorisation of African culture, Wole Soyinka, in his essay, *The Future of Western African Writing*, declared that: "The duiker will not paint 'duiker' on his beautiful back to proclaim his duikeritude; you will know him by his elegant leap." This was a lash on negritudism as a movement which promoted too much parroting about the goodness of blackness without putting into place any action plan. Despite being critiqued as a weak, failing movement, a lot has changed in the study of literature in several African universities. Literary works of negritude scholars such as Leopold Sedar Senghor, Sembene Ousman and others are included in the Literature modules studied in some postcolonial universities. For instance, in universities in Zimbabwe, such works are part of the Bachelor of Education's African Literature in English curricula. This paper also upholds the value of negritudism in as far as it initiated debate on the affirmation of the beauty and worthy of blackness, being African and also bringing African ontological and epistemological perspectives under scrutiny. Despite being criticised as a lot of noise, the negritude movement drove the Pan-

> "The second generation of African scholarship is characterised by Pan Africanism, Negritudism, Afrocentricism, Black Consciousness and sentiments which fed into the struggle for political independence in the various African countries in the twentieth century."

African agenda and spurred the subaltern to think critically about what coloniality does to the African being and the possible means to reverse it.

Western modernity and civilisation which influenced Africa in the 1960s and 1970s resulted in the dependency syndrome and the development of Afro-pessimism in African scholarship. This saw the adoption of a depoliticised stance of post-modernism and post-coloniality in their writing which worsened the isolation of Africa, misrepresentation of its histories, knowledges and identities (Mkandawire 1995; Zeleza, 2003). The post-structuralism and post- modernism postures in the academics and researchers of the era negatively impacted on African scholarship. Firstly, they got muted because of lack of funds for their research to be published. Secondly, the reviewers and editors from the global North negatively reviewed their research work such that they could not publish in journals of the global North (Zeleza, 2003).

By the 1980s and into the 1990s, African scholars made attempts to explore African social and political histories. They emphasised on issues such as political cultures, identities and the civil society. During the same period, the world witnessed the rise of neoliberalism, a movement which had a debilitative effect on African scholarship in African universities (Zeleza, 2003). Instead, the typical Euro-American University in Africa persistently prevailed in which emphasis was on profiteering in almost every engagement in both private and public institutions. The university in Africa was and continues to be compelled to shape up into a commercial university under-girded by the need to satisfy the global markets. The scholarship needed in the market should subscribe to the Euro-North American canons of knowing and being (Zeleza & Olukoshi, 2004; Mbembe, 2017). However, despite the Westernised ontological and epistemological imperatives, there have been renewed calls and struggles for epistemic freedom and transformation of African universities since the beginning of the 21st century (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018). This means that there is an endeavour to make Africa the epicentre of discourses that dismantle the Eurocentric philosophies which masquerade as the global knowledge economy.

In the last two decades of the 20th century, some scholarship focused on the struggles for liberation of the African being/mind. I see these struggles as best understood from a decolonial perspective. For example, in *Decolonising the Mind*, wa Thiong'o's argument provokes deep thinking about the possibility of a truly decolonised linguistic space in Africa when he probes as follows:

> Is an African Renaissance possible when we the keepers of memory have to work outside our own linguistic memory / and within the prison house of European linguistic memory? . . . can we expect this army to conquer when its generals are held prisoner? (wa Thiong'o, 2009: 12).

For wa Thiong'o, bringing back the erased languages at the centre where they originally belonged serves the role of re-membering, which Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2015) understands as a means of realising a decolonial turn. wa Thiong'o challenges linguistic dis-membering as a case that should be fought against through decolonisation of language. He strongly took this stance in the 1962 *Makerere Conference of African Writers of English Expression at Makerere University* in Uganda. As a follow-up to his undertaking to decolonise African languages, wa Thiong'o adopted his Gikuyu language in his scholarly work (wa Thiong'o 2009). He was also actively involved in the intellectual struggles to decolonise and transform the English Department at the University of Nairobi in Kenya in 1968. His *On the Abolition of the English Department* (wa Thiong'o, 1972) was a call for the decolonisation of the cognitive processes and a lobbying for awareness that the so-called universal literature was merely European literature. In the essay, wa Thiong'o proposed a decolonised model of literary studies which conceptualised curriculum from a bottom-up perspective, starting with the geo-location of the readers who should reconnect with their local histories. I argue that waThiongo's 1972 essay challenged and continues to challenge the complicity of the disciplines in the higher education institutions of the postcolony which are intended to promote Western epistemologies and pedagogical practices in the teaching of literature.

Mudimbe (1988) shared the same understanding with waThiongo where he observes that Europe's geographical expansion and civilisation submitted the world to its memory, thus, uprooting Africans from their memory. Chinweizu (1985) subscribes to the decolonisation of linguistic spaces in the

African Literature departments in most African universities. Wa Thiong'o, Mudimbe and Chinweizu interrogations could play an important role in compelling academics and scholars to engage in complicated conversations which provoke academics to think about where they should place Africa in their work. On the contrary, Achebe felt that the acquisition of the English language was useful to the African. For Achebe, acknowledgement of English Language becomes a valuable resource in the hands of the Africans, thus his assertion:

> I feel that the English language will be able to carry the weight of my African experience. But it will have to be a new English, still in full communion with its ancestral home, but altered to suit new African surroundings (Achebe, 1965: 47).

Developing on Achebe's reasoning, I argue that an African who uses the Eurocentric languages in social, business or academic engagements has the privilege to Africanise the English, French or Portuguese. For example, he or she could do this through embracing the different, rich indigenous accents in speaking it and/or use of rich indigenous meanings in proverbial and idiomatic expressions. I join scholars such as Hlatshwayo, Shawa and Nxumalo (2020), Le Grange (2012), Letseka (2013) and waThiongo (1994) in their calls for the framing of African thought and philosophies and branding them in indigenous terms as opposed to the top-down Westernised hegemonic approaches to teaching research and community engagement.

However, there are scholars such as Mbembe (2002) who describe African nationalism as fake philosophy. In his earlier works, Achille Mbembe was opposed to nationalist-inspired discourses which criticised global coloniality. Indeed, Mbembe had attempted to embrace the cosmopolitarian idea and approach. He further discarded the thinking that identity was synonymous to the physical location of a person and upheld and celebrated cosmopolitarianism. Similarly, Mafeje (2011) asserts that nationalism does not necessarily guarantee better things since several nationalistic alternatives have resulted in further exploitation of Africans by fellow Africans. Nonetheless, in their recent works, both Mbembe and Mafeje attack the capitalist elements evident in global mobility.

Moving On: African Scholarship and Knowledge Production in the 21st Century

The contemporary generation of African scholarship is characterised by its hunger for non- Western epistemologies and methods that are more responsive to the social and economic complexities besetting Africa (Cross & Govender 2021; Mamdani 2018). It is influenced by scholars from the global South, especially the Latin American scholars such as Grosfoguel (2007), Quijano (2000), Maldonaldo-Torres (2007) and Mignolo (2009; 2011). These scholars' views about epistemic disobedience/borderline thinking could be used as tools to dismantle the myth that Western epistemes and philosophies are the objective reality. Often, most contemporary African scholars propose ontological, epistemological, theoretical and methodological orientations which value heterogeneous locations of knowledge (Asante, 2019; Chilisa, 2012; 2017; Mafeje, 2011).

Challenges and Prospects

Although local domains of knowledge positively contribute to the production of local academic knowledge creation, there is still a problem of contemporary scholars being hampered by the global economic disparities and structures (Melber 2021). Thus, a gap exists where the African scholar ought to engage by contributing more to the reduction of the global restrictions in providing African solutions (Mkandawire, 2011; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2017). Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018), one of the key scholars in this development, provided

> "Is an African Renaissance possible when we the keepers of memory have to work outside our own linguistic memory / and within the prison house of European linguistic memory?"

some rationale for a locus of enunciation, shifting geography of knowledge, decolonising the normative of critical theory, rethinking thinking and learning to unlearn so as to learn, as possible means to the dismantling of neoliberal forces in scholarship (2018:16). Ndlovu- Gatsheni is supported by Kumalo (2020) and Mandlingozi (2018), who believe in resuscitating the Black Archives in order to recentre the marginalised African systems in knowledge production and sharing in African university curricula. Hlatshwayo (2022) critiques neoliberalism in scholarship by observing that scholars/academics are conceptualised as knowledge producers in the spaces in which they operate. In saying this, Hlatshwayo confirms Jonathan Jansen's (2009) observation that:

> . . . university-based intellectuals no longer work in the same kinds of campuses that, for the most part, were once sites of productivity, problem-solving and politics... (Jansen, 2009: 147).

The neoliberal paradigm compels scholars and academics to understand what is on demand in the knowledge market and to supply their products to that market for them to remain relevant in the system. This consideration compromises the production of graduates who are critical thinkers and able to use their acquired knowledges to solve their societies' immediate problems. In his relatively recent work, Mbembe (2017) critiques global capitalism and neoliberalism as clearly anti-public good. His stance has thus changed, compared to his earlier work, as already discussed, in which he condoned globalisation as a solution to African problems. In his recent work, he subscribes to progressively decolonial scholarship which digs deeper and confronts neoliberalism in scholarship for the good of the communities which they serve, and for a futuristic vision of a possible post-neoliberal university in Africa and the global South at large.

Another limitation of African scholarship is its lack of indigenous theories. This absence of theory has led to the reliance on borrowed methodologies which have the effect of epistemological and methodological silencing. African scholars operate in spaces where the epistemologies, theories and methods of the global South are looked down upon and misrepresented and relegated to the periphery (Chilisa, 2012; Dastile, 2016). The syndrome of borrowed methodologies can be evaded by adopting empowering indigenous research methodologies which seek to unmute the silenced voices, interpretation and reflexivity (Chilisa, 2012; Smith, 1999).

In trying to fill the gap created by the borrowed methodologies syndrome, Mafeje (2000) and Mamdani (2012) advocate a narratological research paradigm which affords the researcher opportunities to hear the stories from the perspective of those who experienced it. This approach enables the African scholar to unlearn, rethink, reconceptualise and deconstruct the hegemonic discourses. Similarly, Dastile (2016) commended the beauty and logic of a narratological stance in African scholarship and beyond by asserting that when centred upon one's own intellectual corpus, challenges encountered will be solved through culturally relevant ways. It becomes imperative for more African scholars to embrace testimonies from marginalised groups as addressed by such African scholars as Bagile Chilisa in her (2012) seminal work, *Indigenous Research Methodologies*. This work was greatly influenced by culturally responsive research methodologies which bring together theoretical underpinnings, literature, ethical assumptions, ontological and epistemological orientations as part of a whole and interdependent. Chilisa (2012) asserts that indigenous research creates a basis for historical perspectives on how to conduct research about indigenous issues. Some decolonisation research work in the new millennium has been framed on Chilisa's work, in which scholars focus on the deconstruction of knowledge systems which limit and exclude other forms of knowledge (Ajani & Gamede, 2021; Zavala, 2013; Nhemachena Mlambo & Kaundjua, 2016) in theorising the decolonisation of higher education.

Mafeje's scholarship is popularly known for its argument that researchers should consider phenomena of enquiry on their own terms. Hence, the theoretical orientations of a research should not dictate to data. Insights should be generated from the data themselves. The Mafeje, (1995: 158) logic that "it is a mistake to endow concepts with ontological meanings" is however contradictory to Afrocentrism since one would wonder if, for example, viewing Africanism in ontological terms is a mistake. From the Mafeje standpoint, when

data contrasts with established views, there is epistemological rupture which would dictate for the development of new theories or knowledge enrichment. Thus, the idea of a deconstructionist stance in research plays a major role in Mafeje's work (Mafeje, 1991; 1996). Another well-known scholar who advocates African-oriented research methodologies is Molefi Kete Asante. M.K, Asante is credited as the brains behind Afrocentric philosophy, a philosophy which is concerned with the encapsulation of African ideas, values spearheaded by intellectuals who have come to terms with their African identities, and are geared to create scholarly response to national and continental issues (Asante, 2007).

In the third decade of the twenty-first century, some collaborative work is underway to upscale knowledge production in Africa. The multi-country project, *Organisational & Research Culture in African Universities* is a typical example. A three-day workshop hosted by the University of Zimbabwe, with researchers and academic intellectuals from South Africa, Uganda, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Ghana, Canada, and the United States of America collaborated and explored avenues to overcome barriers to productivity in African scholarship and contribution to knowledge production (Thondhlana & Garwe, 2021: 2). The *Journal of British Academy,* in turn, set aside a supplementary issue which provided African scholars an opportunity to publish. Such developments in the promotion of African knowledge production and sharing could play a significant role in the increase of African knowledge production from its meagre 2% mark (Thondhlana & Garwe, 2021). Such low contribution to the knowledge economy is one of the contributing factors to Africa's underdevelopment (Ajani & Gamede 2021).

The preceding discussion illuminates that the 21st century African scholar is operating in an era of serious epistemological battles in which knowledge systems of global South in general are contesting those of the global North (Comaroff & Comarrof, 2012; Ndlovu-Gatsheni & Zondi, 2016). Contemporary African scholars grapple with the misrepresentation of the histories of the indigenous Africans. In that struggle, African scholarship focuses on combative methodological and epistemological tools that seek to create spaces for Africans to speak about their past, present and future and to correct distorted discourses about Africa's experiences.

On a Parting Note

This paper attempted to examine and illuminate the direction of African scholarship and decolonisation discourse from the 1950s to date. There is a visible thread which connects African knowledge systems and decolonial discourses in public domains such as higher education, which are the key areas targeted by African scholarship. Many African scholars have sought to capture the diverse aspects of African realities in the past and present, and are searching for the epistemological ideas to fill the missing ontological link that qualifies African perspectives and global South knowledge systems as equally relevant. In their pursuit of that ontological gap, African intellectuals should continue to make impactful steps. They should continue to lobby for a decolonial turn that would enable Afrocentric theory building. African scholarship could contribute more to knowledge production from the global South if more is done on the conceptualisation of African philosophical, emancipatory concepts and notions which could guide further development of African ontological, epistemological and methodological orientations which guide research, teaching and community engagements not only at local but also at global levels.

"In the third decade of the twenty-first century, some collaborative work is underway to upscale knowledge production in Africa."

References

Achebe, C., 1958. *Things Fall Apart*. London: Heinemann.

Achebe, C., 1965. English and the African Writer. *Transition*, 18: 27-38.

Achebe, C., 1977. *An Image of Africa*. Johannesburg: Penguin Books.

Ajani O. A., 2019. Effective Teachers' Cluster System as an Approach to Enhanced Classroom Practices in South African High Schools. *Journal of Gender, Information and Development in Africa* (JGIDA), 8 (1): 173-193.

Ajani, O.A., & Gamede, B. T., 2021. Curriculum Delivery and the Digital Divide in South African Higher Education Institutions During the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Case of Social Justice. I*nternational Journal of Innovation, Creativity and Change,* 15(8): 590-603.

Ajei, O. M., 2018. Educating Africans: Perspectives of Ghanaian Philosophers. *UP Journals*, 19: 1-15.

Ani I, E., 2014. Responding to Okadigbo's Critique of Nkrumah's Consciencism. Kiubara: *Journal of Humanities*, 20(1): 101-124.

Appiah, K.A., 1992. I*n My father's House: Africa in the Philosophy of Culture*, Oxford University Press: New York.

Asante, M. K., 2019. *The History of Africa: The Quest for Eternal Harmony.* London: Routledge.

Asante, M.K., 2007. *An Afrocentric Manifesto: Toward an African Renaissance.* Cambridge & Oxford: Polity Press.

Ashby, E., 1961. *Patterns of Universities in Non-European Societies.* London: University of London School of Oriental and African studies.

Biko, S., 1987. *I Write What I Like*. Johannesburg: Heinemann.

Chilisa, B., 2012. I*ndigenous Research Methodologies.* Thousand Oaks: SAGE.

Chilisa, B., 2017. Decolonising Transdisciplinary Research Approaches: An African Perspective for Enhancing Knowledge Integration in Sustainability Science. *Sustainability Science*, 12(5): 813-827.

Chinweizu, I., 1985. *Towards the Decolonisation of African Literature.* London: Routledge.

Comaroff, J., & Comaroff, J., 1992. *Ethnography and the Historical Imagination.* New York: Avalon.

Cross, M. & Govender, L., 2021. Researching Higher EDducation in Africa as a Process of Meaning-Making: Epistemological and Theoretical Considerations. *Journal of Education*, 83: 13- 33. https://doi.org/10.17159/2520-9868/i83a01.

Dastile, P. N., 2016. Telling Our own Stories: Narratology as a Decolonial Methodology. In S. J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni and S. Zondi (eds.), *Decolonising the University, Knowledge Systems and Disciplines in Africa* (pp. 195-212). Durham: Carolina Academic Press.

Datta, A., 1984. *Education and Society: A Sociology of African Education.* London: Macmillan.

Dike, K. O., 1952. *African History and Self-overn-ment*. London: Heinemann.

Falola, T., 2005. Writing and Teaching National History in Africa in an Era of Global History. *Afrika Spectrum*, 40(3): 499-519.

Grosfoguel, R., 2007. The Epistemic Decolonial Turn: Beyond Political-Economy Paradigms. *Cultural Studies*, 21(2): 211-223.

Hlatshwayo, M. N., 2022. The Rise of the Neoliberal University in South Africa: Some implications for curriculum imagination(s). *Education as change*, 26 (1): 1–21. https://doi.org/10.25159/1947-9417/11421.

Hlatshwayo, M. N., Shawa, L. B. & Nxumalo, S. A., 2020. Ubuntu currere in the Academy: A Case Study from the South African Experience. *Third World Thematics: A TWQ journal,* 5(1-2): 120-136.

Hountondji, P. J., 1996. *Endogenous Knowledge: Research Trails,* Dakar, Senegal: Codesria.

Koma, K., 1976. *Education in Black Africa*. Mahalapye: Botswana National Front Secretariat.

Kumalo, S. H., 2020. Resurrecting the Black Archive Through the Decolonisation of Philosophy in South Africa. *Third World Thematics: A TWQ journal,* 5(1–2): 19-36.

Le Grange, L., 2012. Ubuntu, Ukama and the Healing of Nature, Self and Society, *Educational Philosophy and Theory,* 44:56-67.

Letseka M., 2013. Educating for Ubuntu/Botho: Lessons from Basotho Indigenous Education. *Open Journal of Philosophy,* 3(2): 337-344.

Mafeje, A., 1991. *The Theory and Ethnography of African Social Formations: The Case of the Interlacustrine Kingdoms.* Dakar: CODESRIA.

Mafeje A., 1995. Benign' Recolonisation and Malignant Minds in the Service of Imperialism. *CODESRIA Bulletin*, 2: 17-20.

Mafeje, A., 1996. A Commentary on Anthropology and Africa. *CODESRIA Bulletin*, (2): 6-13.

Mafeje, A., 2011. Africanity: A Combative Ontology. In R. Devisch and F. B. Nyamnjoh (eds.), *The Postcolonial Turn: Re-Imagining Anthropology and Africa.* Bamenda & Leiden: Langaa and African Studies Centre, pp. 31-48.

Maldonado-Torres, N., 2007. On the coloniality of being: Contributions to the development of a concept. *Cultural Studies,* 21(2): 240-270.

Mamdani, M., 2007. *Scholars in the Marketplace: The dilemmas of neoliberal reform at Makerere University,* 1989-200. Dakar: CODESRIA.

Mamdani, M., 2012. *Define and Rule: Native as Political Identity.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Mamdani, M., 2018. The African university. *London Review of Books*, 40(14): 29-32.

Mamdani, M., 1990. A glimpse at African studies, made in USA. *CODESRIA Bulletin*, no. 2: 7-11.

Mandlingozi, T., 2018. 'Decolonising "Decolonisation" with Mphahlele', New Frame, 1 November 2018. Retrieved from www.newframe.com/decolonising-decolonisationmphahlele/

Mapaya, M. G., 2016. The Fourth and Fifth Generations of African Scholars: A South African Case Study, *Acta Academia*, 48(2): 76-90.

Mazrui, A., 1978. *Political Values and the Educated Class in Africa*. London: Heinemann Educational Books and Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Mbembe, A., 2017. *Critique of Black Reason*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Mbembe, A., 2016. Decolonising the University: New direction. *Arts and Humanities in Higher Education*, 15(1): 29-45.

Mbembe, A. (2002). The Power of the Archive and its Limits. In: Hamilton, C., Harris, V., Taylor, J., Pickover, M., Reid, G., Saleh, R. (eds) *Refiguring the Archive*. Dordrecht: Springer.

Melber, H., 2021. Knowledge production and decolonisation – not only African challenges. *Strategic Review for Southern Africa,* 40(1): 1-15.

Mignolo, W., 2009. Coloniality: The Darker Side of Modernity. In: S.Breitwieser, C.Klinger, &W. Mignolo, (eds). *Modernologies. Ontemporary Artists Researching Modernity and Modernism.* (pp. 39-49). Barcelona: Museud' Art Contemporani de Barcelona.

Mignolo, W., 2011. *The Darker Side of Western Modernity: Global Futures, Decolonial Options*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Mkandawire, T., 1995. Beyond Crisis: Towards Democratic Development States. 8th General Assembly. Dakar: CODESRIA.

Mkandawire, T., 1998. Thinking about developmental states in Africa. A Paper Presented at the UN-AERC Workshop on Institutions and Development in Africa. Tokyo, Japan: United Nations University.

Mkandawire, T., 2005. *African Intellectuals: Rethinking Politics, Language, Gender, and Development*. London, New York: Zed Books in association with CODESRIA.

Mkandawire, T., 2011. Running while others walk: Knowledge and the challenge of Africa's development. *Africa Development*, 34(2): 1- 36.

Mkandawire, T., 1995. Three Generations of African Academics: A Note. *Transformation*, 28: 75-85.

Mosweunyan, D., 2013. The African Educational Evolution: From Traditional Training to Formal Education. *Higher education studies*, Fixed as 3(4):50-59.

Mudimbe, V. Y., 1988. *The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, Philosophy, and the Order of Knowledge*, London: James Currey.

Ndlovu-Gatsheni S. J., 2013. *Empire, Global Coloniality and African Subjectivity*. New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books.

Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S. J., 2015. Decoloniality as the future of Africa. *History Campus*, 13(10) 485- 496.

Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S. J., 2016. *The Decolonial Mandela: Peace, Justice and the Politics of Life*. London: Berghahn Books. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvgs0c16

Ndlovu- Gatsheni, S. J., 2017. Decolonising Research Methodology Must Include Undoing Its Dirty History. *Journal of Public Administration*, 52(1): 1- 20. Available at https://hdl.handle.net/10520/EJC-b1cd74dfa

Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S. J., 2018. The Dynamics of Epistemological Decolonisation in the 21st Century: Towards Epistemic Freedom. *Strategic Review for Southern Africa*, 40(1): 16- 45.

Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S. J. & Zondi, S., 2016. Introduction: Coloniality of Knowledge: Between Troubled Histories and Uncertain Futures, In S.J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni & S. Zondi (eds), *Decolonising the University, Knowledge Systems and Disciplines*. (pp. 3-24). Durham, North Carolina : Africa Carolina Academic Press.

Ndofirepi, A. & Cross, M., 2017. Knowledge as a Public Good: A Critical Gaze of the Public University. In M. Cross & A. Ndofirepi (eds), *Knowledge and Change in African Universities*. (pp. 41-57). Rotterdam: SensePublishers

Nhemachena A, Mlambo N. & Kaundjua M., 2016. The Notion of the "Field" and the Practices of Researching and Writing Africa: Towards Decolonial Praxis. *Journal of Pan African Studies*, 9: 5-36.

Nkrumah, F. N., 1941. Primitive Education in West Africa. *Educational Outlook*, 15(2): 87- 92. https://archives.upenn.edu/wpcontent/uploads/2018/03/nkrumah_primitive_education.pdf

Nkrumah, K., 1967. *Challenge of the Congo*. New York: International Publishers.

Nyerere, J. K., 1967. *Education for Self-reliance*. Dar es Salaam: Government Printer.

Nyerere, J. K., 1985. Education in Tanzania. *Harvard educational review*, 55(1):45-52. https://doi.org/10.17763/haer.55.1.v6233663243g8343

Quijano, A., 2000. Coloniality of Power and Euro-centrism in Latin America. *International sociology*, 15(2): 215-232.

Smith, L., 1999. *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples.* New York: Zed Books Ltd.

Soyinka, W., 1965. *The Interpreters*. London: Heinemann.

Thondhlana, J. & Garwe, C. E., 2021. Repositioning of Africa in knowledge production: Shaking off historical stigmas – introduction. *Journal of the British academy*, 9(1): 1-17. DOI https://doi.org/10.5871/jba/009s1.001

Wa Thiong'o, N., 1967. *A Grain of Wheat*. Oxford: Heinemann.

Wa Thiong'o, N., 1972. On the abolition of the English Department, In *Homecoming*, 145–50. London: Heinemann Educational. [Google Scholar]

Wa Thiong'o, N., 1986. *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African literature*. Oxford: James Currey.

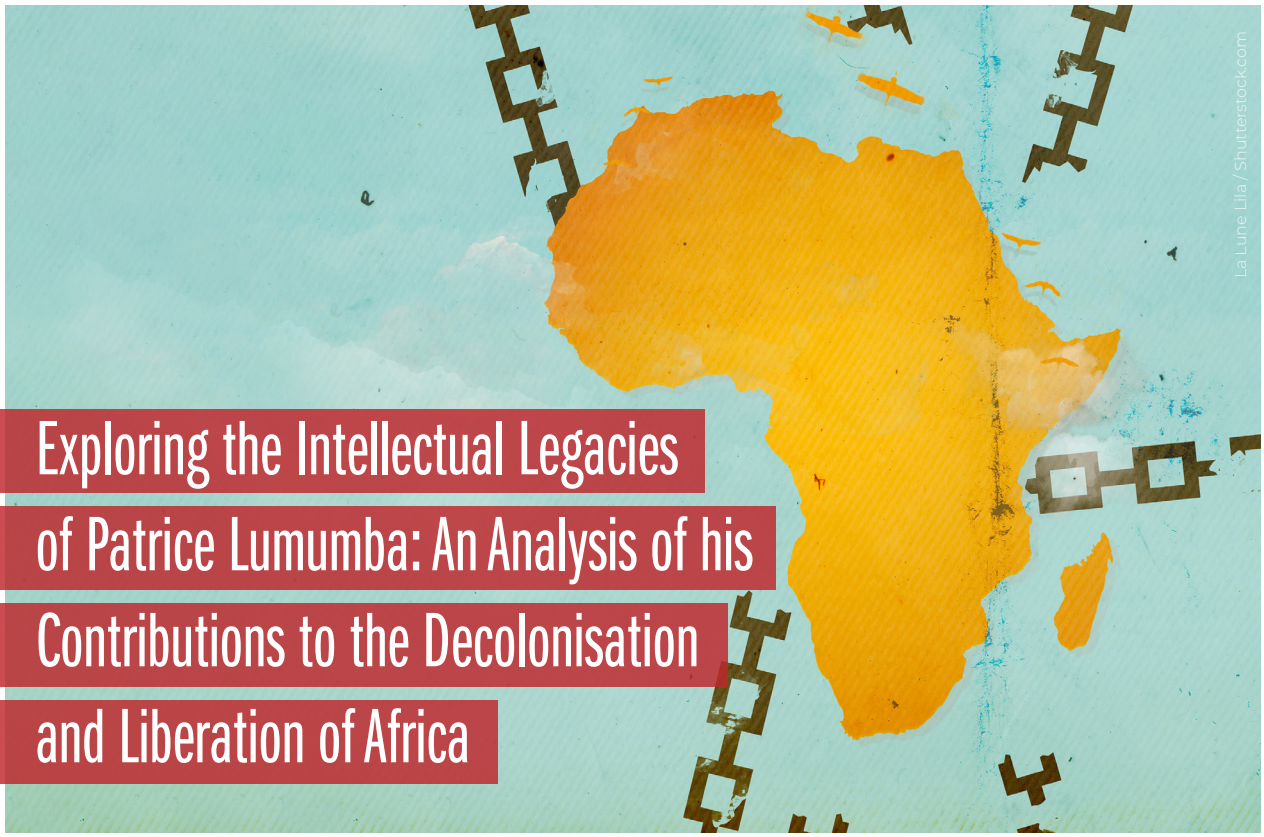
Wa Thiong'o, N., 2009. *Something Torn and New: An African Renaissance*. New York: Basic Civitas Books.

Woldegiorgis, E. T. & Doevenspeck, M., 2013. The changing role of higher education in Africa: A historical reflection. *Higher Education Studies*, 3(6): 35-45.

Zavala, M., 2013. What do we mean by decolonising research strategies? Lessons from decolonising, indigenous research projects in New Zealand and Latin America. *Education and Society*, 2(1): 55-71.

Zeleza, P. T., 2003. Academic freedom in the neo-liberal order: Governments, globalisation, governance, and gender. *Journal of Higher Education in Africa*, 1(1): 149-194.

Zeleza, T. P. & Olukoshi, A., 2004. Introduction: The Struggle for African Universities and Knowledges. In P.T Zeleza & A. Olukoshi, (eds) *African Universities in the Twenty-first Century* (pp. 1-20). Dakar: CODESRIA.



Exploring the Intellectual Legacies of Patrice Lumumba: An Analysis of his Contributions to the Decolonisation and Liberation of Africa

By Dr. Kennedy Monari

Abstract

This paper focuses on the intellectual legacy of Patrice Lumumba, a Congolese independence leader and the first democratically elected Prime Minister of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The paper examines his contributions to the decolonisation and liberation of Africa through his political and leadership roles, ideas, and writings. The paper provides background information on Patrice Lumumba's life and political career, highlighting his key contributions to the decolonisation movement in the Congo and Africa more broadly. The paper then analyses the key ideas and themes from Lumumba's speeches and writings, particularly his ideas on decolonisation, Pan-Africanism, and African unity. Moreover, it also explores how Lumumba's ideas and legacy continue to shape contemporary scholarship and intellectual discourse on decolonisation and liberation in Africa. Furthermore, it examines his influence on later leaders and movements on the continent and in the African diaspora. The scope of this paper is limited to the historical context and dynamics of the time, drawing upon a wide range of scholarly works and academic sources that delve into the intellectual legacy of Patrice Lumumba and his significant contributions to the decolonisation and liberation movements in Africa.

Keywords: Intellectual legacy, Patrice Lumumba, Decolonisation, Africa

Introduction: Patrice Lumumba's Political Journey

The decolonisation process in Africa, marked by the struggles for independence and self-determination, holds significant historical importance (Lock, 2023), with key figures like Patrice Lumumba emerging as symbols of resistance against colonial oppression. Despite Lumumba's pivotal role in Africa's liberation movements, there exists a need to critically examine and understand the

contextual factors that influenced his actions and contributions (Blackpast, 2009). Lumumba, a key figure in Africa's struggle against colonial rule, emerged as a response to the deep-rooted oppression experienced by Black communities in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and beyond (KLB, 2015). His visionary work and unwavering dedication have served as a profound source of inspiration for successive generations, igniting the flame of change and progress in Africa (Nzongola, 2014).

Decolonisation is the undoing of colonialism, giving native peoples their independence and rights to form their governments. Africa underwent rapid decolonisation from the mid-1950s and 1975 (Study.com (n.d). The changes that occurred during the process were abrupt and drastic, characterised by political violence (Kiruthu, Kapiyo, & Kimori, 2005). Each country's struggle was distinct, notwithstanding certain general trends and similarities that occurred (Ndlovu, 2015). The decolonisation of Africa resulted in new hope for African nationalist leaders seeking liberation from colonial rule. This momentum was exemplified in the growing push for self-government in the DRC during the 1950s (Larson, 2021).

The life and political career of Patrice Lumumba are extensively documented in numerous books, authored by diverse contributors, encompassing journalists, political scientists, sociologists, playwrights, novelists, and individuals directly involved in the decolonisation of the Congo (Giordano, 2020). Lumumba, born on July 2, 1925, in Onalua, Kasai region of the Belgian Congo (now the Democratic Republic of Congo), faced financial constraints hindering his education, yet his political awakening between 1950 and 1955 propelled him into anti-colonial activism, leading to roles in trade unions and the Belgian Liberal Party (Omasombo, 2020). Despite a conviction for embezzlement in 1956, Lumumba emerged from prison with renewed determination, founding the Congolese National Movement (Mouvement National Congolais or MNC) in 1958 and engaging in the All-African People's Conference in Ghana later that year (Zeilig, 2015; Kanza, 1977).

Lumumba's imprisonment proved transformative, fueling his commitment to Congolese independence and pan-African solidarity. In 1960, as the Belgian Congo transitioned to independence, Lumumba rose as a key leader, becoming the first democratically elected Prime Minister. However, ethnic violence and political turmoil marred the transition, leading to fragmentation and conflict between Lumumba, President Joseph Kasavubu, and provincial leader Moise Tshombe (Young, 2019). Lumumba's efforts to maintain unity were thwarted by Western intervention and internal strife, ultimately resulting in his arrest, removal from office, and subsequent torture and assassination in 1961 (KLB, 2015). Despite his tragic end, Lumumba's legacy as a symbol of African unity and decolonisation endures, inspiring contemporary movements across the continent (Tödt, 2021). His dedication to Pan-Africanism remains a foundational aspect of modern African political discourse, emphasizing the imperative of continental unity in the face of ongoing challenges (Kapanga, 2012; Igué, 2010).

> "Patrice Lumumba – a symbol of resistance against colonial oppression."

The purpose of this paper is to examine the intellectual legacy of Patrice Lumumba and his significant contributions to the decolonisation and liberation of Africa. The paper draws upon a wide range of scholarly works and academic sources including the review and analysis of historical records, archival documents, biographies, scholarly articles, and books related to Lumumba's life and contributions to the decolonisation and liberation of Africa.

Lumumba Speeches and Writings: Key Ideas and Themes

This section analyses the themes and ideas that are found in Patrice Lumumba's speeches and writings, providing insight into their significance and impact within the broader historical context. The focus is on exploring specific memories conveyed through excerpts from historical articles, speech, given at the All-African Peoples' Conference in Accra,

Ghana Lumumba's Independence Day speech, Lumumba's speech on African unity, his letter to the United Nations general assembly, and the letter he wrote to his wife, particularly within the memories of colonialism, aspirations for national unity, and the pursuit of political stability.

"The Congolese Case" Speech

In his "The Congolese Case" speech, delivered at the All-African Peoples' Conference in Accra, Ghana in December 1958, Lumumba said:

> "The winds of freedom currently blowing across all of Africa have not left the Congolese people indifferent. Political awareness, which until very recently was latent, is now becoming manifest and assuming outward expression, and it will assert itself even more forcefully in the months to come. We are thus assured of the support of the masses and of the success of the efforts we are undertaking. This historical conference, which puts us in contact with experienced political figures from all the African countries and from all over the world, reveals one thing to us: despite the boundaries that separate us, despite our ethnic differences, we have the same awareness, the same soul plunged day and night in anguish, the same anxious desire to make this African continent a free and happy continent that has rid itself of unrest and of fear and any sort of colonialist domination" (Lumumba, 1972: 116).

Lumumba's speech reflects a sense of optimism, determination, and unity. It conveys several key ideas and themes. Firstly, he used the metaphorical expression "winds of freedom" to imply a transformative period in which African nations were breaking free from oppressive systems, colonial rule, or any form of domination. The metaphor captures the essence of the collective African desire for independence, self-determination, and the pursuit of rights and liberties. It mirrors sentiments echoed in various African decolonial discourses that emphasise the active participation of the Congolese people in the African freedom movement, the growing political awareness among them, and the collective aspirations for a liberated and prosperous continent (Nzongola, 2014). Lumumba's ideas are reinforced by other African scholars such as Neville Alexander and Salim Vally in their continued effort to dismantle colonial legacies. Their writings engage with decolonisation addressing the interconnected structures of oppression, which, were deeply rooted in racial and class disparities during apartheid and post-apartheid regimes in South Africa (Alexander, 2023).

Independence Day Speech

On June 30, 1960, the Belgian Congo became independent, and Patrice Lumumba gave an Independence Day speech in which he declared the independence of the Congo. Subsequently, this event has emerged as a widely recognised expression of resistance against colonialism and a political agenda for the postcolonial era. In his speech, Lumumba said:

> Although this independence of the Congo is being proclaimed today by agreement with Belgium, an amicable country, with which we are on equal terms, no Congolese will ever forget that independence was won in struggle, a persevering and inspired struggle carried on from day to day, a struggle, in which we were undaunted by privation or suffering and stinted neither strength nor blood. It was filled with tears, fire, and blood. We are deeply proud of our struggle because it was just noble and indispensable in putting an end to the humiliating bondage forced upon us. That was our lot for the eighty years of colonial rule and our wounds are too fresh and much too painful to be forgotten. We have experienced forced labor in exchange for pay that did not allow us to satisfy our hunger, clothe ourselves, have decent lodgings, or bring up our children as dearly loved ones. We have experienced atrocious sufferings, being persecuted for political convictions and religious beliefs, and exiled from our native land: our lot was worse than death itself (Lumumba, 1972: 44-47).

The first part of the speech underscores a chronological narrative that encompassed the collective struggle of the Congolese people throughout history, highlighting the hardships they endured together under oppression (Hickner, 2011). The ultimate goal expressed in this segment was to bring about an end to both suffering and the oppressive system of colonialism. The Prime

> “Lumumba’s ideas are reinforced by other African scholars such as Neville Alexander and Salim Vally in their continued effort to dismantle colonial legacies.”

Minister’s speech continued along the same lines for several additional sections, which have since become widely recognised within the pan-African community. Lumumba’s words cast a shadow over and undermined Baudouin’s narrative for various audiences across the third, second, and first worlds (Leslie, 1973). This speech by Lumumba stood as a distinct event amidst a turbulent series of events, sparking extensive debates among historians, political figures, and the general public in both Belgium and Congo.

Lumumba’s Speech on African Unity

African unity has been a central agenda among the post-independence African founding fathers, who recognised the significance of solidarity and collaboration among African nations. This commitment to unity and cooperation has been repeatedly emphasised in the discourse surrounding post-colonial Africa. The leaders of newly independent African countries recognised the common challenges faced by their nations and the shared aspirations for progress, development, and self-determination (Conrad, 1982). Patrice Lumumba spoke about the importance of African unity in several speeches, including his speech at the All-African Peoples’ Conference in Accra, Ghana in December 1958, known as “The Congolese Case” speech. In this speech, Lumumba said:

> I am sure that I shall be expressing the sentiments of all my African brothers when I say that Africa is not opposed to any nation taken separately, but that she is vigilant against any attempt at new domination and exploitation both in the economic and spiritual fields. Our goal is to revive Africa’s cultural, philosophical, social, and moral values and to preserve our resources. But our vigilance does not signify isolation. From the beginning of her independence, the Congo has shown her desire to play her part in the life of free nations, and this desire was concretized in her request for admission to the United Nations (Lumumba, 1972). Ministers and dear comrades, I am happy to express the joy and pride of the Government and people of the Congo at your presence here, at the presence here of the whole of Africa. The time of projects has passed. Today Africa must take action. This action is being impatiently awaited by the peoples of Africa. African unity and solidarity are no longer dreams. They must be expressed in decisions. United by a single spirit, a single aspiration, and a single heart, we shall turn Africa into a genuinely free and independent continent in the immediate future. Long live African unity and solidarity! Forward, Africans, to complete liberation! (Lumumba, 1972: 19-25).

The excerpt from his speech underscores several themes and ideas that made significant intellectual contributions to the decolonisation of Africa, particularly the Congo. One prominent theme in Lumumba’s speeches was the importance of African unity. He stressed the need for solidarity and cooperation among African nations, highlighting that Africa was not against any nation individually but vigilant against new forms of domination and exploitation. Lumumba emphasised the revival of Africa’s cultural, philosophical, social, and moral values and the preservation of its resources. By advocating for African unity, Lumumba aimed to counter the divisive strategies of colonial powers and promote a collective effort for self-determination and development (Walters, 1973). His powerful words expressed the aspirations and impatience of the African people for true freedom and independence (Hoskyns, 1973).

Lumumba's Writings

The written words of Patrice Lumumba offer valuable insights into his political beliefs, ideas, and vision for the Congo and Africa as a whole. Lumumba's letters and excerpts depict a better understanding of his thoughts on governance, decolonisation, and his hopes for his country and the wider African continent. Lumumba reveals deep concern for the well-being and empowerment of the Congolese people, as well as his strong opposition to external interference and exploitation (Leslie, 1973). Through this analysis of Lumumba's writings, we gain a deeper appreciation of his intellectual legacy and his significant contributions to Africa's struggle for independence from colonial rule.

Patrice Lumumba's Letter to the President of the UN General Assembly

After gaining independence in 1960, the Republic of the Congo found itself embroiled in a new struggle, not only against internal challenges but also facing external influence from Belgium, the former colonial power. The continuing political crisis provoked by the head of state, Mr. Kasavubu, on September 5, 1960, made the imminent danger of the Congo's complete break-up all the more apparent (United States, 2023). This situation intensified the political antagonism between Patrice Lumumba and Mr. Kasavubu, as their ideological differences came to the forefront. Lumumba, a charismatic and visionary leader, held radical views that aimed to challenge the existing power structures and establish a progressive and independent Congo. In contrast, President Joseph Kasavubu, supported by Belgium, represented a conservative faction that sought to maintain elements of the colonial legacy and preserve the existing power structures (Kapanga, 2012).

The power struggle between Kasavubu and Lumumba reflected the legacy of colonial rule and hampered the DRC's efforts to achieve complete independence. Lumumba was conscious of the urgent need for global action and sought assistance from the UN General Assembly aimed at disrupting the colonial narrative that often dictated the fate of African nations (Duodu, 2011). Lumumba's actions and radical beliefs offer a decolonial approach to navigating the DRC through challenging times, aiming for full independence and agency in the face of constant foreign pressures (Duodu, 2011; Hoskyns, 1973). Lumumba's ideas were exemplified by subsequent African decolonial thinkers such as Walter Rodney who believed that to dismantle the effects of colonialism on African nations African leaders need to challenge external interference and foster genuine self-determination (Apata, 2018). As stated,

> The continuing political crisis provoked by the head of state, Mr. Kasavubu, on September 5, 1960, makes imminent the grave danger of the Congo's complete break-up. A regime of anarchy and dictatorship replaced the democratic regime established by the Congolese people on June 30, 1960. A tiny minority, advised and financed by certain foreign powers, is engaged in subversive activity night and day. The capital of the republic is a scene of disorder, where a handful of hired military men are ceaselessly violating law and order. The citizens of Leopoldville now live under a reign of terror. Arbitrary arrests, followed by deportation, are a daily and nightly occurrence, and many persons are reported missing. Murder, burglary, and rape of married women and young girls are committed almost daily by individuals bereft of every sense of morality and patriotism, who profess to be in the service of the national army and of Mr. Kasavubu. The presidents of the provincial governments of Stanleyville and Leopoldville, Mr. Finant and Mr. Kamitatu, recognised leaders, elected by the people,

> "Long live African unity and solidarity!
> Forward, Africans, to complete liberation!
> *(Lumumba, 1972: 19-25)*"

> and governing between them more than six million inhabitants to the satisfaction of all concerned, are at this moment subjected to every conceivable form of brutality and torture. These two provincial presidents-men wholly dedicated to the task of improving the well-being of their people-were taken by surprise by Mobutu's thugs respectively on October 13, 1960, at Stanleyville and November 10 at Leopoldville and are now in concentration camps set up at Leopoldville by Messrs. Kasavubu and Mobutu (Lumumba,1961: 50-52.).

Lumumba proceeded to make a direct appeal to the United Nations, urging their intervention in the unfolding crisis:

> The United Nations is not entitled to choose any course other than the one indicated by Parliament. Certain slates, which are members of the United Nations, instead of conforming to the decisions taken by the sovereign Congolese Parliament, ignore them and support only the minority working against the will of the majority. Instead of helping the Congolese leaders to effect a peaceful settlement of the conflict provoked by Mr. Kasavubu, certain powers are doing their utmost to widen the breach between us, their plan being indirectly to bring about the dismemberment of the Congo. In this connection, the Congolese people as a whole deplore the attitude of the United States Government; it is with great regret that I call the General Assembly's attention to the fact that, as eloquently testified by the documents seized, the 30 million francs recently confiscated at Stanleyville from a group of persons plotting to seize power by a *coup d'etat* came from United States sources. Given the foregoing and the fact that the United Nations has proved unable to find a prompt solution by the expressed will of the people, I propose, with the backing of the millions of inhabitants I lawfully represent, that the solution to the Congolese problem should be left to the Congolese people themselves (Lumumba, 1961: 50-52).

Lumumba's condemnation mirrors a broader sentiment among African nations striving to liberate themselves from colonial domination and assert their independence. His proposal for the Congolese problem to be resolved through a popular referendum aligns with decolonial goals, advocating for self-governance and the right of Africans to determine their destiny (Walters, 1973). This resonates with the overarching objectives of decolonisation movements across Africa, seeking to dismantle foreign control and establish independent nations based on the aspirations of the African people. Lumumba's letter stands as a powerful testament to the aspirations and determination of African leaders and nations to shape their destinies autonomously, free from the control and interference of Western powers (Nzongola, 2015). It serves as a critical document within the decolonial discourse, highlighting the persistent struggles against external influence and the pursuit of genuine self-determination in the postcolonial era.

"The Last Message" (1960), a Letter Addressed to his Wife Before his Death

> I write you these words without knowing if they will reach you, when they will reach you, or if I will still be living when you read them. All during the length of my fight for the independence of my country, I have never doubted for a single instant the final triumph of the sacred cause to which my companions and I have consecrated our lives. But what we wish for our country, its right to an honorable life, to spotless dignity, to independence without restrictions, Belgian colonialism, and its Western allies who have found direct and indirect support, deliberate and not deliberate among certain high officials of the United Nations, this organization in which we placed all our confidence when we called for their assistance-have not wished it (BlackPast, 2009).

The final message of the letter written by Patrice Lumumba to his wife before his tragic death deviates from the conventional love letters we often encounter in our lives. Instead, it unveils a deeper purpose, revealing the inherent connection between critical portrayals of the colonial past and the ever-changing landscape of national politics. Lumumba sheds light on the challenges faced by his country's struggle for independence, particularly the deliberate or inadvertent support received by Belgian colonialism and certain high officials within the United Nations. This critical reflection underscores the complex dynamics and

power structures that influenced the course of decolonisation, highlighting the need to examine the role played by external forces in shaping the destiny of nations striving for independence (Walters, 1973). As noted in the work of Lesli Duly (1973), Lumumba's language conveys a sense of collective unity and resilience as he calls upon his compatriots to reject the degrading and shameful practices of colonialism. He envisions a future where his people, united as one, will rise and reclaim their dignity under the radiant light of the pure sun. Lumumba's words reflect his deep conviction in the power of collective action and the restoration of national pride in the face of external manipulation and oppression.

Lumumba's Impact on Contemporary Discourse on African Decolonisation

Scholarly Impact

Lumumba's speech and writings on contemporary discourse on African decolonisation take various forms, reflecting the diverse perspectives, mediums, and platforms through which it is expressed. His iconic speech, which will forever remain alive in the minds of many Africans and friends of Africa, holds significant political rhetoric and content (Tödt, 2021). His ideas and legacy continue to shape scholarship and intellectual discourse on decolonisation and liberation in Africa. Scholars such as Nzongola-Ntalaja (2007) emphasise Lumumba's influence, noting how his principles resonate with later leaders and movements in Africa and the diaspora (Blackpast, 2009). His ideas have inspired modern decolonial scholars, like Mignolo (2007) and Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013), Achille Mbembe (2020), who build on his foundation, offering critical perspectives on the ongoing challenges of decolonisation in Africa. Lumumba's legacy, as explored by contemporary scholars, reinforces the enduring relevance of his contributions to the discourse and his pivotal role in shaping the intellectual landscape of decolonisation in Africa.

Lumumba's ideas are closely intertwined with the critical period in the evolution of race relations in the United States. The Black Freedom Movement, which had been questioning the effectiveness of earlier strategies and seeking a new direction, found Lumumba's martyrdom deeply resonant (Hickner, 2011). Prior to his untimely death, Lumumba already held an esteemed position within the African diaspora, embodying the aspirations of African nations for not only independence but also greatness and international recognition. However, his posthumous representation took on a new dimension as he came to epitomize the potential of the West. Lumumba became a concise reference, underscoring the risks associated with white betrayal (Kelley, 2002).

The shift in discourse and ideology can be observed in various organizations and cultural movements of the time. Groups such as the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), the Black Arts Movement, the Black Panther Party, the Harlem Writers Guild, the Cultural Association for Women of African Heritage, On Guard, and the Black Muslims, among others, were influenced by Lumumba's legacy (Perlstein, 2002). This influence extended to a generation of African-American intellectuals, artists, writers, and activists who shaped cultural production, racial construction, and political consciousness in the United States. Lumumba's martyrdom served as a rallying point, inspiring a reevaluation of strategies and a renewed commitment to the pursuit of justice and liberation (Campbell, 2006).

Within academic circles, numerous contemporary African scholars have been influenced by Lumumba's ideas and have made substantial contributions to the discourse surrounding African decolonisation. These scholars engage in rigorous research, author research papers, and publish scholarly publications that delve into various aspects of decolonisation. For example, Emnet Woldegiorgis (2021), a distinguished scholar and researcher, has significantly contributed to the discourse on the decolonisation of knowledge production in Africa. Woldegiorgis' substantial body of work emphasises that the calls for decolonizing higher education are deeply rooted in the shared experience of European colonization, which imposed profound epistemic violence upon African indigenous knowledge systems. Achille Mbembe - a prominent Cameroonian philosopher and political theorist has written extensively on African politics, Postcolonialism, and decolonisation. His work is heavily influenced by Lumumba's ideas, particularly his critique of neo-colonialism. Mahmood Mamdani a Ugandan academic and political commentator who has

written extensively on African politics, particularly the legacies of colonialism and the challenges of postcolonial state-building. He has credited Lumumba with inspiring his commitment to social justice and his critique of neo-colonialism.

Artistic expression has also helped shape the intellectual discourse on African decolonisation. Many artists have found inspiration in Lumumba's speeches and writings, using their artistic expressions to convey the history of colonization and decolonisation in Congo and Africa as a whole. Through various art forms, these artists tell the stories of struggle, liberation, and the quest for independence, shedding light on the complexities of colonial history and the ongoing process of decolonisation. Their work serves as a powerful medium to raise awareness, provoke thought, and foster dialogue about the legacy of colonization and the pursuit of freedom in Africa. Initially, during the moment of independence, artistic variations were limited due to the scarcity of individuals present to hear Lumumba's speech. Therefore, artistic expression mainly relied on a few photographs. Subsequently, during the turbulent crisis of the 1960 dry season, a greater influx of contradictory questions, rumors, and images circulated, leading to further artistic interpretations (Jewsiewicki, 1999).

"Many artists have found inspiration in Lumumba's speeches and writings, using their artistic expressions to convey the history of colonization and decolonisation in Congo and Africa as a whole."

The direct experience of the transformative political era in Africa during the 1960s is distant from the lived reality of many Congolese individuals today. However, it survives through the connections established by art and academic knowledge. After the assassination of Patrice Lumumba in 1961, his image became firmly ingrained in both public and scholarly discussions concerning Congolese. The culmination of these moments revolved around the martyrdom of Lumumba, which became the central focus of all images. These pivotal moments allowed for diverse interpretations and artistic enhancements. Some individuals associate these images with episodes of colonization, while others link them to the founding era of Africa's liberation under Lumumba's leadership. Additionally, some people relate the images to the subsequent liberation movements in Congo and Africa as a whole (De Groof, 2018).

As an illustration, in 1999, the Museum for African Art in New York, NY, hosted an exhibition titled "A Congo Chronicle: Patrice Lumumba in Urban Art," which displayed artistic portrayals of Patrice Émery Lumumba (1925-1961), the first democratically elected prime minister of the newly liberated Congo (Jewsiewicki, 1999). The exhibition featured the creative works of twenty-seven urban Congolese artists and was curated by Dr. Bogumil Jewsiewicki from Laval University in Québec, QC. Through their art, the exhibition celebrated Lumumba as an enduring symbol of heroism, representing ideals such as national unity, political freedom, and human rights within the context of an independent Africa. Initially launched at the Museum for African Art, the exhibition subsequently embarked on a tour, visiting eight different museums in the United States and one in Antwerp, Belgium, spanning the years from 1999 to 2009 (Nyunda ya Rubango, 1999).

Political Impact

In the realm of politics, Lumumba's ideas and political actions have exerted a profound influence on the political discourse in Congo. His visionary thinking and activism have left an enduring impact on the national narrative. Nzongola-Ntalaja contends that Lumumba's name has acquired significant influence in the political landscape of Congo, serving as a gateway to power. In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), invoking Lumumba's name and ideology has evolved into a

political strategy aimed at gaining the trust of the populace and securing their votes. Remarkably, over 95% of Congolese politicians identify themselves as Lumumbist or followers of Lumumba's teachings. However, the proliferation of Lumumbist political parties appears to be a deceptive tactic employed solely to exploit Lumumba's name for personal gain and access to political positions. Regrettably, the use of Lumumba's name in this manner allows for the manipulation of political citizenship, ultimately serving personal ambitions and potentially furthering an imperialist agenda (Nzongola, 2015).

Conclusion

Africa's founding heroes continue to hold a significant place in the collective consciousness of many Africans and their allies. Their sacrifices in liberating the continent from the shackles of colonialism and imperialism have had enduring impacts that transcend generations. Among these influential figures, Lumumba's intellectual legacy stands out, not only inviting us to revisit our history as Africans but also inspiring a collective effort toward the realization of a united Africa. Lumumba's ideas emphasised African agency and the imperative to challenge the legacies of colonialism and imperialism. The sacrifices made by African liberation leaders continue to reverberate through time. The remembrance of Lumumba and his contemporaries serves as a reminder of the struggles and triumphs that shaped the continent's history. The legacies serve as beacons of hope and inspiration for current and future generations, fueling a sense of pride, resilience, and determination. The memory of Lumumba's ideas and actions invites Africans to reflect on their own identities and histories, fostering a deeper understanding of the challenges faced in the past and the possibilities for a decolonized and prosperous future.

Moreover, Lumumba's intellectual legacy transcends the borders of individual African nations and resonates with the broader Pan-African movement. His vision for a united Africa, characterized by regional cooperation and solidarity, remains relevant today. Lumumba's call for African agency and the rejection of external domination provides a powerful framework for contemporary discussions on African unity and self-determination. His ideas continue to shape the political discourse surrounding regional integration efforts, as well as the pursuit of economic, social, and political cooperation among African nations. Lumumba's intellectual legacy, intertwined with the collective memory of Africa's liberation struggles, serves as a constant reminder of the shared aspirations and common destiny of the African continent.Top of Form

References

Alexander, N., 2023. *Against Racial Capitalism: Selected Writings* (S. Vally & E. Motala, Eds.). Pluto Press. ISBN: 9780745348377 (Paperback), 9780745348384 (eBook).

Apata, G. O., 2018. Review of Walter Rodney's How Europe Underdeveloped Africa (Verso, new edition, 2018). Goldsmiths University Press.

BlackPast, B., 2009. 1960 *Patrice Lumumba's Last Letter to Pauline Lumumba.* BlackPast.org. https://www.blackpast.org/global-african-history/primary-documents-global-african-history/patrice-lumumbas-letter-pauline-lumumba-1960/

Campbell, J. T., 2006. *Middle Passages: African Americans Journey to Africa,* 1787-2005. New York: Penguin.

Conrad, J., 1982. *Review of The African Condition: A Political Diagnosis, by A. A. Mazrui]. Canadian Journal of African Studies / Revue Canadienne Des Études Africaines,* 16(1), 186–188. https://doi.org/10.2307/484624

De Groof, M. (2018). Lumumba's Iconography as Interstice between Art and History. In E. Koide, M. De Groof, R. Sacks, P. Missassi, H. Kalama, & D. Andrew (Eds.), *Mediating Past, Present and Future of D.R.Congo's Historical Narratives on Art in a Global South Dialogue*. Artl@s Bulletin, Vol. 7, No. 1, pp. 58-69.

De Groof, M., 2019. *The Iconography of Patrice Lumumba in the Arts.* Leuven: Leuven University Press.

Duodu, C., 2011. Patrice Lumumba from a Mere Man to a Lasting Symbol. *New African,* (505): 42-46. Retrieved September 24, 2017, from http://0-search.ebscohost.com.mercury.concordia.ca/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=59897956&site=eds-live.

Encyclopedia Britannica, n.d. *Google*. Britannica Academic. Retrieved January 13, 2024, from https://www.britannica.com/place/Democratic-Republic-of-the-Congo/Belgian-paternalism-and-the-politics-of-decolonisation

Gerard, E., & Kuklick, B., 2015. The Government Falls. In D. M. Whitehead (Ed.), *Death in the Congo: Murdering Patrice Lumumba* (pp. 91–106). Harvard University Press. https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt21pxknd?turn_away=true

Gerard-Larson, N., 2021. Decolonisation and Independence in 20th Century Africa. Story Maps. https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/4464bbde1b0d4328a7a486301bfb7a83

Giordano, R., 2020. The Masks of the Savage: Lumumba and the Independence of the Congo. In J. R. J. Eyck (ed.), Reprint from "Lumumba in the Arts" (ISBN 978 94 6270 174 8). Leuven University Press.

Hall, S., 1980. Encoding/decoding. In S. Hall, D. Hobson, A. Lowe, & P. Willis (eds.), *Culture, Media, Language* (pp. 128-138). New York: Routledge.

Hickner, J., 2011. '"History will one day have its say": Patrice Lumumba and the black freedom movement'. PhD thesis, Purdue University.

Hoskyns, C., 1973. "Martyr by Choice" *Review of Lumumba Speaks: The Speeches and Writings of Patrice Lumumba*, 1958-1961. The New York Review of Books, 20.5.

Igué, J. O., 2010. A New Generation of Leaders in Africa: What Issues Do They Face? *International Development Policy | Revue internationale de politique de développement,* 1: 115-133.

Irwin, R., 2015. Sovereignty in the Congo crisis. In L. James and E. Leake (eds), *Decolonisation and the Cold War: Negotiating Independence*. (pp. 20-40). London: Bloomsbury Academic.

Jansson, A., 2019. Things are different elsewhere: An intellectual history of intellectual history in Sweden. Global Intellectual History. https://doi.org/10.1080/23801883.2019.1657634

Jewsiewicki, B., 1999. Congolese memories of Lumumba: Between Cultural Hero and Humanity's Redeemer. In B. Jewsiewicki (ed.), *A Congo Chronicle: Patrice Lumumba in urban art.* (pp. 73-91). New York, NY: Museum for African Art.

Jewsiewicki, B., 1999. *A Congo Chronicle: Patrice Lumumba in Urban Art.* New York: Museum for African Art.

Kapanga, K. M., 2012. Introduction: Decolonization in the Congo (DRC) Fifty Years Later. *African Studies Review,* 55(1): 105–108.

Kelley, R. D. G., 2002. Stormy Weather: Reconstructing Black (Inter) Nationalism in the Cold War Era. In E. S. Glaude Jr. (ed.), *Is it Nation Time: Contemporary Essays on Black Power and Black Nationalism* (pp. 39-67). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Kanza, T. R., 1977. *The Rise and Fall of Patrice Lumumba: Conflict in the Congo*. Cambridge, MA: Schenkman.

Kiruthu, F., Kapiyo, J., & Kimori, W., 2005. The evolving world history and government book form 4 (pp. 172-180). Oxford University Press East Africa Ltd. Retrieved from https://books.google.co.ke/books?id=SLc1AgAACAAJ

Kenya Literature Bureau, 2015. *History and Government Course Book Form 4* (6th ed.). KLB Nairobi.

Kenya Literature Bureau, 2005. *History and Government: Pupil's Book for Form Four* (4th Ed.). Kenya Literature Bureau.

Leslie C. D., 1973. Lumumba Speaks: The Speeches and Writings of Patrice Lumumba, 1958–1961, History: Reviews of New Journal, 1:4, 80, DOI: 10.1080/03612759.1973.9945956

Lock, E., 2023. Rethinking Decolonisation in "Sub-Saharan Africa: Toward Reinventionism. *Journal of Asian and African Studies.* Advanced online publication. https://doi.org/10.1177/00219096231192330

Lumumba-Kasongo, T., 1988. Katanga Secession: Creation of the West or Manifestation of Congolese Internal Power Struggle? *Journal of African Studies*, 15(3/4): 101-109. Retrieved August 28, 2017, from http://0-search.ebscohost.com.mercury.concordia.ca/login.aspx?direct=true&db=hia&AN=46067345&site=eds-live.

Lumumba, P., 1972. *Lumumba Speaks: The Speeches and Writings of Patrice Lumumba*, 1958-1961. In J. V. Lierde(Ed), (pp. 44-47, 57, 116, 222-223, 281-283). Boston: Little, Brown and Company.

Lumumba, P., 1961. *The Truth about a Monstrous Crime of the Colonialists.* Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House.

Nyunda ya R., 1999. Patrice Lumumba at the Crossroads of History and Myth. In B. Jewsiewicki (ed.), *A Congo Chronicle: Patrice Lumumba in Urban Art* (pp. 373-387). New York NY: Museum for African Art.

Nzongola-Ntalaja G., 2014. *Patrice Lumumba.* Ohio University Press. Retrieved June 13 2023 from http://site.ebrary.com/id/10953533.

Nzongola-Ntalaja, G., 2015. *Patrice Lumumba: Africa's Lost Leader.* London: Hause Publishing, 2015.

Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S. J., 2015. Decoloniality as the Future of Africa. *History Compass,* 13(10):485-496. https://doi.org/10.1111/hic3.12264

Niles, A. N., et al., 2014. Randomized controlled trial of expressive writing for psychological and physical health: the moderating role of emotional expressivity. *Anxiety, Stress, & Coping*, 27(1): 1-17. https://doi.org/10.1080/10615806.2013.802308

Omasombo T. J. and Verhaegen, B., 1998. *Patrice Lumumba: Youth and Political Apprenticeship.* Paris: L'Harmattan.

Omasombo T. J., 2020. Lumumba, a never-ending tragedy and the unfulfilled mourning process of colonisation. In M. De Groof (ed.), *Lumumba in the Arts* (pp. 44-61). Leuven University Press.

Perlstein, D., 202. Minds Stayed on Freedom: Politics and Pedagogy in the African-American Freedom Struggle. *American Educational Research Journal,* 39(2): 249–277. http://www.jstor.org/stable/3202522

Study.com. (n.d.). *Google*. Study.com for Schools. Retrieved January 13, 2024, https://study.com/academy/lesson/changes-in-africa-after-world-war-ii.html

Tödt, D., 2021. *The Lumumba Generation: African Bourgeoisie and Colonial Distinction in the Belgian Congo.* Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter. https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110709308

Toussaint, E., 2021, January 17. In memory of Patrice Lumumba, assassinated on 17 January 1961. CADTM.

United States. (2023) *Office of the Historian | U.S. Department of State.* United States. [Web Archive] Retrieved from the Library of Congress, https://history.state.gov/milestones/1961-1968/congo-decolonisation#:~:text=The%20decolonisation%20of%20Sub%2DSaharan,independent%2C%20non%2Daligned%20nations.

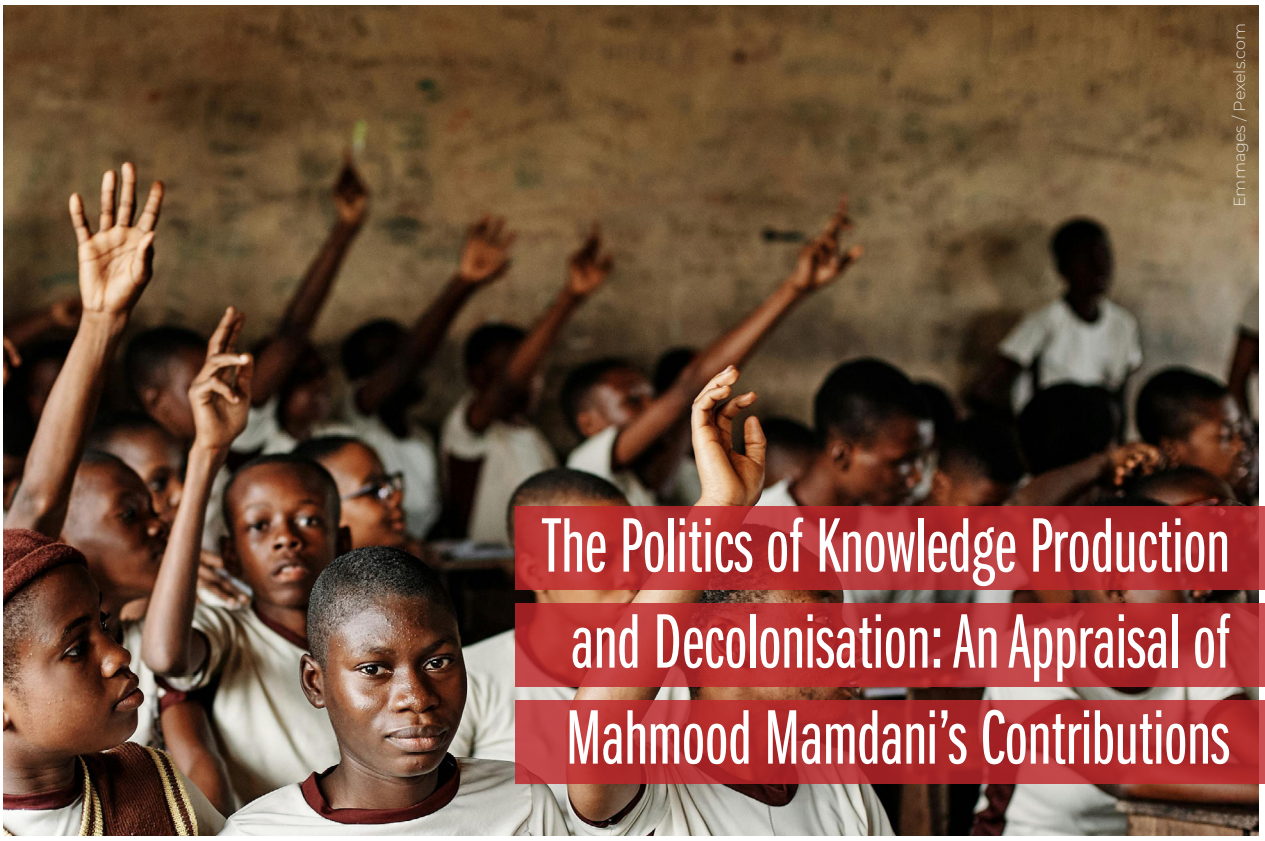
Walters, R. (1973). *Lumumba Speaks: Review of the Book "Lumumba Speaks: The Speeches and Writings of Patrice Lumumba,* 1958-1961." Black World, 22(7), 51-52, 80-83.

West, C., 1993. *Race Matters*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

Woldegiorgis, E. T., 2021. Decolonising a higher education system which has never been colonized.' *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 53(9): 894-906, DOI: 10.1080/00131857.2020.1835643

Young, C., 2019. *The Rise and Fall of Patrice Lumumba: Conflict in the Congo*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Zeilig L., 2015. Lumumba: Africa's Lost Leader (Revised and updated). Haus Publishing. Retrieved 1 June 2023 from https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&db=nlabk&AN=1246179.



The Politics of Knowledge Production and Decolonisation: An Appraisal of Mahmood Mamdani's Contributions

By Dr. Sifiso Ndlovu

Abstract

One of the fundamental challenges facing higher education is the much-needed confrontation of the legacies of colonialism which are hidden behind the claims of universality, neutrality and objectivity in knowledge production. From the vantage point of the present, Mahmood Mamdani, is one of the scholars who have given an account of colonial rule, its main characteristics and consequences of colonial conquests in a telling manner that renders transparent how the universalising structure of political modernity produced the colonised as subjects of difference. In his writings, Mamdani has connected the diverse experiences of the post-colonial world and flagged modernity as very pivotal in understanding the politics of knowledge production because it was crafted by the colonial project which centred on producing colonial subjects of difference within the hegemonic European thought. Mamdani's main contribution is his use of historical analysis from the vantage point of the present to offer a productive frame of thought on knowledge production that exposes the anatomy and operation of colonialism and its universalising structures that have been inadvertently normalised as the model in knowledge production. In this article, I attempt to piece together the fundamentals of Mamdani's exposition of how colonialism was a particular variation of the discourse of difference that shaped forms of existence and knowing. Primarily using a decolonial inspired theoretical framework, the paper makes a nuanced reading of Mamdani's writings to show how his contributions makes visible the impact of colonialism as a project that is not confined to history and its pervasiveness in shaping the production of the objects of knowledge and its subjects.

Key words: Modernity, Colonial state, Eurocentrism, Subject, Power.

Introduction

The modern world has been shaped in various ways by the empire and processes of colonialism in ways that have attracted vast numbers of scholarly reflections that spawn across various disciplines. It is the enduring influences of colonialism in contemporary ways of life and thought that has also provoked the need to critically reflect on the validity and limitations of Eurocentric notions of universalism in knowledge production. The Euro-modernist notions of universality is a system of global power structure that has not only pushed the ex-colonised's ways of reading and interpreting social experience to the margins but has also perpetually trapped them in colonial configurations in terms of knowledge production. The exclusion of other knowledges of the majority of the world's population from the domain of credible and authoritative knowledge has been one of the crucial entry points in disrupting the logic of coloniality in knowledge and this constitutes a body of thought by decolonial theorists such as (Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013a; 2013b; Maldonado-Torres (2011; 2018), Grosfuguel (2011) and Mignolo (2011), to mention just a few. These scholars have taken a leading role in revealing the darker side of modernity that has privileged the Eurocentric framework of rationality as the centre from which all ways of knowing and being cascade from.

Decolonial theorists propose the reversal of the imposition of universal ethos underpinning Euro-modernist epistemologies and the persistence of power relations embedded therein that have hierarchised and pushed to the margins other ways of knowing that fall outside of the framework of modernity. Mahmood Mamdani's quest to give an account of colonialism and how it operated on multiple levels as a racial object of continually producing and reproducing the colonised as subjects of colonial difference within European thought has a compelling resonance with decolonial scholarship's concerns with the pervasiveness of coloniality in knowledge production. I argue that Mamdani is one of the key figures in this scholarship because his works links to some of the key questions debated today in the politics of knowledge production. In his works, Mamdani variably pulls together an exposition of how colonialism systematically and deliberately emphasised and politicised differences in social life as a major technology of domination in a systematic and deliberate manner. This is significant in so far as it shows how Mamdani's angle of intervention reveals how within the discursive terrain of the colonial project, difference was constructed in ways that amount to coloniality of thought and being. I start off by mapping out the units of analysis that are proffered by decoloniality as they offer a productive lens through which we can read the politics of knowledge production and modern global power structure. This will be followed by a brief background of Mamdani's works before proceeding to explore how he employs an analysis of colonial rule and the rule of difference as an overarching premise from which to think about and confront the epistemic challenges of Eurocentrism and its demeaning consequences on African realities and experiences.

Decolonial Epistemic Perspective and its Units of Analysis

Decoloniality has been chosen as an indispensable theoretical toolkit precisely because it drills deeper into the specificity of how coloniality works and lays bare the hidden power structures and articulations that shape knowledge production in universities and are at the heart of epistemic violence. In proceeding, it is therefore vital to flesh out the three conceptual pillars of decoloniality namely coloniality of power, knowledge and being. The concept of power which is used in decolonial perspective is usually deployed to understand the dominant global power structure as constituted by 'hetararchies', that is, multiple, vertical, horizontal and criss-crossing strings of 'colonialities' that touch every aspect of human life (Grosfoguel 2007). Through the conceptual pillar of coloniality of power, decolonial theorists like Quijano (2000); Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013a, 2013b), and Grosfuguel (2007), for example, have delved deeper into understanding the invention, configuration and universalisation of modern asymmetrical global power structures. The decolonial theorists have used this concept of power in richly telling ways that illuminate the visible and invisible colonial matrices of domination and control, exploitation and dehumanisation of the African subject. We learn through the works of Annibal Quijano that coloniality of power is not a form of coloniality that only imposes domination

and control on subjectivity but also hegemonic control over various facets of life. He put it this way:

> [P]ower is a space and a network of social relations of exploitation/domination/conflict, which are basically integrated around the dispute over control of the following arenas of social existence: (1) labor and its product; (2) depending on the first, nature and its productive sources; (3) gender, its products, and reproduction of the species; (4) subjectivity and its material intersubjective products, including knowledge; (5) authority and its instruments-specifically those of coercion. (Quijano 2000:3)

Quijano's analysis of coloniality of power goes a long way in illuminating how the subjective racialised subjectivities were produced, logics of inclusion and exclusion and 'paradigm of difference' to borrow from Mudimbe's (1994) was produced. The power to define is the driving logic in the coloniality of power which led to the relegation of some social groups as blacks, the coloureds and the Indian and their subjective experiences. The organising principle of the social hierarchisation and classifications in the coloniality of power is race or a 'mental category of modernity' as Quijano (2008: 182) calls it. The concept of the coloniality of power is significant in unmasking the hidden logic of the Eurocentric monopolisation of knowledge systems because the imposition of power as the operational logic of coloniality has remained intact as Quijano (2007: 171) rightly observed: "coloniality of power has proven to be longer lasting than Eurocentred colonialism." On the other hand, through the works of scholars like Saldivar (2007) we learn about the marginalisation and interpellation of the non-Western as subject and as minor through the hegemonic practices of coloniality of power. The logic of classification and production of knowledge is articulated through coloniality of power and the legacy of colonial power which has been sustained through the myth of decolonisation and postcolonialism (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013). Grosfoguel (2007: 219) also succinctly dismisses the myth of postcolonialism in the following way that sums it all:

> One of the most powerful myths of the twentieth century was the notion that the elimination of colonial administrations amounted to the decolonization of the world. This led to the myth of a "postcolonial" world. The heterogeneous and multiple global structures put in place over a period of 450 years did not evaporate with the juridical-political decolonization of the periphery over the past 50 years. We continue to live under the same "colonial power matrix." With juridical administrative decolonization we moved from a period of "global colonialism" to the current period of "global coloniality." Although "colonialism administrations" have been entirely eradicated and the majority of the periphery is politically organised into independent states, non-European people are still living under crude European exploitation and domination. The old colonial hierarchies of European versus non-Europeans remain in place and are entangled with the "international division of labour" and accumulation of capital at a world-scale.

The tendency to view the removal of juridical administrative colonialism as postcolonialism obscures the current status quo of asymmetrical power relations of global coloniality.

Coloniality of being is the second important contour of analysis which was conceptualised by one the leading decolonial theorist Maldonado-Torres (2007) when he argued that being human itself suffered a form of colonisation. Coloniality of being is closely linked with coloniality of power wherein those who became targets of colonisation and enslavement were subjected to denial of humanity and a myth of a people without history or human agency. On this, scholars like Grosfoguel (2007: 214) have argued that through the colonial discourse, the non-Western subject were dehumanised and portrayed without legacy. In his own words, Grosfuguel had this to say:

> We went from the sixteenth-century characterisation of 'people without writing' to the eighteenth and nineteenth century characterisation of 'people without history', to the twentieth- century characterisation of 'people without development' and more recently, to the early twentieth century of 'people without democracy.'

What has been highlighted by Grosfuguel was deliberate denial of humanity, social classification and racial hierarchisation of humanity and most importantly invention of the 'other' and aberration

> "[P]ower is a space and a network of social relations of exploitation/domination/conflict, which are basically integrated around the dispute over control of the following arenas of social existence."

of the norm (Maldonado Torres, 2007; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013). As one of the major technologies of domination, denial of humanity led the colonised subject to be pushed to what Fanon (1968) calls 'zone of non-being' and profiled as lacking, including lack of 'humanity' itself. Fanon's works is useful for the interrogation and deeper understanding of the existential conditions of black subjectivity.

Decoloniality also rests on the analysis of knowledge as an important unit. According to Hoagland (2009: 24) knowledge is produced from the "epistemic framings and methodologies that are fraught with colonial orderings, including racial and gendered orderings." As part of the coloniality of being, dehumanisation of the colonised and placing of the non-Western subject in the realm of subalternity within the hierarchy of the structure of modernity ensued. According to Quijano (2007: 169) coloniality of knowledge resulted from repression of specific beliefs, ideas, images and symbols that constituted the colonised people's indigenous knowledge systems. Making it much clearer is Ngugi wa Thiong'o (2009a: 21) who articulated on the operational logic of coloniality of knowledge by putting it in the following way: "get a few of the natives, empty their hard disk of the previous memory, and download into them a software of European memory..." What we learn from Ngugi wa Thiong'o's works is the invasion of the mental universe that resulted in alienation, deep mental dislocation, dehumanisation and invisibility of the colonised human subject in the production of knowledge. Ngugi (2012: 39) then sums it all by noting that:

> The colonial process dislocates the traveller's mind from the place he or she already knows to a foreign starting point even with the body still remaining in his or her homeland. It is a process of continuous alienation from the base, a continuous process of looking at oneself from the outside of self or with the lenses of a stranger. One may end up identifying with the foreign base as the starting point towards self, that is from another self towards one-self, rather than the local being the starting point, from self to other selves . . .

Of critical concern in coloniality of knowledge as Ngugi wa Thiong'o (2012: 30) rightly observes is the use of knowledge to 'obscure reality and force a certain perception of reality'. I draw on the three conceptual premises of decoloniality (power, being and knowledge) to argue that a close examination of Mamdani's works helpfully illuminates the power relations embedded within the discursive framework of modernity through which racialised and historical subjects were constituted across time and space. His interventions are fundamental in flagging colonialism as a project of epistemic violence and raging debates on politics of knowledge production. Read carefully alongside decoloniality scholarship which hinge on unlearning and re-learning of ideas as an alternative line of knowledge production that is against Eurocentric epistemologies that purport to be universal, objective and neutral, Mamdani's fine grained analysis of colonialism sheds light on the colonised's experience of modernity and the creation of their subjectivity. His works challenge scholars to not only rethink their scholarship but also relearn the history of the colonised-particularly the hierarchization of humanity through race as the organising principle of the structure of the colonial power. This is an analysis that neatly dovetails with arguments of decolonial thinkers who have argued that if colonization is understood as a global power structure it makes visible how differences were turned into hierarchical arrangements through naturalisation of racialised power.

Background and Historical Context of Mamdani's Works

Born in 1946, Mahmood Mamdani is third generation Ugandan of Indian ancestry who was born in Mumbai and grew up in Kampala. He specialises in the study of African and international politics, colonialism and post-colonialism and the politics of knowledge production. His works explore the intersection between politics and culture, a comparative study of colonialism since 1452, the history of civil war and genocide in Africa, the Cold War and the War on Terror and the history and theory of human rights. Permeating several of his works is the view that instead of looking at Africa and comparing it with Europe, Mamdani sees Africa as separate, with its own historical path. Hence the injunction to think about how colonialism shaped the modern world and how it mutated into coloniality as a power structure to sustain differential power relations in knowledge production is an idea that can fairly be credited to Mamdani as one of the leading thinkers in the decolonisation of knowledge. Predominantly it was his work: *The Citizen and the Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism* which was first published in 1996 that arguably made a compelling impact on making us rethink about how modes of rule and legacies of difference are animated and how the rule of difference premised on race and ethnicity as distinction about settler and native remade the African people in the image of the colonial conqueror.

Citizen and Subject is a landmark work of Mamdani and historical narrative that explores the theoretical foundations of the modern African state and of contemporary conflict and most importantly how colonialism "left an indelible legacy in the present since it so powerfully politicised culture as a mode of rule." (Pillay 2018: 42). Mamdani provides an analysis of two related phenomena: how power is organised and how this formation of power tends to fragment resistance as a valuable compass with which to navigate how the rule of colonial difference was primarily about the management of difference in ways that mattered politically. Citizen and Subject is an important work that goes to the heart of the subject, examining its history, its current status and its future and his work carries intellectual fertility that dovetails neatly with the important work of scholars like Quijano (2000), Maldonado Torres (2007) and Dastile and Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013)– just to mention a few– who give an account of denial of humanity to those who became a target of colonisation through racial hierarchization of human species in accordance with invented ontological densities.

Even though thinking about colonialism and the colonial question is a subject that can be taken from different vantage points, Mamdani is one of the scholars who give a compelling analysis that cuts across disciplines and particularly unpacks how colonialism has been instrumental in the constitution of colonial subjects' difference. Arguing that race has been inherently an organising principle of colonialism, Mamdani – though using the case study of South Africa and Uganda, unpacks how differences among the colonised were codified as fixed and eternal as colonial powers tried to resolve the dilemma of stabilising their tiny minority alien rule over an indigenous majority population, otherwise referred to as the 'native rule'. In his all-important work, *The Citizen and the Subject*, Mamdani argues that culture was politicised as a mode of rule, wherein a "colonial power solidified the distinctions between the native and non-native, indigenous and foreigner, race and tribe, in way that transformed cultural difference into a form of difference that mattered politically." (Pillay, 2015: 190).

Mamdani shed light on the dual nature of the colonial state and its deliberate institutional segregation of societies into two distinctive categories, namely 'citizen' and 'subject'. The leitmotif in this characterisation of the 'bifurcated' colonial state was how law was used to distinguish between citizen and subject and how this determined their participation within the affairs of the state. Using this as a point of entry, Mamdani tracked indirect rule as it existed throughout colonial Africa arguing that institutional segregation was made possible through principles of civil law. This ostensibly legitimated a universe citizen who were deserving of rights and enjoyed direct rule and a world of colonised 'natives' who were governed by a set of customary laws. Because the latter were profiled as belonging to 'ethnicities' and were according to civil law, excluded from racial categorisation, they were ruled indirectly "by either reconstituting or imposing tribal leadership as the local extension of the colonial state" (Mamdani, 1996:

17). It can be argued that Mamdani is a key figure in thinking about some of the central questions debated today on the politics of knowledge production broadly and colonialism as a project of epistemic violence through which racialised, political and historical subjects were constituted in time and space. In his work, Mamdani never loses sight of the pervasiveness of the colonial project in drawing and reshaping African cultures to invent 'natives' hence explained it in these revealing words:

> Unlike what is commonly thought, native does not designate a condition that is original and authentic. Rather, [...], the native is the creation of the colonial state: colonised, the native is pinned down, localised, thrown out of civilisation as an outcast, confined to custom, and then defined as its product. (Mamdani 2013: 2-3).

The idea that before Africans were colonised and conquered by Europeans, their communities were marked by cultural heterogeneity is too well known to rehearse but what has been central in Mamdani's writing is a compelling case that the idea that Africans have always belonged to tribes is an oversimplification of very complex precolonial realities and it is ahistorical. Mamdani warns about reading the African past through the European gaze. Africans had very porous and flexible boundaries and ethnic identity did not determine group belonging. Political tribalism-the whole idea of defining group belonging by 'tribe' is a product of colonialism and apartheid. Tribes are a very modern construct, and tribalism only became a major problem in African societies when colonial governments linked Africans' access to limited resources such as land, housing and jobs to identification of individuals with a particular 'tribe'.

Mamdani's incisive intellectual works and thinking have demonstrated the predicament of postcolonial futures and their entanglement in the nature of colonial power from a historical perspective that sets out to prove that inheriting a European structure of governance lies at the heart of Africa's current problems. One of the main problems, according to Mamdani, is a glaring disconnect between the urban and the rural, a disconnect he maintains was reproduced from the days of colonial rule when urban and rural Africa was governed differently. This is where he fleshed out the idea that the colonial state in Africa was of a 'bifurcated' nature. In urban areas, there was direct rule based on modern law, rural areas were governed indirectly through more traditional authorities and laws based on customs. In urban areas people were treated as citizens, while in rural areas people were treated as subjects. In a nutshell, Mamdani follows this line of thought as he takes concerns with the crisis in the African state and evaluates how state power is structured, the institutional legacy of colonialism and the governing differences between urban and rural areas. He argues that in postcolonial Africa, the fundamental distinction between rural and urban rule that was characteristic of the colonial state has been reproduced. In contemporary Africa there is clear distinction between citizens and subjects, resulting in a fundamental sociopolitical split among social groups. More tellingly, Mamdani criticizes arguments that aim to blame the problematic state in Africa on the way the state has been governed by postcolonial regime. He does not deny that many African countries have been poorly governed during the postcolonial era, but he argues that this is a symptom, not a cause of the problematic nature of the African state. For Mamdani, the problem lies in the institutional design of the state, not in individual regimes and people have governed within that design. The problem is with the inherited colonial system, not with the way that postcolonial African governments have used it. Such diagnosis of the crisis of governance in Africa and the postcolonial state in Africa is equally shared by Falola (2022) in his befitting review of Ndlovu-Gatsheni's works when he notes that "postcolonial challenges have been identified with Africans because the institutions of colonialism are alive. Rather, they are active and regrettably still in operation."

Mamdani's work on late colonialism has not only been well received around the world, but his unique historic-institutional approach gave his perspective great weight that went against the grain of mainstream thinking on the crisis of the African state. He argues that the concept of ethnicity, the marker of identity that defines a group by common ancestral, social and cultural experience and its meaning in Africa today, is not something that is either traditional or natural. Rather it is something created by European colonisers who constructed the idea to help them rule their African subjects.

> Mamdani's incisive intellectual works and thinking have demonstrated the predicament of postcolonial futures and their entanglement in the nature of colonial power from a historical perspective that sets out to prove that inheriting a European structure of governance lies at the heart of Africa's current problems.

Mamdani's work made cutting-edge interventions that did not just spell out the problems facing modern Africa, but he also traced these through a historically grounded approach -to colonial rule which was a project of define and rule.

Mamdani's work revealed the mind-boggling reality of how the colonial subject of difference has been produced and reproduced in European thought. What he fleshed out renders transparent what is inherent in Enlightenment thought about bounded conceptions of belonging and that natives are different. This difference, Mamdani emphasises- was manufactured and instrumentalised in order to enable colonial power. This colonial power, Mamdani (2020) continues to argue, held itself to be the representative of the civilised world and the guardian of general principles of humanity. Mamdani's analysis that drills into the specificity of how colonialism was a project of define and rule can be read alongside a number of works that bring to the surface how Africans were constituted into subjects of difference by the Western discourse. For example, the debates on how identities of colonised subjects were constructed through 'invention of tradition' and the adaption of pre-colonial indigenous traditions, customs and institutions to suit forms of colonial governmentality such as 'indirect rule' neatly dovetails with Mamdani's characterisation of the colonial state and how it rooted Africans in difference. Although the scholarship on the invention of tradition and how it was used to politicise and produce identities of the colonised in Africa is fraught through with contestations over the extent to which the colonised retained a sense of agency, scholars such as Hobsbawn and Ranger (1983) have convincingly demonstrated how colonialism invented tradition in ways that distorted and altered the fluidity and dynamism that characterised pre-colonial Africa.

Mamdani's works is germane to various disciplines and efforts to understand the logic of modernity and the problematic paradigm of difference and the enduring coloniser's model of the world that has been normalised, universalised and reproduced in contemporary thoughts and ways of life. The paradigm of difference that colonial power hinged on is what then legitimates the denial of humanity of others as a major technology of domination which enabled pushing them out of the human family into a sub -human category and a zone of non-being (Fanon, 1968), otherwise termed 'colonization of being' by decolonial theorists. Decolonial theorists have produced enduring evidence that being human itself suffered a form of colonisation known as 'coloniality of being.' Fanon in particular elaborates that being black meant existing outside the bounds of being human in a context of colonial relations of power. According to Maldonado-Torres (2008: 104), blackness is "a relational term that represents an area of exclusion from the reign of humanity." For Mamdani, to establish the non-humanness of the colonised (African) other, a nuanced historical analysis is not only an ideal angle but most importantly a necessary one to understand how Euro-political modernity that underpinned colonialism herded Africans into a zone of non-being through the discourse of difference. Suitably interpreted, Mamdani's work can be read as a scholarly and empirically grounded exposition of the epistemic consequences of colonial relations of power that render transparent the totalising and universalising structure of the colonial project. This colonially

instituted modernity and its framework of thought that has been internalised and reproduced in ways that have discursively led to the constitution of the colonised as subjects across space and time.

The efforts of scholars like Mahmood Mamdani in inviting us to systematically counter the Western discourse of colonial difference and epistemic violence of coloniality are even manifest in his book *Define and Rule: Native as Political Identity* (2012). In this book, Mamdani's analysis acknowledges the productive insights he drew from Bala Usman – one of the leading contributors of the Ibadan School of Social History who in his efforts to push back against reading the African past through the European gaze, argued that the term ethnicity is inappropriate for understanding precolonial Nigerian social formations. Additionally, one finds present within Mamdani's analyses a critique of history by analogy, that if something happened in Europe, it is bound to happen in Africa. Mamdani's works can be read alongside Mudimbe's (1988) work challenges the superiority and hegemonic tendencies of Western epistemologies that have turned a blind eye to the diversity of ways of reading and interpreting social experiences. In his book *The Invention of Africa* (1988), Mudimbe warns scholars within the field of African studies on the use of categories and conceptual systems that are anchored on the Western epistemology as what constitutes valid and legitimate knowledge. He notes:

> Even the most explicitly "Afrocentric" descriptions, models of analysis explicitly or implicitly, knowingly or unknowingly refer to the same order. Does this mean that African *Weltanschauungen* and African traditional systems of thought are unthinkable and cannot be made explicit within the framework of their own rationality? My own claim is that thus far the ways in which they have been evaluated and the means used to explain them relate to theories and methods whose constraints, rules, and systems of operation suppose a non-African epistemological locus...What does this mean for the field of African studies? (1988: X)

If read alongside Mudimbe's interventions, Mamdani's works are well thought out insights that pushes to visibility enduring evidence that can serve as an arsenal to push back against the over-reliance on Western epistemologies in the context of contemporary Africa that is grappling with manifestations of coloniality. There is burgeoning scholarship whose overarching preoccupations are that of disentangling and liberating knowledge from existing asymmetries in global knowledge production and this scholarship has tabled various propositions of drawing from a broad spectrum of epistemological traditions and contextual realities to rescue the knowledge systems that have been relegated to the margins. This is the category to which Mamdani belongs as he pushes the decolonial agenda into new and promising directions. It is through Mamdani's works that we mainly learn about how modernity makes subjects. Mamdani has been able to sharply focus on the practices by which political modernity constitute subjects, with a particular focus on colonialism and how it produced and reproduced the colonised as non-beings to authorise and normalise their colonial subjugation. Mamdani's position on colonialism places him firmly within a terrain of scholars that explain the modus operandi of coloniality and its pervasiveness in contemporary thoughts and ways of life like Ngugi wa Thiong' o (2012: 39) who has this to say:

> The colonial process dislocates the traveller's mind from the place he or she already knows to a foreign starting point even with the body still remaining in his or her homeland. It is a process of continuous alienation from the base, a continuous process of looking at oneself from the outside of self or with the lenses of a stranger. One may end up identifying with the foreign base as the starting point towards self, that is from another self towards one-self, rather than the local being the starting point, from self to other selves.

Ngugi's interventions brought into sharp focus how colonialism invaded the mental universe. Mamdani's work clears the way for making conversations about colonialism, coloniality and decoloniality that even though they have been happening for a long time, have now received renewed resurgence as scholars are challenged to rethink their scholarship and relearn histories of the colonised world outside the normative bounds of modernity and its founding premises and practices.

Conclusion

This paper has attempted to show how Mahmood Mamdani has engaged in an intellectual labour of giving us the backstory– that which is behind what is apparent by insisting on attending to the critical questions of what was colonial rule in order to disrupt the totalising hold of Euro-modernist epistemologies in knowledge production. Without necessarily being exhaustive of his works, a selected focus on some of his cutting-edge scholarly works gives an ideal perspective from which to mount efforts of epistemic thoughts about manifestations of coloniality in knowledge production. The relevance of Mamdani's works lies in his sustained exposition of the anatomy and operations of the colonial project which in every way was written continually by producing and reproducing the colonised as different and fit for colonial domination. Reading Mamdani's works through the lens of decoloniality opens a window of opportunity to link his contributions to the politics of knowledge production. At the level of knowledge production, Mamdani is unrelenting in challenging scholars to rethink their scholarship and question the power relations embedded in the universalising structure of European thought and colonisation whose impact is not confined to history. His works add a layer of contribution to decoloniality which has become necessary in unlearning some of the ideas that have been inadvertently produced in ways that pushes to the margin's diverse ways of reading and interpreting experiences that fall outside Eurocentric rationalist framework of knowledge.

References

Dastile, N. P. and Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S., 2013. Power, Knowledge and Being: Decolonial Combative Discourse as a Survival Kit for Pan-Africanists in the 21st Century. Alternation: *Interdisciplinary Journal for the Study of Arts and Humanities in Southern Africa*, 20(1): 105-134.

Grosfoguel, R., 2007. The Epistemic Decolonial Turn: Beyond Political-Economy Paradigms. *Cultural Studies*, 21(2/3): 203-246.

Hoagland, S. L., 2009. *Giving Testimony and The Coloniality of Knowledge*. [Online] Available at http://www.cavehill.uwi.edu/fhe/histphil/chips/archives/2009/docs/Hoagland 2009.aspx

Hobsbawm, E. and Ranger, T., 1983. *The Invention of Tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Maldonado-Torres, N., 2007. On Coloniality of Being: Contributions to the Development of a Concept. *Cultural Studies,* 21 (2-3): 240-270.

Mamdani, M., 2013. *Define and Rule: Native as Political Identity.* Johannesburg: Wits University Press

Mamdani, M., 1996. *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the legacy of Late Colonialism.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Mudimbe, V. Y., 1994. *The Idea of Africa*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S. J., 2013b. *Coloniality of Power in Postcolonial Africa: Myths of Decolonisation.* Dakar: CODESRIA Books.

Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S. J., 2013a *Empire, Global Coloniality and African Subjectivity.* New York, Oxford: Berghahn Books

Ngugi wa Thiong'o, 2009a. *Re-Membering Africa*. Nairobi, Kampala/ Dar es Salaam: East African Educational Publishers Ltd

Ngugi wa Thiong'o. 1986. *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature*. Oxford: James Currey.

Pillay, S., 2018. Thinking the State from Africa: Political Theory, Eurocentrism and Concrete Politics. *Politikon*, 45(1):32-47.

Quijano, A., 2007. Coloniality and Modernity/Rationality. *Cultural Studies*, 21(2-3): 168-178.

Quijano, A., 2008. Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Social Classification. In M. Moraña, E. Dusserl, and A. C. Jáuregui (eds). *Coloniality at large: Latin American and the postcolonial debate.* (pp. 181-224). Durham, London: Duke University Press.

Anuski Serrano / Shutterstock.com

Rethinking Moses Òkè on the Recolonisation Project

By David A. Oyedola

Abstract

The study engages Òkè's submission 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 recolonisation*. It presents concise discussions on Òkè's recolonisation project (RP) – both for and against. It argues that Òkè and the commentators alike, i.e. the defenders and the critics, have failed to pay attention to the fact that Òkè's RP does not presuppose a complete mockery of decolonisation campaign. Nevertheless, Òkè can be seen in the light of his consistency in maintaining the same fundamental principles that made him to reject decolonisation, and propose recolonisation as the alternative. This made Òkè to concede that recolonisation is possible. The study employs the methods of conceptual analysis and philosophical argumentation.

Key words: Colonialism, Decolonisation, Recolonisation, Intercultural contact, Cultural past

Introduction

This study analyses why the defenders of decolonisation could regard Òkè's fear that "a people that continually look back to its past that failed them, and could not sustain them for present salvation, must change their attitude to that past or hold themselves ready for eventual recolonisation," (2006: 340) as threat to the decolonisation campaign. It connects the attitudes shown by some scholars toward decolonisation with how colonialism is depicted to have worked against the interest of Africa. This does not preclude the ways in which scholars such as Fálolá, Táíwò, and Masolo have raised their concerns regarding Òkè's recolonisation as a viable project. The similarities in the dispositions of scholars regarding how neo-colonial structures were erected to stop the advancement of Africa

indicate a connection with how Appiah has asked that colonialism be eschewed from the orientation of Africa because of the negative implications it might have on the mindset of future Africans. Nevertheless, the perspectives of the defenders and the critics of Òkè on recolonisation have failed to pay attention to the fact that his idea of recolonisation does not make a complete mockery of decolonisation. He only points to the fact that recolonisation is a possibility when people refuse to change their attitude to that past.

On Decolonisation: Òkè and Others in Perspective

The quest to decolonise Africa has remained visible in the yearnings against the colonial relationship which the West shares with Africa. The problem of identity that is peculiarly African commenced with how colonialism has undermined the African psyche. Scholars and statesmen such as Wiredu, Bódúnrìn, Mákindé, Nkrumah, Senghor, and Nyerere have expressed their disaffections for the ascription of irrational status to philosophical activity in Africa. This got to its peak when Kaphagawani (1986: 86) re-introduced it, and Serequeberhan concludes that "given the violence of Africa's encounter with Europe, the dark continent was introduced into the modern world" (1998: 234). There has not been any agreement among scholars if this view prompted the yearnings for decolonisation.

Similarly, there has not been sincere agreement among scholars on how to classify colonialism because of the different interpretations of its impact. The interpretation of Serequeberhan on how violence is attached to the calls against colonialism appears as if wrong dispositions against it cannot be mitigated. He says that "Europe is found wanting on its own terms by the very criteria it uses to externally evaluate humanity of Africa as uncivilized" (1998: 235). Kaphagawani calls what necessitated such as colonialism arising from anthropology. It is known by the "attempt to falsify an anthropological thesis, Levy Bruhlian thesis in particular, which denied Africans, south of Sahara, properties of ratiocination and its cognates due to the apparent primitiveness of these people's mentality" (1998: 86). It is quite understandable why Serequeberhan's adoption of *the violence of Africa's encounter with Europe*, can be premised on Levy Bruhl's anthropological description of the African psyche as primitive. This was caused by "the necessity to provide a social base for facilitating control over the colonised society" (Ọlọruntimẹhin, 2007: 15).

Appiah admits that colonialism is what "most outsiders see as something which could be an obvious basis for resentment than the experience of a colonised people forced to accept the swaggering presence of the coloniser" (1992: 7). This refers to a sense that the colonisers overrate the extent of their cultural penetration which is consistent with a longing for freedom, but it does not entail the failure of self-confidence that lead to alienation. As Ọlọruntimẹhin opines, colonialism refers to "the educational systems of most African States which are part of the heritage of the colonial system; and not just that, colonialism led to calls to domesticate our scholarship" (2007: 15). The attempt to decolonize and domesticate the African scholarship has met with obstacles, such as the difference in languages and cultural beliefs. In Cabral's view, colonialism is a circumstance which makes it

> "very easy for the foreigner to impose his domination on a people. But it also teaches us that whatever may be the material aspects of this domination, it can be maintained only by the organised repression of the cultural life of the people concerned. Implantation of foreign domination can be assured definitively only by physical liquidation of a significant part of the dominated population" (1998: 260).

As Masolo presents it, colonialism is the attempt to "tie the African intellectual practice down in order not to break away from its Western conditioning" (1994: 147). Colonialism became the "attitude of the West that intended to annihilate black culture and civilization. The Western attitude started as a mere cultural bias, supported by a racist orthodox Biblical ideology. This gradually grew into a formidable two-pronged historical reality: slavery and slave trade, and academic expressions" (1994: 3). He sees colonialism as "what is judged overwhelmingly for the ills associated with it" (1997: 285). But Masolo fails to agree with Táíwò, that "colonialism opposes traditional chieftaincy to embrace modern governance. Colonialism messes with this traditional chieftaincy" (2021: 53-54). The African response to colonialism as

> "... 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 recolonisation."

the attempt to resolve the turmoil caused by epochal consequences of the twin developments of abolition of slavery and European slave trade marked the commitment to "the rejuvenation of African agency and to making Africa able to govern itself and move in tandem with the world in humanity's march of progress; and the template from which great future was to be fashioned was forged from modernity" (2021: 55-56).

One thing which is common to the positions on colonialism is the presence of a functional ideological orientation coming from the West. This caused a reaction: a reaction which made decolonisation to call for a shift in paradigm. This led to what Manthalu calls the concern of decolonisation, which is "marginalisation of African perspectives" (2023: 127). The other is Masolo's admission that colonialism was not quite simplistic. This dates, as far back as the time of slavery in the sixteenth century, and realized itself in the defence of African humanity in a type of apology for Africa (1994: 11). What made colonialism to thrive is the dichotomy between "a violent, racist, expansionist, and imperialist Europe, on the one hand, and a powerlessly resistant and *reactionist* Africa, on the other. It is a tough, individualistic, competitive, violent, and materialist European civilisation armed with science and technology, was at war against a sweet and human but weak African civilisation" (1994: 11). He targets the possibility: that any attempt to decolonize might not resolve half of the problems created by colonialism. Táíwò and Appiah agree with Masolo on this. But in Manthalu's words, "much of the decolonisation discourse has focused on uncovering the subtlety of forms/ impact of coloniality in Africa, and the necessity for decolonised education in Africa" (2023: 127).

Commentators on Òkè have drawn implications from how decolonisation has been represented. What these scholars presented on colonialism serves as the precursor to decolonisation. Òkè sees colonialism as the basis for analysing decolonisation. His idea of colonialism is "when the foreigners came to find an environment conducive to serve their own interests, with the active cooperation of Africa" (2002: 39). Africa was forced to build development on the Western method. But on the relevance of Rodney, Karim Hirji affirms that "Africa was deliberately exploited and underdeveloped by the European colonial regimes" (2017: 2). This necessitated the neo-colonial condition of Africa. Òkè feels different. He posits that the "intercultural contact with colonial culture has killed the traditional culture; and that whatever the content of the African cultural past could be, they are too obsolete to meet the demands of a *contemporary scientific world*" (2006: 332). This uses global politics, governance, and economic might as a threat to Africa's development. The clarification made by Oyedola points to an apparent displeasure that "the underdeveloped condition of Africa has been taken advantage of" (2016: 11).

Òkè's point is convincing, but we must ask, what are the reasons we can deduce from his view regarding the nature of colonialism? *One*, the intercultural contact with colonial culture has killed traditional culture. This can be emphasized in two ways: (i) Masolo points to the fact that a violent, racist, expansionist, and imperialist Europe has indirectly killed the African traditional culture through the direct and indirect rules, missionary works, education, science, and sowing the seed of discord into the Africa way of life. And (ii), Africans no longer believe in their respective traditional past as events have overturned the need for a return to such traditional past.

Two, there may not be anything like African cultural past to return to. The "need to be futuristic is more viable than looking back to a largely unhelpful past about which we now barely know the truth" (Òkè, 2006: 340). Masolo calls what Africa needs as post-colonial search for distinct identity. Fálolá and Appiah call it decolonisation. And Òkè fears that they will end in "eventual recolonisation" (2006: 340). The views are different, but scholars have made a Negritudist plea to return to the cultural past. The Negritudist plea, which as Senghor says, is "a kind of a disagreement which Senghor made with Europe but not with its values any longer, with the exception of capitalism" (1998: 441). However, no one currently understands the content of the cultural past. Advancement in science and technology has dealt a blow to whatever may be left regarding the African traditional past. And three, Òkè admits that whatever the content of the African cultural past could be, it is too obsolete to meet the demands of a contemporary scientific world.

Moses Òkè on Recolonisation: The View of Commentators

Different commentators have argued on Òkè's adoption of recolonisation. His avowed displeasure with decolonisation has set it backward. He identified some reasons, but there is need to commence the discussion from the threat which neo-colonialism poses for its sustenance. The views of those who rejected and supported Òkè will be analysed.

The neo-colonial brand of the African life is appropriately presented by Fálolá, whose perspective fails to provide any form of support for Òkè. He opines that "as power was being transferred to Africans, the European powers were putting in place a series of policies to protect themselves and to secure a transition from the exercise of power based on direct control to the indirect exercise of power known as neo-colonialism. Colonial legacies became a feature of the contemporary era" (2002: xxvi). The psychological aspect of African culture was withdrawn. What the political independence achieved for Africa is a partial control. He seems to have moved beyond this argument, asking to "set appropriate boundaries to curtail the West" (2007: 25). This is the next thing to do. Africa is faced with a robust approach: we need to drift from the European modernity, imposed by colonialism, to the American modernism (2007: 28). The problem Africa is now facing is how to reconceptualise modernity, or how to interrogate modernity. Colonial modernity and 'civilisation' delivered something else for Africa. They frustrate the advancement of decolonisation (2007: 37).

Fálolá's sympathy to the African condition fails to create any form of support for Òkè. In Fálolá's words, "as much as colonialism crumbled because nationalism intensified, it became imperative for colonialism to wither. Even with the advent of decolonisation, it becomes the transfer of power to Africa" (2002: xvi), just as colonialism "made Africa to serve the economic interests of Europe" (2002: xxii). Through this, Europe sabotaged the political systems of the African colonies. As a form of decolonisation, "revolt was the choice of those who wanted improved opportunities. The experience of colonial exploitation united Africans, as Africans began to talk as if they had a common destiny" (2002: xxii-xxiii). At some point, neo-colonialism came to an end, paving way for decolonisation. The contents of decolonisation are the demands for reforms, Africanism, and transfer of power (2002: xxiv-xxvi). As Fálolá says, what forms the content of decolonisation did not stop with the transfer of power back to Africans, but also involve an analysis of the neo-colonial activities of Europe. This is called *beyond colonial rule* (2002: xxvi). Kaphagawani calls it *the process of decolonisation, mental as well as physical, which led to post-colonial quest for an African identity* (1998: 87). The problem of the post-colonial quest for identity becomes what is facing Africa.

Masolo analyses the fate of decolonisation while attempting to support Òkè. He states that, "for quite good reasons, one of the dominant themes of postcolonial theory is the issue of identity" (1997: 283), and that "a number of factors make it difficult to assess what are to be the meaning and implications of a long period of domination of one society by another, while the factors can include the consideration of who judges such meaning and implications" (1997: 283). He submits that "post-colonialism defines itself in the shadow of the colonial rule, from which it is inseparable" (1997: 285). If colonialism has been subdued, and decolonisation becomes the attempt to return power back to Africans, the question is, how can "the overthrow of

colonialism be replaced with another, liberated and assuredly, authentic identity?" (1997: 285) Masolo responds that "so strong is the pull toward the *objectivity of this identity* that most of those who speak of Africa from this emancipatory perspective think of it only as a solid rock which has withstood all the storms of history except colonialism" (1997: 285). The mechanism for survival seems to be at play in the quest for a distinct identity, and to seek for how post-coloniality does not recapture the African mind. But Masolo says that "if an African identity is to empower us, what is required is not so much that we throw out falsehood but that we acknowledge, first of all, that race and history and metaphysics do not enforce our identity" (1997: 298). Biakolo's way of looking at the connection between the postcolonial search for a distinct African identity and decolonisation is that "the historical course of the apprehension of the *Other* in Western thought from classical times until the consolidation of the African image in the power-knowledge system of colonialism and post-colonial period. This reveals an ingenuity which goes further to confirm the political behind the western construction of the cultural paradigm of the *Other*" (1998: 1). Consequently, the image of Africa as West sees it is "brutish, ignorant, idle, crafty, treacherous, bloody, thievish, mistrustful, superstitious, savage, and barbaric which was current in the colonies in the eighteenth century (1998: 2). This is an express cultural frame of reference. This means that "the basis of the distinctions is hardly more than ethnocentric convention" (1998: 12).

The view of Staden that "cultural imperialist thesis is related to the theories of post-colonialism is a simplified view of cultural imperialism, expressing the imposition of a single, homogenous foreign culture on local or marginalized cultures" (1998: 21). This supports Òkè that "the root cause of the present crisis in Africa is the colonialists' denial of the African humanity" (2006: 334). The postcolonial search for an authentic African identity can be understood in relation to the very specific cultural context, or it is located in the very specific cultural context with which philosophy is identifiable with the African way of life.

Whither Decolonisation: Towards Recolonisation

In order to unravel how the political actors have made decolonisation impossible, Oyedola and Oyedola argues that, "one common reason for Òkè's cynicism towards the resuscitation of African cultural heritage is because the foundation of African cultural heritage could be so weak to resist the dominance of the colonialist culture. Since this is so, it is not likely going to be helpful to solve the problems of Africa, let alone moving Africa forward" (2015: 97). It is pointed out that Òkè's view of the postcolonial search for a distinct African identity through the traditional values, such as communalism and de-monetisation are too obsolete to be reconciled with the modern cultures (2006: 334). Given the failure of the indigenous cultural arrangements to repel the attack on African cultures, there is no reason whatsoever to think that they will be able to bail the continent out of its present predicament (2006: 338).

The questions which are central are: what is this indigenous cultural arrangement? What attack are they to repel? And what predicament is so present about the African continent? Òkè responds to the first question that Africa had culture. The culture refers to the traditional values of demonetisation and de-centralized traditional African political system. In the new world order, Òkè admits that "they are, at best, abandoned" (2006: 337). The response to the second question can be divided into two ways: (i) he was reluctant to blame the problems which face African development on colonialism. And (ii), "the lazy and corrupt are responsible for African problems. We do not need to return to the African traditional past, but we need to change our attitudes toward the African society for the better" (2006: 341). A return to the African traditional past will be counter-productive (Oyedola & Oyedola, 2015: 98). And the response to the third question is that there was a time when slavery was the only predicament of Africa. Colonialism later came, but became another predicament.

What these responses have generated is the lack of connection between decolonisation and colonialism. This is where Buttner's view is helpful. The history of imperialism shows that "the same time the history of the West's covert aggression against the African peoples, political slogans and special theories on Africa changed like chameleons., and they range from the justification of colonial exploitation on the grounds of so-called racial superiority to the present watchword of partnership" (1985: 169). As Buttner says, it

is not difficult to see that the achievements of classical bourgeois philosophy with its humanist foundations, and that the political slogan of equality, freedom, and brotherhood were incompatible with the justification of colonial conquest (1985: 170). There is a post-colonial aggression towards Africa. The intention of the neo-colonial aggression has been assessed. The basis, as Fáshínà posits, is contained in the inner nature of colonialism. Here, the essential connection of colonialism with capitalism is concealed (1985: 188). What makes Fáshínà's submission helpful is that "colonial relations are relations of exploitation" (1985: 188). What would be the orientation of neo-colonialists toward the post-colonial search for an authentic African identity? Among other things to watch out for will be the lack of peaceful coexistence between the African belief system and the negative impacts which foreign languages will continue to have on Africans. This will lead to the continual dehumanization of Africa.

For Iweriebor,

> "psychological colonisation became the process by which the colonisers attempted to create colonized societies and peoples who were politically disempowered, culturally defeated, and programmed to feel inferior, and deserving of domination. This entailed assaulting the key cultural props and belief systems of the colonised people and representing them as inherently inferior; and that the consequence of the successful inculcation of psychological colonisation was the creation of peoples that are disoriented, insecure, controllable, and totally dependent on the dominators for approval and advancement" (2002: 465).

This leads to Africans running to the West for shelter. Gyekye admits that "a mentality which almost invariably leads many Africans to prefer European practices and institutions, even if a closer look might suggest that the equivalent African thing is of comparable worth" (2004: 34). The ways to achieve this is through corruption: by stealing the money in their nation's treasury to purchase a life of luxury in Europe. These are pointers to why decolonisation seems impossible to attain.

Maringe differs because, "the call for decolonisation of higher education has been increasing in many post-colonial nations across the world" (2023: 1). But

> "The postcolonial search for an authentic African identity can be understood in relation to the very specific cultural context, or it is located in the very specific cultural context with which philosophy is identifiable with the African way of life."

when asked what decolonisation means, he says that "it is to Africanise the curriculum; to remove all colonial vestiges and symbols from education; to centralize the use of African languages as official languages of communication and as the medium of instruction; to creating pedagogic and epistemic justice, and to promoting inclusivity in education" (2023: 11). This is not an extremist position, but it sounds unachievable since many of the reasons why decolonisation is impossible come from the disposition of Africa against Africa. This reason can be hinged on Òkè: "it may not be an idle speculation to say that without slavery and colonialism, the Europeans through normal cultural interactions would still have dominated Africa. The basis for this view is in the regular ways of Africans as demonstrated in the greed of the leaders. Prior to the European incursion, Africans were already enslaving and dehumanising their peoples; and that the foreigners came to find an environment conducive to serve their self-interests, with the active cooperation or connivance of the people" (2006: 339).

Táíwò's contribution to the debate on decolonisation is notable. In his view, we must confront the absence

of Africa from the history of the philosophical traditions (analytic and phenomenological) because, no thanks to colonialism and Christianisation, through which Africa became the inheritor and perpetrators of these heritages (1998: 4). Another problem identified by Táíwò is how the West has presented itself as the embodiment and inventor of the *universal*. As Táíwò notes, "we must protest even more loudly that its universal is so peculiar, and that its' global is local; the West, in constructing the universal, has merely puffed itself up and invited the rest of humanity to be complicit in this historical swindle" (1998: 4). Many issues were put up together forming the root cause of colonialism and neo-colonialism, such that decolonization is made impossible. One, colonialism has its essential connection with capitalism. Two, the achievements of classical bourgeois philosophy with its humanist foundations and the political slogan of equality, freedom, and brotherhood were incompatible with the justification of colonial conquest and neo-colonial exploitations. This culminates in the emergence of the neo-colonial aggression towards Africa. Three, the West has historically swindled Africa. And four "the imperative of Europe's industrial production and capitalist economic calculations could not tolerate relations of equality and equal exchange with African societies" (Iweriebor, 2002: 5). This mindset still persists today.

There are many pointers as to why decolonisation is impossible: one, "while attempting to disempower Africa, and also program them to accept domination, what the coloniser did was to falsify African history. This is entrenched in the view that Africa had no history or more specifically, that it had no societies with organized political and cultural systems and developed economies and technologies; and that the African societies had no arts, culture, and science; and that in Western thought, Africa had no organized existence called civilisation" (Iweriebor, 2002: 469-70). In another dimension, the colonial education systems formed the second major mechanism used in colonising the psyche of Africa (Iweriebor, 2002: 471). This is because "Africans saw colonial education as an avenue for social and occupational advancement in a novel situation. The European school system became powerful mechanism through which the psychology of colonialism was implanted in the mindset of Africa" (2002: 471). Many of the things previously known with Africa were demonised and subjected to ridicule. This has not been lifted out of the mind of an average African. Those who received Western education became professionals, who either used the power of language to propel others to embrace the Western education, preached Christian ideals as the perfect way, taught European history as African history, enforced democracy, told the teeming African youth to move to Europe for education, and embrace European languages as official means of communication. African languages were disempowered, the postcolonial mass media became the real deal, religious imperialism became rampant, residential segregation were preached, and today, Africa embraced the dialectics of dependence on the Western life.

Finally, with all of the current issues in the world order pointing toward negativity, how will decolonisation ease the African mind off the neo-colonial chain? How will an African way of life be imprinted on it? As Africans are attempting to decolonise, Europeans are also decolonising. The African decolonisation takes place using the European ideological structure. But the European urge for decolonisation is a continuous and

> "Recolonisation is "the contemporary African reality, which points to the majority of the Africans, who have either forgotten their cultural roots, but have assimilated foreign cultures and ideas"

deliberate attempt to perpetuate neo-colonial imprisonment of the African mind. Adéjùmọ́bí concedes that "neo-colonialism continues to assume significance in light of all the former colonists' method of control" (2002: 491). Notably, if Barry Hallen's view that "the characterisation of Africa's pre-colonial indigenous cultures as significantly ahistorical in character has been dismissed as patently false" (2002: 3), becomes admissible, where are we to go from there? As Hallen posits, "Africans are said to live in a world that is fundamentally symbiotic and ritualized in character," (2002: 14). They believe such character in the secret. What prompts decolonisation is that "a number of philosophers in Africa contend that there are elements to African cognition that are sufficiently distinctive to somehow set it apart" (2002: 35). It is this disposition which seems to make many to believe that decolonisation is achievable. The problems which stand against the possibility of decolonisation are enormous.

Òkè raised concerns regarding decolonisation. Despite the step-by-step analyses made by Serequeberhan, Masolo, and Fálolá in accepting the reality of decolonisation, Òkè differs. The reasons for tilting toward recolonisation are that, the present African situation "can best be described as the crisis of post-colonial Africa. Lagging behind, as it were, on all developmental fronts, Africa is regarded by many as the world's tragedy. A common explanation for this situation is that the indigenous culture was imposed upon Africa by alien colonialist culture leading to a confused cultural amalgam in which the Western conceptions of the good have been imposed upon African thought and conduct" (2006: 332). Also, that "the African history is a depressing tale of dispossession and impoverishment; most Africans are very deeply concerned about how to halt the fast degeneration of the human condition and how to bring about some worthwhile improvement" (2006: 333). The fears are responsible for making recolonisation a huge possibility. If we are to be sincere, how can there be *decolonisation* when what was intended to be decolonised lives as a form of cultural amalgam in the activities of the people? The people are entirely colonised. Their capacity to iron out critical issues is to be conducted by using the Western paradigm. The people see the provisions of modernisation and science as universal. They see it as the life to be lived. As Òkè admits, "Africa is denied the right to be itself" (2006: 335). Decolonisation can only take place when the African way of life is, in entirety, in the hands of Africa. Kanyandago admits that "the phenomenon of dehumanising Africans and the attitudes that go with it are not limited to history; they persist in the way the West is relating with Africa" (2003: 41).

Òkè (2006: 335) agrees with Kanyandago (2003: 44) that the age long process of deculturation has consequences. He gave reasons why the attempts made to decolonize may not work. One, colonialism has been thoroughly imperialistic, such that Africa has not been able to rise above their history of colonisation (2006: 337). And two, the past seems to be a wrong direction in which to seek the way forward for Africa. The failure of traditional institutions to withstand the onslaught of slavery and the threat of direct colonialism rejects its viability to cope with the complex issues of governance and social co-existence in this age of globalisation. And that the paradigms on which the demolished traditional institutions stood are no longer compatible with the new world order (2006: 337). Recolonisation is a yoke; it is difficult to run away from it. The process for recolonisation has been completed by Africa itself. The emphasis is that "the structures that we have at present, which are products of the amalgam of indigenous African cultures, our colonial experiences, and foreign religious impacts are inherently generative of greed and consumption rather than production" (2006: 340).

Recolonisation is "the contemporary African reality, which points to the majority of the Africans, who have either forgotten their cultural roots, but have assimilated foreign cultures and ideas" (2006: 334). If we are to avoid recolonisation, "we need to be more futuristic than looking back to a largely unhelpful past about which we now barely know the truth. It has to be emphasized that nostalgia is always more often than not decadent. A people that continually look back to its past that failed them then, and could not sustain them for present salvation, must either change their attitude to that past or hold themselves ready for eventual recolonisation" (2006: 340). From Òkè's view, "Africa has been decultured: a situation where Africans have eventually internalized the inferior position to which they are constantly reduced" (2006: 335).

Conclusion

A benign consideration of decolonisation takes into consideration all that has been perpetrated between the West and Africa. Even at the reality of decolonisation, many African leaders would not give decolonisation a chance given their inhumane economic policies. It is one thing to be theoretical about it, it is another to see the practicality as quite possible. It is a waste of time if decolonisation is not united in its theoretical and practical possibilities.

It may not be theoretically easy to adopt Òkè's submission that "the intercultural contact with colonial culture has killed traditional culture. Hence, there may not be anything like African cultural past to return to. And that whatever the content of the African cultural past could be, they are too obsolete to meet the demands of a contemporary scientific world" (2006: 336). The attempt to dismiss this position will be a daunting task. African nations put up different economic muscles even against themselves. The character of leaders in modern day Africa contradicts decolonisation. Òkè is not sympathetic towards this type of African condition, but admits that "given the failure of our indigenous cultural arrangements to repel the attack of other countries in the past, there is no reason whatsoever to think that they will be able to bail the continent out of its present predicament" (2006: 338). The pragmatic currency of the claim makes it very difficult to detest its utility.

References

Adéjùmọ̀bí, S., 2002. Neocolonialism. In Toyin Fálolá (ed.) *Africa: The End of Colonial Rule: Nationalism and Decolonisation*. (pp. 483-494). North Carolina: Carolina Academic Press.

Appiah, K., 1992. The Invention of Africa. In Kwame Appiah (ed.) *In My Father's House: Africa in the Philosophy of Culture.* (pp. 3-27). New York: Oxford University Press.

Biakolo, E., 1998. Categories of Cross-cultural Cognition and the African Condition. In Coetzee, P., & Roux, A.P.J. (eds.) *The African Philosophy Reader.* (pp. 1-14). New York: Routledge.

Buttner, K., 1985. 'Historico-Philosophical Aspects of Different Concepts of Colonialism. In Bódúnrìn, P.O. (ed.), *Philosophy in Africa: Trends and Perspectives.* (pp. 169-184). Ile-Ife: University of Ife Press.

Cabral, A., 1998. National Liberation and Culture: A Return to the Source. In Eze, E.C. (ed.) *African Philosophy: An Anthology.* (pp. 260-266). Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers Ltd.

Fálolá, T., 2002. Introduction. In Fálolá, T. (ed.), Africa: *The End of Colonial Rule, Nationalism and Decolonisation.* (pp. xx-xvi). North Carolina: Carolina Academic Press.

Fálolá, T., 2007. Nationalizing Africa, Culturalizing the West, and Reformulating the Humanities in Africa. In Akínrìnádé, Ş., Fáshínà, O., Ògúngbilé, D., & Fámákinwá, J.O. (eds.) *Rethinking the Humanities in Africa.* (pp. 25-44). Ile-Ife: Obáfémi Awólówò University Cedar Publications.

Fáshínà, Q., 1985. 'Response to "Historico-Philosophical Aspects of Different Conceptions of Colonialism" by Buttner. In Bódúnrìn, P.O. (ed.) *Philosophy in Africa: Trends and Perspectives.* (pp. 185-189). Ile-Ife: University of Ife Press.

Gyekye, K., 2004. *The Unexamined Life: Philosophy and the African Experience.* (pp. 20-44). Legon, Ghana: Sankofa Publishing Company.

Hallen, B., 2002. *A Short History of African Philosophy.* (pp. 1-12). Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

Hirji, K., 2017. *The Enduring Relevance of Walter Rodney's How Europe Underdeveloped Africa.* (pp. 1-15). Wakefield, Quebec: Daraja Press.

Iweriebor, E.E., 2002. The Psychology of Colonialism. In Fálolá, T. (ed.) *Africa: The End of Colonial Rule: Nationalism and Decolonisation.* (pp. 463-482). North Carolina: Carolina Academic Press.

Iweriebor, E.E., 2002. Trends and Patterns in African Nationalism. In Fálolá, T. (ed.) *Africa: The End of Colonial Rule: Nationalism and Decolonisation.* (pp. 3-28). North Carolina: Carolina Academic Press.

Kaphagawani, D.N., 1998. What is African Philosophy? In Coetzee, P. & Roux, A.P.J. (eds.) *The African Philosophy Reader.* (pp. 86-98). London: Routledge.

Kanyandago, P., 2003. Rejection of the African Humanity: Search for Cultural Re-appropriation. In Fálaiyè, M. (ed.), *African Spirit and Black Nationalism: A Discourse in African American Studies*. (pp. 35-48). Lagos: Foresight Press.

Manthalu, C.H., 2023. From the Ideal to Non-Ideal: Towards Decolonised Higher Education in Africa. In Maringe, F. (ed.) *Colonisation and Epistemic Injustice in Higher Education: Precursors to Decolonisation.* (pp. 126-143). New York: Routledge.

Maringe, F., 2023. The Conceptual 'Jungle' of the Decolonisation of Higher Education: Contestations, Contradictions, and Opportunities. In Maringe, F. (ed.) *Colonization and Epistemic Injustice in Higher Education: Precursors to Decolonisation.* (pp. 1-22). New York: Routledge.

Masolo, D.A., 1997. African Philosophy and the Postcolonial: Some Misleading Abstractions about Identity. In Eze, E.C. (ed.) *Postcolonial African Philosophy: A Critical Reader.* (pp. 283-300). Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers Inc.

Masolo, D.A., 1994. Excavating Africa in Western Discourse. In Masolo, D.A. (ed.) *African Philosophy in Search of Identity.* (pp. 147-193). Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Masolo, D.A., 1994. Logocentrism and Emotivism: Two Systems in Struggle for Control of Identity. In Masolo, D.A. (ed.) *African Philosophy in Search of Identity.* (pp. 1-45). Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Òkè, M., 2006. Cultural Nostalgia: A Philosophical Critique of Appeals to the Past in Theories of Re-Making Africa. (pp. 332-343). *Nordic Journal of African Studies*, 15.3

Òkè, M., 2002. Modeling the Contemporary African Philosopher: Kwasi Wiredu in Focus. In Qládípọ, O. (ed.) *The Third Way in African Philosophy: Essays in Honour of Kwasi Wiredu*. (pp. 35-46). Ibadan: Hope Publications.

Olúsẹgun, O., 2004. Introduction. In Fádàhùnsì, A. & Olúṣẹgun Ọ. (eds.), *Philosophy and the African Prospect: Selected Essays of Professor J. Olúbí Ṣódípó on Philosophy, Culture and Society.* (pp. 7-26). Ìbàdàn: Hope Publications.

Ọlọruntimẹhin, Ọ., 2007. Rethinking Humanities Scholarship in Africa. In Akínrìnádé, Ṣ., Fáshínà, O., Ògúngbilé, D., & Fámákinwá, J.O. (eds.) *Rethinking the Humanities in Africa*. (pp. 3-24). Ile-Ife: Obáfémi Awólówò University Cedar Publications.

Oyèdolá, D.A., 2016. The Contribution of Philosophy to Africa's Development. (pp. 9-20). Inkanyiso: *The Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 8.1

Oyèdolá, D.A., & Oyèdolá, Ọ.A., 2015. The Relevance of Cultural Heritage in Remaking a New Africa.' (pp. 85-106). *The Journal of Pan-African Studies*, 8.6

Senghor, L.S., 1998. Negritude and African Socialism. In Coetzee, P. & Roux, A.P.J. (eds.) The African Philosophy Reader. (pp. 438-448). New York: Routledge.

Serequeberhan, T., 1998 Colonialism and the Colonised: Violence and Counter-Violence. In: Eze, E.C. (ed.) *African Philosophy: An Anthology.* (pp. 234-254). Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers Ltd.

Staden, C.V., 1998. Using Cultures in African Contexts. In Coetzee, P. & Roux, A.P.J. (eds.) *The African Philosophy Reader.* (pp. 15-25). New York: Routledge.

Táíwò, O., 1998. Exorcising Hegel's Ghost: Africa's Challenge to Philosophy. (pp. 3-16). *Journal of African Studies Review,* 1.1

Táíwò, O., 2021. 'The Genesis of the Unfinished Business. In Olúfémi Táíwò (ed.), *Can a Liberal be a Chief? Can a Chief be a Liberal? Some Thoughts on an Unfinished Business of Colonialism.* (pp. 1-96). Chicago, IL: Prickly Paradigm Press.

Wiredu, K., 1974. What Can Philosophy Do for Africa? In Wiredu, K. (ed.) *Philosophy and An African Culture*. Massachusetts: Cambridge University Press.

Afrika's Cause Must Triumph: Towards the Hegemony of Lembede's "Afrika for the Afrikans" as a Political Philosophy of National Liberation in "South Africa".

By Masilo Lepuru

Abstract

Anton Lembede, who is regarded as a member of the "new Afrikans", propagated the political philosophy of Afrikanism that is premised on an exclusive idea of "Afrika for the Afrikans." On the other hand, A.P. Mda's idea of "broad nationalism" pursued an inclusive idea of Afrika. This paper seeks to foreground Lembede's exclusive idea of Afrika in contrast to Mda's idea of "broad nationalism" and inclusive idea of Afrika. We will rely on the historical and comparative method and the Afrikan-centred theoretical paradigm. There are several findings which this paper has deduced. The first one is that the political and intellectual relationship between Lembede and Mda has eventuated in the epochal emergence of the antagonism between two Afrikan political philosophies of national liberation in conquered Azania. These philosophies are Afrikanism and broad nationalism. The second one is that the intellectual legacy of Lembede is a marginalised study in South African scholarship especially on the figures of the Black Radical Tradition. The third one is that the broad nationalism of Mda was transformed into the Azanian political tradition by Robert Sobukwe and Steve Biko. The last one is that the triumph of 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. This nonracialism has taken the form of the Congress/Charterist nonracialism of the African National Congress and its Tripartite Alliance and the Azanian nonracialism of the Pan-Africanist Congress and the Black Consciousness Movement. The fundamental objective of this paper is a call for the replacement of these naïve and dangerous forms of nonracialism with the uncompromising racial nationalism of Lembede, so that Africa's cause can triumph as he envisioned it.

Keywords: Political philosophy, National liberation, Garveyism, Afrikanism, Broad nationalism, Anton Lembede, A.P. Mda.

Introduction

The desire for national liberation and collective self-determination is a reaction to the race war which European conquerors have declared on the indigenous people since their catastrophic invasion of Azania in 1652. This race war is multifaceted but fundamentally manifests itself in the forms of land dispossession in wars of colonisation (Ramose, 2018) and intellectual warfare (Carruthers, 1999). When Anton Lembede formulated the political philosophy of Afrikanism, he had in mind these forms of European race war of racial domination and extermination. His idea that *Afrika's cause must triumph* was premised on the deduction that if the natives of Afrika in this case conqueror South Africa (Ramose, 2018) do not attain *freedom in his lifetime*, they will be racially exterminated by the white settlers who conquered them since 1652.

The literature on the life and intellectual legacy of Anton Lembede is scarce. The most important sources for his intellectual contribution to the struggle for national liberation (Cabral, 1979) in conquered Azania is a book entitled *Freedom in Our Lifetime* (2015), edited by Robert Edgar and Luyanda Ka Msumza. They also edited another volume entitled *Africa's Cause Must Triumph* (2018), which is about the life and intellectual legacy of Lembede's friend, namely Mda. Lembede and Mda belong to a generation of Afrikan scholars which came of age in the 1940s within the African National Congress. The intellectual legacies of these Afrikan scholars is intertwined due to their close friendship until the devastating and untimely death of Lembede in 1947. During their interaction as intellectual sparring partners (Edgar and Ka Msumza, 2018) there emerged the antagonism between two political philosophies of national liberation in conquered Azania.

According to the Azanian political tradition of Sobukwe and Biko, Azania is the rightful name for the territory currently called South Africa. These philosophies are Afrikanism and broad nationalism. At the core of these philosophies of national liberation are the exclusive and inclusive ideas of Afrika. The exclusive idea of Afrika is premised on the uncompromising assumptive logic that "whites are not here to stay" while the inclusive idea of Africa is based on the misguided premise that "whites are here to stay". By situating Lembede within the generation of Afrikan scholars called "New Africans" (Masilela, 2013), this paper seeks to foreground the political philosophy of Lembede. Ntongela Masilela (2013) regarded African intellectuals who were influenced by the idea and movement of the New Negro in America as New Africans. They embraced modernity and modelled themselves on the New Negros in America.

The significant contribution of this paper is two-fold. The first one is the redressing of the marginalisation of Lembede's intellectual legacy and contribution to the struggle for national liberation, while the second is the recommendation of his exclusive idea of Afrika as embodied in his political philosophy of Afrikanism as the final solution to the national question in South Africa. We will rely on an Afrikan-centred theoretical paradigm as it prioritises Afrikan culture and thought and advances the collective interest of Afrikans. This paper is not biographical but seeks to foreground the intellectual legacy of Lembede as far as the struggle for national liberation is concerned in South Africa. This implies that we will focus on his intellectual work as opposed to narrating his life. To effectively accomplish this objective, this paper will engage in a comparative analysis of Lembede's idea of Afrika's cause must triumph with Mda's idea of Afrika's cause must triumph. This paper is divided into three sections. We now turn to the first section which will provide a sketchy outline of the intellectual life of Lembede.

Lembede and The Making of the Political Philosophy of Afrikanism

The intellectual legacy of Lembede is a marginalised study in South African scholarship especially on the figures of "the Black Radical Tradition" (Robinson, 2000). According to Robinson (2000), this tradition emerged from the resistance of the enslaved Afrikans who rebelled against slavery on the basis of Afrikan culture and metaphysics. Because of the geographical and cultural context, this paper will designate the Black Radical Tradition as formulated by Cedric Robinson as the Afrikan Radical Tradition. This is because our idea of Afrikan culture and thought on the continent is different from "the idea of Black culture" in the Diaspora. The effect of the *"Maafa"* (Ani, 1994) on the culture and thought of the Afrikans who were subjected to the "middle passage" is different from those of

the natives on the continent. *Maafa* is a term used by Marimba Ani (1994) to describe the inexplicable and incalculable destruction and suffering inflicted on Afrikans by their conquerors and enslavers. This *Maafa* has resulted in the "dismemberment of the continent" (Armah, 2010) due to "two thousand seasons" (Armah, 1973) of a race war of racial domination and extermination.

This is not to suggest that all African Americans are no longer Afrikan and that the "middle passage" made them "to lose their mother". The middle passage denotes the horrendous process of crossing the Atlantic by the enslaved Afrikans after being kidnapped from Afrika. The barbaric violence of settler colonialism which produces the figure of the native and later the "new African" (Masilela, 2013) and the violence of enslavement which produced the figure of the Negro and later the "new Negro" both with naïve "double consciousness" are dissimilar. Double consciousness is a term developed by W.E.B Dubois to describe the striving of the Negros in America to be both African and American at the same time. While both forms of violence share the common objective of racial domination and extermination, their effect on Afrikan culture and thought is different. In general, the native remains *umuntu* while the Negro becomes fixated with being human due to the proximity to whiteness in America. *Umuntu* is an Afrikan philosophical term which denotes the ethical meaning of being a person in the context of Afrikan culture and social relations.

While Afro-pessimism (Wilderson, 2020) has its flaws, it encapsulates very well this fundamental distinction between the native and the Negro. Afro-pessimism (Wilderson, 2020) is a theoretical paradigm which analyses the structure of violence inflicted on the blacks who are reduced to slaves by humans. The Negro who embraces the negative image of Afrika becomes an enslaved object without culture. The native on the other hand being a historical figure who is a majority both numerically and culturally can easily "return to the source" (Cabral, 1979) to resist being an ontological native (an equivalent of a slave), a racist fantasy of racism/white supremacy (Welsing, 1991). The historical native is the rightful owner of the land with own culture and civilization since time immemorial, while the ontological native is a racist figment of imagination of the white settlers. While the ontological native is a structural figure of white supremacy, the historical native is a figure of agency who can escape the structure of racism through culture and revolutionary violence.

This is not to negate the common efforts of the struggle for racial liberation as embodied by the Garvey movement. While the culturalism of the maroons (Robinson, 2000) in the diaspora is commendable, it is different from the role culture (Cabral, 1979) plays in the struggle for national liberation for the natives. The natives are more rooted in their culture and thought than even the most radical of the Afrikans in the diaspora. The case of *amaqaba* and the maroons is a good case in point. *Amaqaba* are the natives who rejected western culture and whites while the maroons rebelled against slavery on the basis of the retention of Afrikan culture which survived the middle passage. Thus, while *amaqaba* and the maroons epitomise the figures of the African Radical Tradition and the Black Radical Tradition respectively, *amaqaba* are more rooted in Afrikan culture from which both draw inspiration in their struggle against racism/white supremacy.

The philo-praxis of *ubuntu* which the natives of conquered Azania maintained despite the ravages of settler colonialism and its "logic of elimination" (Wolfe, 2006) is the basis of the antagonism between *Abantu* and *abelumbi/abelungu*. It was on the basis of Afrikan cosmology that *amaqaba* were able to designate whites as *abelumbi/*

> "We will rely on an Afrikan-centred theoretical paradigm as it prioritises Afrikan culture and thought and advances the collective interest of Afrikans."

abelungu (sorcerers/wizards) and not *Abantu* (thus irredeemable and incapable to co-exist with). It is this Afrikan philosophy of *ubuntu* which was the basis of *amaqaba*'s rejection of whites as evil and irredeemable and from which Lembede drew inspiration through his peasant upbringing. Lembede formulated the philosophy of nativism (a philosophical outlook which proudly prioritises the collective interests and power of the natives to the exclusion of foreign invaders) on the basis of this inspiration which is at the core of his idea of *Afrika's Cause Must Triumph*. He embodied this by stating the following: "Africa is a Black man's country. Africans are the natives of Africa, and they have inhabited Africa, their motherland. From times immemorial, Africa belongs to them" (Lembede, 2015:139). Because Lembede formulated the political philosophy of Afrikanism in these terms, we postulate that he was not merely providing a descriptive analysis of the land and national questions, but that he was also formulating a prescriptive framework for the struggle for national liberation and the final solution for the national question in South Africa.

Anton Lembede was born on January 21, 1914, on a farm in Eston and died on July 29, 1947, an untimely and devastating death, especially regarding the direction of exclusive Afrikan nationalism and liberation in South Africa. He studied for a BA, an LLB, and an MA in philosophy. This was regarded as an intellectual feat by his generation, such as his close friend Mda. Lembede proudly proclaimed, "I am proud of my peasant background. I am one with Mother Africa's dark soil" (Edgar & Ka Msumza, 2018:13).

This is an early indication of his Afrikan nationalism, which he called Afrikanism. The idea of the dark soil prefigures race pride which was fundamental to Garveyism. Being one with Mother Afrika and the dark soil are the prefiguration of his love for Afrika, which is also foundational to Garveyism. Lembede encountered Garveyism while reading *The Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey*. He became one of the leading intellectuals of his generation in the Youth League of the African National Congress. In line with the racial nationalism of Garveyism, the Youth League policy, which bore his influence, stated that "The conflict in South Africa... was fundamentally a racial one between whites and blacks. Because whites had defined their dominance in terms of race, this led blacks to view his problems and those of his country through the perspective of race" (Edgar & Ka Msumza, 2018:34).

By this time, Lembede was reading widely and would have come across the literature on Garveyism, which arrived in the 1920s. This formulation of the conflict in South Africa in terms of race rather than class is a manifestation of the anti-communism and race-first ideology in which the Garvey movement was embedded and which Lembede embraced. We know that Lembede regarded communism as a foreign ideology and adherence to it as a symptom of a pathological state on the part of Afrikans (Edgar & Ka Msumza, 2018). "There is ample oral evidence that Lembede was familiar with Garvey, and he frequently peppered his speeches with quotations from *The Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey* (Edgar & Ka Msumza, 2018: 41).

It is a well-known fact that Garvey was influenced by the father of Pan-Afrikanism, namely Edward Wilmot Blyden (Gerhart, 1979). One of the ideas Garvey got from Blyden was race pride. Similarly, "Lembede's ideas, for instance, echo those of Edward Wilmot Blyden, the West Indian educator who wrote on the creative and distinctive genius of the Negro race and the necessity for Africans to express racial pride" (Edgar & Ka Msumza, 2018: 41). Thus, Lembede's Afrikanism not only accentuates race pride just like the Garveyism, but also underscores the uniqueness of the Afrikan spirit, thus formulating racial nationalism that excludes all non-Afrikans, such as Europeans and Indians.

Commenting on Lembede's idea of *uncompromising* Afrika for the Afrikans, Edgar and Ka Msumza (2018:57) state "His advocacy of an exclusive African nationalism meant that Africans had to emancipate themselves psychologically and rely on their own leadership in order to challenge white domination..." This exclusive Afrikan nationalism, which was exemplified by the slogan of the Garvey movement in the form of "Africa for the Africans those at home and abroad", was the core of Lembede's Afrikanism.

When Afrikans in the 1920s in South Africa envisioned the arrival of Garvey so that whites could clear out of Afrika, they were expressing what Lembede would incorporate into his political

philosophy of Afrikanism in the 1940s. They wanted Africa's cause to triumph. Echoing Garvey's *African fundamentalism* and its elements of race first, racial pride, and self-determination, Lembede (2015: 146) posits that "African nationalism is to be pursued with the fanaticism and bigotry of religion. We must therefore verily believe that we are not inferior to no other race on earth...We must develop race pride". We now turn to the second section of this paper to conduct a comparative analysis of Lembede's idea of Afrika's cause must triumph with Mda's counterpart idea.

Lembede's Afrikanism and Afrika's Cause Must Triumph

While Ntongela Masilela (2013) located Lembede within the "new African movement" which, according to him, was influenced by the "new Negro," this paper prefers to locate Lembede within both the Afrikan Radical Tradition as a native counterpart of the Black Radical Tradition (Robinson, 2000) and Afrikan political philosophy. The essence of the Afrikan Radical Tradition is the total negation of whites, white settler colonialism and white supremacy globally, in this order. The figures of this tradition comprise ordinary people like *amaqaba* and highly gifted thinkers like Lembede. The historico-cultural objective of this tradition is the restoration of the historical personally of the Afrikan race and national sovereignty, while its political aim is the search for "historical being," in the sense of the uncompromising elimination of whites and the European world-order. This order that is based on *Maafa* and *Isfet* (evil force) will be replaced with the Afrikan world-order as premised on *Maat* (a Kemetic moral and ethical philosophy premised on balance, harmony, and truth) and ubuntu, through an Afrikan revolution

In a nutshell the Afrikan Radical Tradition seeks to restore *Maat* by eliminating all the forces of *Maafa* such as Europeans and Arabs on the continent. This is the only way in which Africa's cause can triumph. Because of this uncompromising nature of this tradition, radical liberals like Mda, Sobukwe and Biko are excluded from it. These figures form part of the Afrikan Liberal Tradition. The fundamental aim of this tradition is the search for "actual being" in the sense of the transformation of whites and the white settler world. This transformation is premised on the distortion of Afrikan culture such as the philo-praxis of *ubuntu* by extending it to whites to convert them to *Abantu* and to treat them as Afrikans. This is a naïve and dangerous proposition as premised on Azanian nonracialism.

The metaphors of the African tree and African table are the highest expressions of the treacherous search for actual being by both Sobukwe and Biko. While for the Afrikan Radical Tradition the fundamental problem is whites, for the Afrikan Liberal Tradition the main problem is the system of racism which can be abolished and still retain whites. This is because, as a result of the naïve humanism of the figures of the Afrikan Liberal Tradition there is an absurd separation between whites and the system of oppression. Thus, one can destroy the system of oppression without destroying whites who are its creators and beneficiaries. For the Afrikan Radical Tradition the destruction begins with whites and ends with the system of racism which they created and benefit from. It is in this sense that the Afrikan Radical Tradition is fundamentally anti-white and not just ant-racist or non-racist.

Following Odera Oruka's *Four Trends in African Philosophy* (1979), we will also locate Lembede within the Nationalistic-Ideological school of Afrikan philosophy. The essence of this school is the ideas and philosophies of Afrikan political leaders such as Kwame Nkrumah and Julius Nyerere. While Nyerere has created the political philosophy of Afrikan Socialism, Nkrumah has formulated Consciencism. It is in this sense that just like these Afrikan philosophers of the Independence movement of the 1960s, we locate Lembede within Afrikan philosophy and specifically the Nationalistic-Ideological school. Our location of Lembede in terms of Afrikan philosophy is informed by the fact that he studied philosophy. Lembede, as already stated above, completed a Master of Arts' thesis with the University of South Africa on the idea of God within Western philosophy. Without repeating the details around the difference between the professional school and other schools of Afrikan philosophy such as the ethnophilosophical school, we posit that although Lembede studied philosophy academically, he does not embody the traits of the professional school as epitomised by the likes of Paulin Hountondji and Kwasi Wiredu.

One of these traits is the methodological and epistemological reliance on "icons of the Occident"

> "Africa is a Black man's country.
>
> Africans are the natives of
>
> Africa, and they have inhabited
>
> Africa, their motherland.
>
> From times immemorial,
>
> Africa belongs to them"
>
> *(Lembede, 2015:139)*

(Serequeberhan, 2008) such as Karl Marx. Besides the Nationalistic-Ideological school Lembede can also be located within the hermeneutical school as propagated by Tsenay Serequeberhan (2008). Serequeberhan in his book entitled *The Hermeneutics of African Philosophy* (2008), employs figures such as Frantz Fanon and Amilcar Cabral within Afrikan philosophy as important Afrikan leaders and thinkers who contributed to *The Triumph of the African Cause* of independence. It is also important to note that Serequeberhan accentuates the fact that the likes of Cabral drew from what Serequeberhan designates as "our heritage" in their contribution to address the outstanding issue of Afrikan liberation. Just like Cabral as an Afrikan philosopher who has emphasised the role of the peasants and their culture to formulate the notion of "returning to the source", Lembede's peasant upbringing exposed him to "the source". For the purposes of this paper, this source is accessible through the native sphere which comprises of the wisdom, culture, and thoughts of our ancestors or "the living tradition of our ancestors."

Due to his peasant upbringing which Lembede was proud of, we argue that he was exposed to the sentiments of *amaqaba*, despite becoming a Christian. We argue that despite his Christian influence which we think he was going to outgrow had he lived long enough and to dismiss it as a foreign ideology just as he did with communism. Lembede combined both the uncompromising sentiments and ideas of *amaqaba* and Garveyism. It is in this sense that Lembede's intellectual legacy as an Afrikan political philosopher within the Nationalistic-Ideological school and the hermeneutical school comprises of the combination of the culture and thought of *amaqaba* and Garveyism.

In other words, Lembede's political philosophy of Afrikanism is a combination of amaqaba's culture and sentiments as well as Garveyism. Fundamental to *amaqaba*'s uncompromising philosophy of nativism is the antagonism between *Abantu* and *abelumbi/abelungu* who can never be *Abantu* due to their inherent evil nature and the race war of conquest. This includes or involves the racial domination and extermination which whites as *abelumbi/abelungu* have embarked on against the natives of Azania since 1652. Garveyism on the other hand was premised on the battle-cry of "Africa for the Africans those at home and abroad" (Vinson, 2012). In essence, both *amaqaba* and Garvey were advocating in an uncompromising manner the *en masse* expulsion of whites from Afrika as the preliminary step towards the destruction of global white supremacy and the restoration of a "new Afrika" (Lembede, 2015).

Lembede in line with his peasant upbringing and intellectual evolution managed to combine both the native tradition of resistance as epitomised by *amaqaba* and the diasporic tradition of resistance as embodied by the Garvey movement. This combination accounts for his exclusive Afrikan nationalism. The idea of *Africa's Cause Must Triumph* as formulated by Lembede was encapsulated in his uncompromising sentiment of Afrika for the Afrikans, Europe for the Europeans, and Asia/India for the Asians/Indians. Due to the combined nature of his political philosophy of Afrikanism as comprising of the influence of *amaqaba* and Garvey, at the core of Lembede's idea of *Africa's Cause Must Triumph* is the total rejection of whites as *abelumbi/abelungu* and Garvey's sentiment of Africa for the Africans. Thus, for Lembede "whites are not here to stay" and

that the cause of Afrika can only triumph with the expulsion of whites as opposed to co-existence with them. Herein lies Lembede's intellectual legacy of exclusive Afrikan nationalism and its exclusive idea of Afrika for the Afrikans. Lembede "...mentioned men like Hintsa and Ntsikana who had tried for years fighting against superior weapons, to hurl the White man into the sea" (Lembede, 2015: 128).

Mda on the other hand formulated the political philosophy of "broad nationalism" (Edgar and Ka Msumza, 2018). At its core is Christian humanism (Edgar and Ka Msumza, 2018), which is the foundational pillar of the Afrikan Liberal Tradition of Sobukwe and Biko.This is how Mda (Edgar and Ka Msumza, 2018: 224-5) stated it:

> "Now it has to be noted that there are two brands of African nationalism. The first brand is extremist and ultra-revolutionary. *Extreme African nationalists demand that Europeans "quit Africa" and that all the white men are to be thrown into the sea.* The other brand of African nationalism is comparatively moderate. It is totally opposed to white domination and to foreign leadership in Africa: *but it takes account of the concrete situation and recognizes that the different racial groups have come to stay in South Africa. It insists that a condition for inter-racial cooperation is the abandonment of white domination, the complete national freedom of the African people, and such changes in the basic structure of South Africa that those relations which breed exploitation and misery shall disappear"* (our italics). "Mda inserted a section, "Two Streams of African nationalism," in which he rejected the one variant of African nationalism identified with Marcus Garvey's slogan: "Africa for the Africans."

It is based on the "Quit Africa" slogan and on the cry "Hurl the Whiteman into the sea.". This brand of African nationalism is extreme and ultra-revolutionary. Because Lembede often referred to Garvey in his speeches, this was a subtle way for Mda to signal a departure from some of Lembede's positions" (Edgar and Ka Msumza, 2015:53).

Because Mda was deceived by Christian humanism and its dishonest idea of universal brotherhood, he accepted the ridiculous idea that "whites are here to stay.". Edgar and Ka Msumza (2018:14) stated that "during Mda's school years, his political and cultural views fitted comfortably into a black "Cape liberal" paradigm shared by many mission-educated Africans who believed this to be the surest basis for advancement in both white and black worlds." This is how Mda has sown the seed of Afrikan nonracialism which grew into the African tree of Sobukwe which was used by Biko to make an African table to co-exist with *abelumbi/abelungu* who were rejected by *amaqaba* and Lembede. It is in this sense that in contrast to Lembede, Mda's idea of Africa's cause must triumph is premised on the acceptance of whites and coexistence with them. Lembede on the other hand envisioned the idea of Africa's cause must triumph on the basis that "whites are not here to stay" and that they should be rejected and expelled *en masse*.

The intellectual legacies of both Lembede and Mda are seminal. One of the findings of this paper is that their antagonistic ideas of Africa's cause must triumph are still relevant to the struggle for national liberation in the so-called post-Apartheid South Africa. While Mda's idea of Africa's cause must triumph is not hegemonic in South Africa today, it is gaining traction through the Azanian critical tradition (Dladla, 2021 and Modiri, 2021). This tradition which is a philosophical refinement of the Azanian political tradition of Sobukwe and Biko is contesting the hegemony of the Congress tradition of Oliver Tambo and Nelson Mandela. Another finding is that Lembede's idea of Afrika's cause must triumph is marginalised because it is regarded as ultra-revolutionary, extreme and nativistic. This paper seeks to correct this naïve and dangerous marginalisation by accentuating the significance of Lembede's intellectual legacy. We now turn to the last section to discuss how Lembede's intellectual legacy can aid the natives in conquered Azania to finally resolve the national question in the so-called post-Apartheid South Africa.

Lembede and the National Question in South Africa: Towards the Hegemony of Lembede's Afrika for the Afrikans

Lembede's idea that Afrika's cause must triumph can be reduced to the idea that the natives of Azania will only be free when they restore their ownership of the land since time immemorial. The restoration of the land by the natives who are by definition native to it, entails the resolution of the national question in conquered Azania through

a *chimurenga* (war of liberation). Due to the brevity of this paper, we will not discuss at length the different schools of thought on the national question. It is in this sense that the national question is fundamentally the land question in "conqueror South Africa" (Ramose, 2018). This is because the national question begins with conquest in wars of colonisation since 1652. Following Lembede's exclusive Afrikan nationalism, the natives of "pre-conquest" Azania formed nations on the basis of their nativity to the land, their unique Afrikan spirit and race. When European conquerors invaded Azania through a race war of racial domination and extermination, they invented the racist fiction of "the native question". At the core of this question is the question, how can whites racially dominate and ultimately exterminate the natives, after they have conquered them in wars of colonisation?

The natives on the other hand as the rightful owners of the land especially as *amaqaba* who rejected whites and their fiction of white civilization, posed the historically and politically correct question, namely *the white settler question*. This is because the natives regarded whites as "white strangers" (Kunene, 2017) who have invaded their land and are destroying them as an Afrikan race.

Lembede made a seminal contribution to the national question in South Africa, namely the race paradigm. According to this race paradigm of the national question, the fundamental antagonism in South Africa is premised on race as opposed to class. Due to his embrace of Garveyism, Lembede is the best proponent of this paradigm as already stated above regarding his ideological contribution to the Program of Action and the Youth League Manifesto. Lembede who was the main ideologue in the Congress Youth League of the ANC in the 1940s contributed to this race paradigm by rejecting communism and its class conflict thesis as a foreign ideology. Because of his studies of Garveyism, Lembede embraced its race-first ideology and its race pride. Lembede accentuated the idea of the Afrikan race as opposed to the Afrikan class. For instance, Lembede (2015:190) states: "Africans are not primarily oppressed as workers but are oppressed on the ground of colour or race". While his reflections and contributions to the race paradigm of the national question are scattered in his writings, they are also encapsulated succinctly in a piece by Lembede entitled *Fallacy of Non-European Unity Movement* (1945). It is in this piece that Lembede formulates what we can call the "four-nation thesis" regarding the national question in South Africa. .This "four-nation-thesis" is premised on the logic of race groups in South Africa which constitute autonomous nations.

According to Lembede, South Africa consists of the Afrikan nation, the European nation, the Indian nation and the Coloured nation. In line with the Garvey movement's battle-cry of "Africa for the Africans those at home and abroad," Lembede formulated his uncompromising idea of Afrika for the Afrikans, Europe for the Europeans and India for the Indians. The fundamental premise is the land question. According to Lembede, Afrikans are the natives of Afrika and Afrika is their motherland. It is in this sense that both Europeans and Indians are non-Afrikans because they are not native to Afrika. In terms of his political philosophy of Afrikanism, these non-Afrikans lack the unique Afrikan spirit which the Afrikan environment endowed the natives with. Lembede (2015:137) posits in this regard, that "an eternal law of variation has developed peculiar people in the spirit of the environment called the African, Native or Aborigine. And that Africans are the natives of Africa from times immemorial." Lembede (2015:137) further argued that:

> "Now from time immemorial Africa has developed her own peculiar plants, animals and man-the African Native or Aborigine . . . *This African spirit can realise itself through, and can be interpreted by, Africans only. Foreigners of whatever brand and hue can never properly and correctly interpret this spirit owing to its uniqueness, peculiarity and particularity"* (our italics).

Europe is the motherland of the Europeans while India is the motherland of the Indians. These non-Afrikans cannot interpret and understand the unique Afrikan spirit thus cannot co-exist with the natives. Despite their long presence in conquered Azania, these non-Afrikans cannot possess this unique Afrikan spirit. They are the products of their unique environments which are Europe and India as their motherlands respectively. It is in this sense that Europeans and Indians as non-Afrikans are Asiatics because they emerged from the continent of Asia and are the "implacable and

everlasting enemies" (Williams, 1987) of the natives as members of the Afrikan race.

The Coloured people on the hand do not have a motherland. This is obviously because they emerge in the wake of slavery and wars of colonisation since 1652. According to Lembede, Coloureds and Indians are non-Europeans. Following Lembede's exclusive Afrikan nationalism and its exclusive idea of Afrika, the resolution of the European and Indian problem within the national question is expulsion to their motherlands. But because the Coloureds do not have their own motherland, this en masse expulsion is impractical. In order to resolve this Coloured problem, Lembede divided the Coloureds into three types. According to Lembede (2015:182), the first type is the one which embraces Afrikan culture, the second type regards itself as a Euro-African nation while the last one regards itself as European.

Lembede (2015:181) argued that "Africans are natives of Africa, they and Africa are one, their relation to Africa is superior to the relations of other sections of the populations . . . *it is evidently wrong to place Africans on a footing of equality with other racial groups at present residing in Africa*" (our italics)." Departing from this fundamental and unapologetic nativistic premise, Lembede posited that the Coloured people who embrace Afrikan culture by for instance speaking Afrikan languages "we can tolerate in our society" (Lembede, 2015:182). It is in this sense that Europeans and Indians cannot be tolerated in our society and thus must be expelled to their motherlands. As Lembede (2015:181) states: "A great hullabaloo is being made by advocates of the Unity of all Non-Europeans in South Africa in their struggle against white supremacy or white oppression. This unity we are told is to include Africans, Coloureds, and Indians. Before irreparable harm is done to the development and progress of the African people, this fallacious and fantastic theory must be exposed. Unity among the above-mentioned classes on Non-Europeans is impossible..." This is how Lembede's Afrikanism embodies exclusive racial nationalism. This paper seeks to restore this uncompromising racial nationalism of Lembede as a worthy intellectual legacy which Afrikans can use to launch a *chimurenga*/war of liberation to destroy whites and white supremacy in South Africa in this order, so that finally Africa's cause can triumph.

Conclusion

This paper has foregrounded the intellectual legacy of Lembede. In doing so, we have provided a brief intellectual sketch of Lembede to demonstrate that he was influenced by Garveyism. In addition to this intellectual influence, Lembede was exposed to peasant upbringing which placed him in proximity with *amaqaba*'s wisdom. This was in order to argue that Lembede's political philosophy of Afrikanism which is his main intellectual legacy comprised the influence of *amaqaba* and Garvey. It is in this sense that we designated Lembede as an Afrikan political philosopher who formulated the political philosophy of Afrikanism. The findings of the paper are attempting to break a new ground in studies on the national question and political philosophy of national liberation in South Africa. We located Lembede within the Nationalistic-Ideological school and hermeneutical school of Afrikan philosophy. It is also in this sense that Lembede's intellectual legacy as an Afrikan philosopher of liberation should be used to resolve the national question in South Africa.

References

Ani, M., 1994. Yurugu: *An African-centred Critique of European Cultural Thought and Behaviour.* New York: Africa World Press.

Armah, A.K., 1973. *Two Thousand Seasons.* London: Heinemann African Writers Series.

Armah, A.K., 2010. *Remembering the Dismembered Continent.* Popenguine: Per Ankh.

Cabral, A., 1979. *Unity and Struggle: Speeches and Writings of Amilcar Cabral.* New York: Monthly Review Press.

Carruthers, J., 1999. *Intellectual Warfare*. New York: Third World Press.

Dladla, N., 2021. The Azanian Philosophical Tradition Today. *Theoria*, 68(168): 1–11.

Edgar, R.R. and Ka Msumza, L., 2018. *Africa's Cause Must Triumph: The Collected Writings of A.P. Mda*. South Africa: Best Red.

Gerhart, G., 1979. *Black Power in South Africa: The Evolution of an Ideology.* New York: University of California Press.

Lembede, A.M., 2015. *Freedom in our Lifetime*. South Africa: Kwela Books.

Masilela, N., 2013. *An Outline of the New African Movement in South Africa (Intellectual History of Southern Africa)*. New York: African World Press.

Modiri, J., 2021. Azanian Political Thought and the Undoing of South African Knowledges. *Theoria* 68(168): 42–85. https://doi.org/10.3167/th.2021.6816804.

Ramose, M.B., 2018. Towards a Post-Conquest South Africa: Beyond the Constitution of 1996. *South African Journal on Human Rights*. 3 (34): 326-341.

Robinson, C.J., 2000. *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition.* North Carolina: North Carolina University Press.

Vinson, T. R., 2012. *The Americans are Coming: Dreams of African American Liberation in Segregationist South Africa*. New York: Ohio University Press.

Welsing, F. C., 1991. *The Isis (Yssis) Papers: The Keys to the Colors.* New York: C.W. Publishing.

Wilderson, F., 2020. *Afropessimism*. New York: Liveright.

Williams, C., 1987. *The Destruction of Black Civilization*. New York: Third World Press.

Wolfe, P., 2006. Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native., *Journal of Genocide Research*, 8(4): 387–409.

Re-writing the Disability Script from the Global South: Tsitsi Chataika's Contribution to Disability Studies Scholarship in Africa

By Dr. Sibonokuhle Ndlovu

Abstract

For decades, scholars from the Global North have written the disability script from their own perspective, writing it for persons with disabilities and for disability scholarship in the Global South. A mould has been broken and African scholars have now begun re-writing the script from their own perspectives and from the Global South's perspective. Using Decolonial Theory and the systematic review method, the paper is based on the work of Professor Tsitsi Chataika, which has impacted disability scholarship from an African context and from the Global South at large. The work contributes extensively to disability scholarship in terms of 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. The scholar shifts the narrative from writing disability scholarship from the Global North to the South.

Key words: Disability script re-writing and critiquing, African scholar, Tsitsi Chataika, Global South, Decolonial Theory, Critical Disability Studies

Introduction

African countries' encounter with colonialism has resulted in the disability script being written predominantly by the Western scholars for Africa and the Global South, writing it from a negative western perspective. In the process, negative perceptions about disability have, in turn, influenced the negative conceptions of disability, which foreground individual limitations based on impairments. Goody (2006) has viewed the experience as "*a theft of the history of Africans*" (p. 1). In other words, colonisers who stole the African history and culture, disempowered the Africans, to manipulate, dominate and control them, hence influencing African disability scholarship in a negative way. This has led to the isolation,

marginalisation, exclusion and oppression of persons with disabilities in Africa and in the Global South. A generation of African scholars has emerged to 'right the wrong' imposed by the dominant society in terms of the conception of disability in Africa. Influencing and making a significant impact in terms of re-writing the disability script, from the African perspective is Tsitsi Chataika.

Aims

The aims of this paper are:

a. To analyse how Tsitsi Chataika's work influences re-writing disability from the African perspective and the Global South.
b. To review how Chataika's work positively impacts disability inclusion in African countries and the Global South.
c. To provide evidence that Chataika is an African generation of scholars of the time in the disability field.

Rationale

A generation of African scholars in the Global South have stood up to challenge hegemony, Eurocentric epistemology, dominance, oppression and repression of systems and structures in the Global South. Considering the persistence of Eurocentrism and unwillingness to release power, African scholars, such as Chataika, who stand up to resist such a structure, need to be known.

Theoretical Frame: Decolonial Theory

Decolonial Theory underpins the critique of the work of Tsitsi Chataika. Coloniality of power and knowledge undergirds the ontological and epistemological contribution of the scholar. The zones of location— social and epistemic location, locus of enunciation, decoloniality and decolonial thinking and doing - are tools that combine to explain the works of Tsitsi Chataika in a deeper way.

The zones of location (De Sousa Santos, 2007; Grosfoguel, 2011; Dastile & Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013), the social and epistemic location (Quijano 2000; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2001), locus of enunciation (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013) and decoloniality and decolonial thinking and doing (Maldonaldo-Torres 2007; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2015), inform understanding of the African scholars' contribution to the African perspective of disability. Decolonial theoretical concepts are highlighted in passing because they have been extensively discussed in the works of decolonial scholars in contemporary scholarship.

Method

A systematic literature review method was used to source relevant data for Chataika's positive contribution to disability inclusion and the shift to the African perspective of disability. The Scopus and Web of Science were used in the search process for relevant literature, yielding published books, journal articles, online sources and book chapters. The two websites are where most of Chataika's work is indexed. The search terms and their combination used in the search process included. 'Tsitsi Chataika, disability from African perspective, decolonial theory, disability, inclusion, mainstreaming disability, disability policy and theory, and students with disabilities.

The Selection of Relevant Literature

All literature that yielded the name Tsitsi Chataika was selected, including other scholars with whom she had collaborated and co-authored. Literature that did not bear the name of the respective scholar was excluded. The selection included all peer reviewed journal articles, books, book chapters, online resources, reports and conference papers by Chataika, from 2007 to 2024, a period in which all the Chataika's quality work was captured. Duplicates were removed from the original 40 publications leaving 32 publications on Chataika and Decolonial Theory, which suited the aims of the study.

Chataika's Work and Influence on Epistemology.

Chataika's wide array of research and publications, which also include a sole authored book entitled, *The Routledge Handbook of Disability in Southern Africa* (Chataika, 2018b), influences epistemology by re-centring disability inclusion scholarship from the African perspective. All peer reviewed articles, chapters in books and books reflect on disability inclusion from the African perspective. Chataika demonstrates that all human beings are knowledge producers from their central positions of location, uniquely contributing to epistemology from the African context specifically. Chataika disrupts the notion that disability knowledge and

ways of knowing, can only be produced from the Global North. Evidence to the argument is her many works in which the central location of knowledge production is Africa.

Chataika is a proponent of rights of persons with disabilities (Chataika 2015; Chataika et al. 2018), disability policy (Chataika et al. 2011) and disability and gender (Chataika 2013; 2017; 2020). The evidence is in her direct engagement with not only persons with disabilities but also gender issues to do with women's rights (Chataika 2013; 2017; 2020). She has engaged in childhood studies on disability (Chataika & Mackenzie 2018), and has, and is, in all cases, situating disability in the African context. Her work is exceptional as it discusses different categories of disabilities including albinism (Chataika 2018). Though albinism is unique and requires specific intervention and support in the disability field and in educational contexts, it has not been given adequate attention as an impairment,

Chataika has impacted disability and religion from the African perspective (Chataika 2013). The intersection of disability and religion from the African context is important in terms of explaining the influence of religion on disability and vice-versa. Due to African religious inclinations, African countries have looked at disability negatively. In essence, Chataika's work is distinct as it considers intersectionality. Chataika does not engage with disability in isolation but as it intersects with gender, age, religion. Thus, her work reveals the multidimensional discrimination faced by persons with disabilities in society. Chataika thus manages to mainstream disability and its different intersections in Africa (Chataika & Mackenzie 2016). Her work shifts from the Eurocentric understanding of disability (Phasha, Mahlo & Dei 2017), to consider other worldviews.

Chataika's firm stand in writing disability from the African perspective is influenced by her social and epistemic location. She has an African mindset and she is epistemologically, socially, and geographically located in Africa and the Global South. When socialised by a modern Western Education, individuals become colonised into Western ways of thinking and of knowing. They become colonial subjects who are subjectified, hence their epistemic location become that of the Global North (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2001). Further argued is that some people are socially located in the zone of non-being and are oppressed, but they think like their oppressors and speak their language (De Sousa Santos 2007; Ndlovu 2015). Chataika is not tainted in terms of understanding disability. She fights oppression from an African epistemic location, as her disability work reveals. This is evident in her engagement and publications that are African oriented, proving that she is epistemically located in the Global South, and Africa is the centrality from which she creates disability knowledge.

Influence on Disability Theory

Chataika's work has an influence on disability theory, more specifically Critical Disability Studies (CDS). The theory is referred to that way because it is viewed as having outgrown the capacity of a theory (Critical Disability Theory), because of the numerous studies that have researched, discussed and reviewed mainstream understanding of disability. Critical Disability Studies involves analysis not of bodily or mental impairments but the social norms, contexts and conditions that are attributed to limitations, stigmatisation, social isolation and discrimination experienced by other social groups more especially those with disabilities (Schalk 2017). The proponents of CDS are scholars who gloss over the influence of the African social and cultural context that marginalise persons with disabilities. Chataika's engagement in the output, '*What Kind of Development Are We Talking About?' A Virtual Roundtable with Tsitsi Chataika*' presents her own contribution to CDS (Chataika et al. 2016), from an African perspective. Chataika directly engages the proponents of Critical Disability Studies and she influences CDS from the African context and positively impacts disability inclusion.

From the Decolonial Theory perspective, Chataika's contribution to Critical Disability Studies is decolonial thinking and doing, in which she makes a concerted effort to infuse the African perspective into the theory that is Global North orientated. It has been argued that theories and scholars from the South and those who produce them, have been inferiorised and censored, being considered as of less value from those produced in the Global North scholars (Grosfoguel 2011). However, Chataika resists the oppression that theories which are seen as legitimate in epistemology are those produced by

the scholars in the Global North, and she motivates for a consideration of the African perspective and its context in CDS. As evidence of her resistance to oppression related to disability theories, she has sat on round table debates with scholars from the Global North, to also contribute to Critical Disability Studies from the African perspective (Chataika et al. 2016). In essence, Chataika's work and its impact on theory disrupts the long-standing hegemony. The overarching fact is that Chataika's work influences a disability theory that has so much impact in terms of disability inclusion in the Global South and in Africa specifically.

While other scholars in the disability field have also made significant contributions to the disability scholarship by way of publication, Chataika's distinguishes herself by way of decolonial thinking and doing. Decolonial doing refers to what is being done on practical terms to fight oppression, a situation when decolonial thoughts have been, and are being, translated into action, to engage practical resistance and struggle against hegemony. Chataika, in her disability work, translates decolonial thoughts into action. Thus, Chataika's decolonial thinking and doing, in which she engages in practical terms with scholars from the West, is to include the African perspective on CDS, which could be seen as having practically contributed to core production of disability knowledge from both worlds.

Influence on Hybridity

Chataika has also contributed to postcolonial theory (Chataika 2012), in which hybridity is emphasised. Chaitaka' work impacts hybridity, in which the Global South and the West need to find solutions for common problems. This entails learning from each other about different cultures, different experiences of disability (hybridity), including the construction of disability knowledge, ways of knowing about it and different ways in which disability is interpreted (Grech & Soldatic 2015). Her influence on hybridity is evidenced on the number of peer-reviewed articles she has published on postcolonial theory (Chataika 2012), in which hybridity is emphasised. She has also been the co-editor of a book on postcolonial disability, in which all chapter centre around postcolonial theory and postcolonial disability studies (Chataika & Goodley 2024). Above all, she distinguishes herself

> "Chataika does not engage with disability in isolation but as it intersects with gender, age, religion."

on the actual engagement (decolonial thinking doing) with Western scholars to share disability knowledge and culture from the Global South and African perspective (Chataika et al. 2016).

In emphasising the need for hybridity, as reflected in her works in post-colony theory, Chataika is concerned about sharing disability knowledge and cultures from the Global North and South on common platforms in which there is no censoring of any disability experience and knowledge or considering one as better than the other. Furthermore, in post-colonial theory, she proposes post-colonial disability studies, which are also accessible to the marginalised Global South and the inclusion of persons with disability into the research.

Chataika does not only propose hybridity in postcolonial theory, but she implements the proposal as she practically engages Western scholars (Chataika et al. 2016). From the perspective of decoloniality, it could be argued that while Chataika, as an African scholar, brings the perspective of Africanism into disability scholarship, she is not a fundamentalist (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2018). This is evident in that she does not totally refute everything Western but understands that it is not about contesting and resisting, but to seek solutions for common problems between the Global North and South. Such an approach has a positive impact in which both worlds can come together to solve the challenge of disability inclusion, at the same time adding value to disability scholarship from both worlds.

Impact on Inclusive Education Policies in African countries

Chataika has influenced policy, from the international legal instrument, United Nations on the

Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) (Chataika 2016), to a number of other policy issue engagements in higher education in different African countries (Chataika 2007; Chataika & Hlatywayo 2022). Chataika has made a direct impact on policies of inclusion in Africa, at regional and national levels. Chataika has influenced and continues to impact policy in a positive way by drafting inclusive education policies in different African countries, besides reviewing and evaluating the existent ones. She has engaged in formulating disability policies in African countries, which include among others, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Uganda, Ethiopia and Sierra Leon. Chataika has produced national reports that have been commended for their impact on disability inclusion (Chataika & Hlatywayo 2019). Chataika's approach to issues of policy is thus unique because unlike other scholars in the field who only analyse and critique existent disability policies, Chaitaka has actual formulated disability policies (Chataika 2007; Chataika 2016; Chataika & Hlatywayo 2022).

Chataika drafted the National Development Plan of 2010 in Uganda, through the National Union of Disabled People of Uganda. Chataika has also influenced the policy by ensuring that disability was included in the respective national policies. She drafted the National Disability Policy of 2021 in Sierra Leone. In Zimbabwe, where for a long time there was no inclusive education policy, she drafted the inclusive education policy, and has also been involved in drafting the Persons with Disabilities Act and spearheaded the drafting of the Draft Higher and Tertiary Disability Inclusive Education Policy, which is presently awaiting public consultations.

Chataika has recently been engaged by the United Nation Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), to review inclusive education policies in nine Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries, examining whether the legal policies in those countries were inclusive of all diversity, including disabilities. She was engaged by the African Union (AU), various development partners that include CBM International, Save the Children Malawi and Zimbabwe, UNESCO ROSA, World Bank, World Vision and British Council, to review national policies (Chataika et al. 2011). She has produced reports that were highly acknowledged and commended by various stakeholders.

Chataika began to make an impact on inclusive education policies in African countries, ensuring that disability was included in national policies in African countries such as Ethiopia, Malawi, Sierra Leon and Uganda. Inclusion of all diversity including those with disabilities, could be facilitated through policies of inclusion largely and Inclusive Education policies specifically. Her efforts in this regard in the above-mentioned countries has had an impact on disability inclusion within the specific contexts, as influenced by policies she has drafted and reviewed.

Chataika's contribution to theory reveals that she understands that it is when informed by theories of disabilities as Critical Disability Studies, that the hidden systemic and institutional ableism, resulting from preference of the persons without disabilities over those with disabilities, could be revealed. She understands that Critical Disability Studies theory highlights institutional barriers, attitudinal barriers and inaccessible physical structures that continue to stigmatise and marginalise students with disabilities in higher education in Africa. Chataika understands that without engagement with Critical Disability Studies theory, which critiques mainstream disability studies, the deeper underlying and hidden causes of exclusion may only be understood at surface levels. This is evidenced from her many public talks on social media such as Facebook, in which she explains that disability is a social construct, created by society to limit persons with impairments. She does not leave it at that level but goes further to engage with Critical Disability Studies for academics and students in higher education to understand the disability theory as Critical Disability Studies that illuminate exclusion from deeper levels. Thus, Chataika's work has been able to highlight the hidden underlying reasons for institutional, attitudinal, and physical barriers apparent in different institutions of higher education in African countries and in society at large.

Chataika's research and practical involvement in policy issues could be explained in the light of decoloniality and decolonial thinking and doing, which has started from the consciousness and awareness of how policy can be used for furthering the oppression of persons with disabilities, rather than emancipating them. It is shown in her work, in which she argues that some African countries (South Africa in particular) have inclusive education policies, which are just on paper (Chataika 2007).

She also has had engagement with African countries that do not have Inclusive Education policies at all and has published academic work on countries with policies that are just on paper (Chataika 2007; 2010). Such a body of work undoubtedly distinguishes Chataika as an African scholar, who is not only concerned about effective disability policy, but one who is willing to practically effect change in that regard in African countries.

Impact on Voices from the South

Chataika has made an impact in terms of privileging the voice of academics and persons with disabilities from Africa. For decades, the voice from the academics in the South has been underrepresented in disability debates and scholarship. The voice of persons with disabilities in particular have been ignored with those without disabilities, speaking on their behalf (Hosking 2008). In her practical involvement and participation in debates with other scholars from the West, Chataika privileges the African views of disability. In an edited volume, *The Routledge Handbook of Disability Activism* (Berghs et al. 2020), the voices of different African scholars, including those with disabilities, are privileged offering the African perspective.

> “Privileging the voices from Africa has an impact on disability scholarship, as disability is presently being re-written from the African perspective, by scholars in Africa and those with disabilities themselves through Chataika’s edited volume.”

By virtue of the book being an edited volume rather than sole authored, several African scholars, including those with disabilities are given opportunity to express themselves and speak out on a range of disability issues, from their own African worldview. Proof and evidence of the voices of those with disabilities being provided the opportunity to speak out is shown in the book chapter, ‘My Disability, my Ammunition, my Asset in Advocacy Work’, which Chataika edited with other scholars in the field. It is not only the African academics’ voices that are privileged but also those of academics with disabilities themselves. Ten chapters in the book have been written by scholars with disabilities, who are writing on different disability experiences and perceptions from the African perspective.

In the book, a special dedication is made to people who have gone before and set the foundation for disability rights, to those who are presently fighting to ensure continued justice, equality and equity and to those who would come after, with more sharpened advocacy and lobbying skills, to build a more inclusive world (Berghs et al. 2020). The dedication illustrates how Chataika is engrained in disability rights and her quest to fight for social justice and an inclusive society for all. It is not by coincidence that the book won the Outstanding Taylor and Francis global award in the Social Sciences in April 2020. The same book was nominated among the 20 most influential books in activism globally by Book Authority in 2023. It goes to show the impact that Chataika has made in the global arena in terms of impacting the voice of persons with disabilities in the African context, to be heard in the whole world.

Chataika’s impact on amplifying silenced voices could be seen as decoloniality (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013), in which the oppressed are also given the opportunity to speak out against oppression experienced by persons with disabilities. Chataika is not only aware of oppression in the way of the absence of the voices from the South largely and Africa specifically, but in turn, she uses her agency to disrupt the norm and hegemony that has been normalised, in as far as silencing other voices from the different worlds is concerned, more specifically the African voice. It could be argued that the focus and the purpose of the book is to provide the platform for the silenced voices to also be heard.

Furthermore, by including those with disabilities to have their voices represented in the chapters of the book, it could be viewed as a disruption of hegemony of those without disabilities speaking for those with disabilities (Hosking 2008). Privileging the voices from Africa has an impact on disability scholarship, as disability is presently being re-written from the African perspective, by scholars in Africa and those with disabilities themselves through Chataika's edited volume. The chances of change and improvement in terms of disability inclusion are high likely in the African context, when silenced voices are being privileged, heard and listened to through the works of Chataika.

Impact on Inclusion of Students with Disabilities in Higher Education in African Countries

Chataika's works has had an impact on inclusion of students with disabilities in higher education in African countries. She ensures the inclusion of students with disabilities in higher education. In the Zimbabwean context, she outlined the attitudinal, institutional, and physical barriers as limiting those students' functionality and access to learning (Chataika 2007). She did not only identify barriers but proposed possible impactful interventions (Chataika 2007).

I had the opportunity for an interview with her during the COVID-19 pandemic, in which she shared valuable information on the challenges that were confronted by students with disabilities, in the context of the Zimbabwean higher education. She argued that challenges mainly emanated from the economic situation in the country at that time. Interestingly, she revealed that although Zimbabwean students with disabilities were confronted by challenges in their learning, unlike in South Africa, they completed their programmes within the minimum time, and as a result, there is no delayed throughput. Through her idea of hybridity, South Africa can learn from Zimbabwe in terms of timely throughput.

Chataika's awareness of the specific challenges confronting students with disabilities in Zimbabwe specifically and other African countries largely, could be explained as decoloniality, in which she does not see those students as the Other, placed in the lower hierarchy of the higher education structure, as understood from categorisation of people by the dominant society (Quijano 2000). Chataika's work on disability inclusion does not conform and subscribe to the coloniality of segregating students with disabilities at higher education level. Chataika notes their capability of resilience to get to higher education, despite the limitations imposed on them by society. Chataika considers them as more than equal to their able-bodied counterparts when barriers are dismantled, and an enabling environment is created for them (Chataika 2010). It could be argued that Chataika's positive view of students with disabilities is empowering as it helps students themselves not to see themselves as the Other, despite the fact that they are placed in the lower hierarchy and viewed as the Other, in the coloniality context.

Chataika (2007) has influenced the inclusion of students with disabilities in higher education, not only in Zimbabwe, but in other African countries including South Africa. Chataika argues that institutional barriers result from policies and programmes that do not take into cognisance the needs of those with disabilities. She notes that even in those African countries such as South Africa with comprehensive inclusive education policies, they are not effectively implemented (Chataika 2007). In essence, she understands that it is not only about having good policies of inclusive education, but it is in genuine policy intent that enables effective implementation. It could be argued that her awareness and consciousness is not only in policy influencing disability inclusion; it could influence change in which policies are analysed for their relevance and intentions. With policy intent analysed, leading to effective implementation, institutional barriers could be dismantled, hence the inclusion of students with disabilities in higher education in African countries, which has been a challenge for decades.

The impact of inclusion of students with disabilities in higher education has significance in that by being included in higher education, those students, have overcome barriers in order to access to higher education, and are thus in a privileged position to significant change in disability inclusion and scholarship. They can rewrite disability scholarship from the African perspectives in dissertations and theses in higher education.

Impact on Wider Society

Chataika impacts wider society and is changing the negative conception of disability, previously influenced by the Global North in African societies largely. She runs a face-book page 'Disability Diaries with Prof Tsitsi' where her weekly posts on positive conception of disability on influence readers. On this social media platform, Chataika uses easily accessible language to reach out to all. She explains how disability is a socially constructed phenomena and imposed on those with impairments by society and the environment. She explains in simple terms how local communities create barriers for those with impairments through attitudinal, environmental and institutional barriers, ultimately stigmatising, marginalising and disabling persons with impairments.

She highlights the African cultural beliefs that influence negative understanding of impairment, leading to stereotypes about disability. Using local examples that could easily be understood by all in African communities, she explains how disability and impairment differ. Chataika's Facebook page is accessible to all people in Africa and internationally and she urges all people to dismantle barriers in their different communities, to include persons with disabilities. This has an impact because she argues that what is good for persons with impairments is good for everyone. She uses the human right approach, in which she believes that everyone, including those with impairments, have the right to a dignified life. She gives example of people with impairments who function well in life because barriers were removed for them by society. She argues that everyone is vulnerable to an impairment, and all have the potential to have a disability during a lifetime. Through the use of a public platform such as Facebook, Chataika impacts, not only academics, but the whole world of persons with and without disabilities. She is making a massive impact in terms of understanding disability, specifically from the African perspective. As her posts continue each week, there could be change in the way disability has been or is being conceived, not only in Africa but globally.

Prior to her posts on disability as a socially constructed phenomena on her Facebook page, Chataika begins by declaring her positionality, that she is an academic-cum disability activist. She explains why she is both and how she started engaging in disability matters and what ignited her passion for disability issues. She does not even hide her humble beginnings and that she came from a struggling family, where she learnt about sharing constrained resources with persons who had disabilities in the community from her parents. Chataika's declaration of her positionality as she introduces herself could be explained in the light of locus of enunciation, which is a "particular location from which a human being speaks from within a power structure" (Dastile & Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013:114). Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013) argues that there is hypocrisy in coloniality whereby oppressors themselves have been found to speak against oppression. In that regard, decolonial scholars emphasise transparency in terms of locus of enunciation. Chataika's pronouncement of her locus of enunciation and where she stands in the power structure of coloniality, makes her arguments, writings on disability and practical engagement with disability in general, to be transparent, genuine, and authentic. The genuine impression influences the wider society to accept those with disabilities in their different communities in Africa, and internationally.

Influence in 'Nothing without us' Mantra

Chataika could have been a colonial subject, who reproduces and perpetuates the oppression of African people, more especially those with disabilities. Colonialism has such a powerful influence that the common trend is that most African scholars who have been educated in European universities tend to lose their Africanness and become colonial subjects. The longer they stay in European countries, the more readily they think and speak the language of their oppressors, become epistemologically located in the 'zone of being' while they are also oppressed like all other oppressed Africans (Ndlovu 2015). Even during the post-colonialism period, most elite Africans replicated the oppressive tendencies of their formal colonial masters (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2016). Chataika is epistemically located in the Global South. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2001) argued that epistemic location is all about ways of thinking and knowing and has nothing to do with geographical location.

From the way Chataika engages with disability in the African context, her epistemic location in

the Global South cannot be doubted. Chataika engages persons with disabilities in her research work and writing about disability from the African perspective. The critical reader of Chataika's doctoral thesis was an individual with total visual impairment (not named for ethical reasons), whom she intentionally engaged to manifest the 'Nothing for us without us' mantra. She understands that for her to propose for genuine disability inclusion, her work cannot leave out those with a lived experience of disability. For Chataika, therefore the 'Nothing for us without us' slogan, common in the disability field, is not only verbal but a lived experience.

Why Chataika is an African Scholar of her Generation

Chataika's academic work and how she engages with persons with disabilities makes her distinctive persons with disabilities appreciate her as one of their own in the social, academic and the world of activism. She demystifies their marginalisation by generating disability knowledge as seen in core-knowledge production of the book, *The Routledge Handbook of Disability Activism*. Authors with disabilities celebrated the global award for the specific book together with her as they make a greater percentage of the contribution to the book. It could be argued that Chataika lives what she argues that disability is not in an individual but in the social environment. As she mainstreams disability, persons with disabilities are no different from other people in society at large and to her, as an individual. She does not speak for them but speaks with them, as evidenced from her collective disability work. This is the aspect that most scholars fail to balance.

Chataika has been given awards, accolades and prizes for being a distinctive disability inclusion academic in Africa. The accolades have been awarded nationally, regionally, and internationally by amongst others, disability organisations, universities in Africa, and Ministries of Education. She was recognised for the *2018 Pan African Leadership Women's Achievers Award* in inclusive education. She has received numerous research grants and funding at national, regional and international levels, for disability research in a number of African countries. Although disability scholarship has been written from the Global North perspective for decades, leading to a myriad of challenges for persons with disabilities, exclusion in society in Africa and in higher education specifically, there is currently a change gradually taking place through the work of Chataika. She is playing a significant role in influencing the shift, and positively impacting disability inclusion from the Global South broadly and the African perspective specifically.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Tsitsi Chataika can be counted among the generation of African scholars who has made an impact in terms of re-writing the disability script from the Global South, largely and from African perspective specifically. Her work influences and positively impacts epistemology from the African perspective, the UNCRPD and inclusive education policies in African countries, disability theories more specifically Critical Disability Studies and the inclusion of students with disabilities in higher education in Africa, and inclusion of persons with disabilities in society at large. Undoubtedly, she plays a major role in influencing a shift, in terms of understanding disability from the Global South. Of importance, is that her work is not only theoretical, but also practical – motivating for a mental shift which is seen as influencing change in terms of inclusion of all diversity, including those with disabilities.

References

Bergs, M., Chataika, T., El-Lahib, Y. & Dube, K. 2020. *The Routledge Handbook of Disability Activism.* London: Routledge.

Chataika, T., 2007. *Inclusion of Disabled Students in Higher Education in Zimbabwe: From Idealism to Reality: A Social Ecosystem.* Perspective. Ph.D. Thesis, The School of Education, University of Sheffield, Sheffield: UK.

Chataika, T., 2010. Inclusion of Disabled Students in Higher Education in Zimbabwe. In J. Lavia and M. Moore (eds.) *Cross-Cultural Perspectives on Policy and Practice: Decolonizing Community Contexts,* (pp. 116-131). New York: Routledge.

Chataika, T., Mulumba, M., Mji, G. & MacLachlan, M. 2011. *Did What? Research Project in Brief: The African Policy on Disability & Development (A-PODD) in Uganda*. Dublin: The Global Health Press.

Chataika, T., 2012a. Disability, Development and Postcolonialism. In D. Goodley, D. Hughes & L. Davis (eds.), *Disability and Social Theory: New Development and Directions* (pp. 252-269), London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Chataika, T., 2012b. Postcolonialism, Disability and Development. In D. Goodley & B, Hughes (Eds.), *Social Theories of Disability: New Developments and Directions* (pp. 252–269). London: Routledge.

Chataika, T., 2013a. Gender and Disability Mainstreaming Training Manual. Disabled Women in Africa: GIZ Sector Initiative Persons with Disabilities on behalf of BMZ, Germany, pp, 1-75. Available from: http://www.diwa.ws/index.php?option=com_phocadownload

Chataika, T., 2013b. Cultural and religious explanations of disability and promoting inclusive communities. In J. M. Claassen, Leslie. Swartz & L. Hansen (eds.), *Search for Dignity: Conversations on Human Dignity. Theology and Disability,* (pp. 117–128). Cape Town: African Sun Media.

Chataika. T. 2015. Kanter: The development of disability rights under international law: From charity to human rights. *African Disability Rights Yearbook.* 2015(3): 329-337.

Chataika, T. & McKenzie, J. A., 2016. Global Institutions and Their Engagement with Disability Mainstreaming in the South: Development and (dis)connections. In S. Grech & K. Soldatic (Eds.), *Disability in the Global South: The Critical Handbook* (pp. 423–436). Switzerland: Springer International Publishing.

Chataika, T., 2017a. African Perspectives on Article 24 of the CRPD. In C. O'Mahoney & G, Quinn (eds.), *Disability Law and Policy: An Analysis of the UN Convention* (pp. 177-196. London: Clarus Press.

Chataika, T., 2017b. Disabled Women, Urbanization and Sustainable Development in Africa. In A. Lacey (ed.), *Women, Urbanization and Sustainability: Practices of Survival, Adaptation and Resistance.* (pp. 177-196). London: Palgrave McMillan.

Chataika, T., 2018a. *Addressing Albinism in Zimbabwe: A situational analysis.* World Bank: New York.

Chataika, T., 2018b. *The Routledge Handbook of Disability in Southern Africa*. London: Routledge.

Chataika, T., & Hlatywayo. L. 2019. *Report on the Implementation of the Continental Plan of Action on the African Decade of Persons with Disabilities* (2010-2019). Addis Ababa: African Union.

Chataika, T., 2020. *Toolkit for Action on Advancing the Rights of Women and Girls with Disabilities: Fighting Harmful Cultural Beliefs and Practices in Zimbabwe.* Harare: UNESCO Regional Office.

Chataika, T, Hlatywayo, L., 2022. Examining the Implementation of Inclusive Education in Zimbabwe. In T Chataika & L. Hlatywayo (eds.), *Disability Rights and Inclusiveness in Africa: The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Challenges and Change* (pp. 79). Boydell & Brewer.

Chataika, T., Gwaze, I. & Maroveke, M., 2019. *Midterm Review (MTR) of the Christian Blind Mission Country Plan (2015-2019)* Harare: Christen Blinden Mission (CBM).

Chataika, T., et al., 2016. 'What Kind of Development Are We Talking About?' A Virtual Roundtable with Tsitsi Chataika, Nilika Mehrotra, Karen Soldatic and Kater ̌ina Kola´r ̌ova´ Edited by Kater ̌ina Kola´r ̌ova, *Somatechnics*. 6(2): 142–158.

Chataika, T. & Goodley, D., 2024. *The Routledge Handbook of Postcolonial Disability Studies.* United Kingdom: Routledge Publishers.

Dastile, P. N. & Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S. J., 2013. Power, Knowledge and Being: Decolonial Combative Discourse as a Survival Kit for Pan Africanists in the 21st Century. *Alternation.* 20(1): 105-134.

De Sousa Santos, B., 2007. Beyond Abyssal Thinking: From Global Lines to Ecologies of Knowledges. *Review.* 30(1): 45-89.

Goody, J., 2006. *The theft of history*. Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University press.

Grech, S. & Soldatic, K., 2015. Disability and Colonialism: (dis) encounters and Anxious Intersectionalities. *Social Identities*. 21(1-3): 1-5.

Grosfoguel, R., 2007. The Epistemic Decolonial Turn: Beyond Political Economy Paradigms. *Cultural Studies.* 21 (2-3): 211-223.

Grosfoguel, R., 2011. Decolonising Post-Colonial Studies and Paradigms of Political Economy: Transmodernity, Decolonial Thinking and Coloniality. *Journal of Peripheral Cultural Production of the Luso-Hispanic World*. 1(1):1-5.

Hosking, D. Critical Disability Theory. 2008. In *A paper presented at the 4th Biennial Disability Studies Conference at Lancaster University, UK.*

Maldonado-Torres, N., 2007. On the Coloniality of Being, *Cultural Studies*. 21:2, 240-270.

McKenzie, J. & Chataika, T., 2018. Supporting Families in Raising Disabled Children to Enhance African Child Development. In K. Runswick-Cole, T. Curran, & K. Liddiard (Eds.). *The Palgrave Handbook of Disabled Children's Childhood Studies* (pp. 315-332). London: Palgrave

Ndlovu, M., 2015. *Cultural Villages in Post-apartheid South Africa: A Decolonial Perspective.* Unpublished PhD Thesis. Department of Anthropology: Monash University.

Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S. J., 2001. Imperial Hypocrisy, Settler Colonial Double Standards and Denial of Human Rights to Africans in Colonial Zimbabwe. In N. Bhebe and T. Ranger (eds.), *The Historical Dimensions of Democracy and Human Rights in Zimbabwe: Volume One: Precolonial and Colonial Legacies.* Harare: University of Zimbabwe Publications.

Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S. J., 2013. Why Decoloniality in the 21st Century? *The Thinker.* 48: 2013, 10-15.

Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S. J., 2015. Decoloniality as the Future of Africa. *History Campass*. 13(10): 485-496.

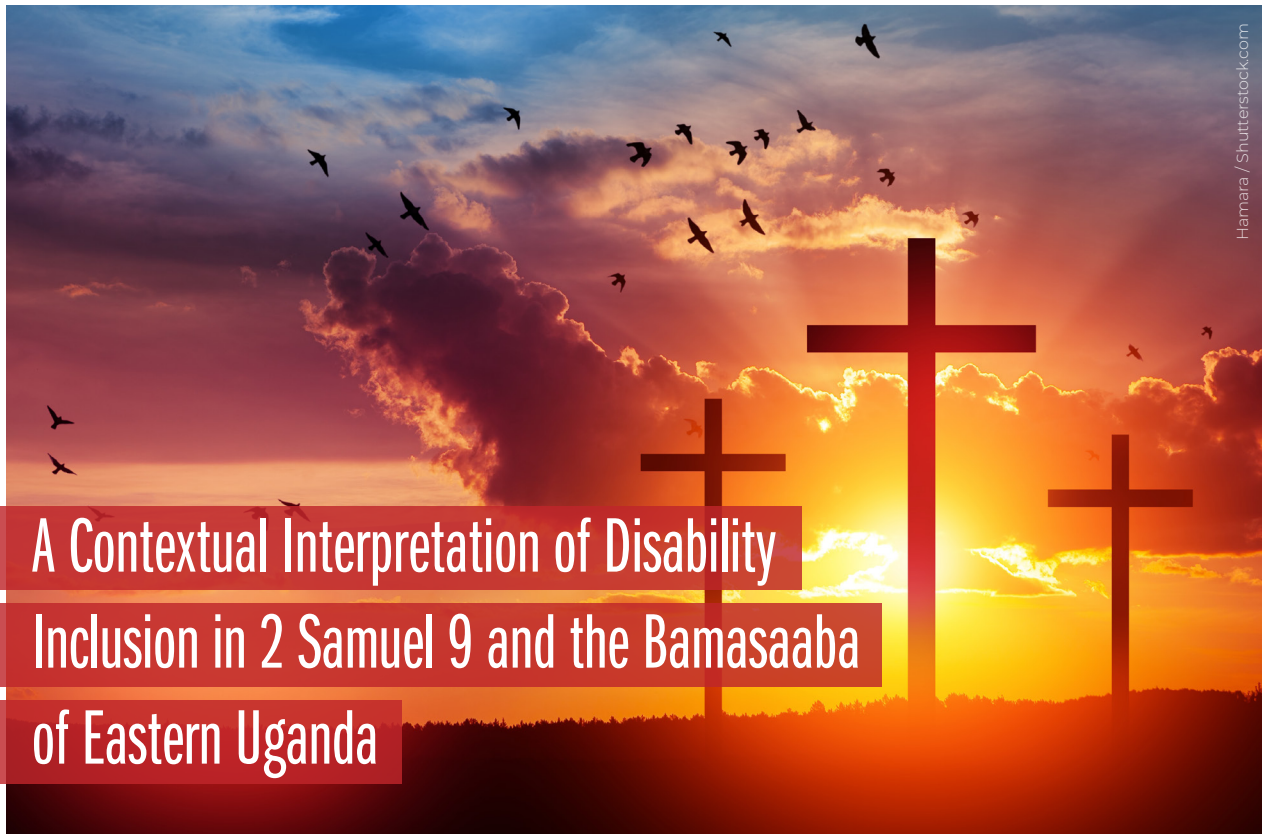
Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S. J., 2016. Decolonizing the University and the problematic Grammars of Change in South Africa. In *Keynote Address Delivered at the 5th Annual Students Conference on Decolonizing the Humanities and Social sciences in South Africa/Africa* (pp. 6-7). Durban: University of KwaZulu-Natal.

Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S.J., 2018. *Epistemic Freedom in Africa: Deprovincialization and Decolonization*. New York: Taylor & Francis.

Schalk, S., 2017. Critical Disability Studies as Methodology. *Journal of the Cultural Studies Association.* 6(1):1-4 https://doi.org/10.25158/L6.1.13

Phasha, N, Mahlo, D. & Dei, G. S. 2017. *Inclusive education in African contexts: A critical reader.* Springer.

Quijano, A., 2000. Coloniality of Power, Ethnocentrism, and Latin America. *Nepantla*. 3: 533-580.



A Contextual Interpretation of Disability Inclusion in 2 Samuel 9 and the Bamasaaba of Eastern Uganda

By Rev. Simon Masiga & Dr. Helen N. Nkabala

Abstract

Disability inclusion among African communities is shaped by African religious discourse on disability, which influence the perceptions of the society. This article provides a contextual reading of disability inclusion in 2 Samuel 9 and among Bamasaaba of Eastern Uganda. The authors argue that although inclusive communities are affirmed in both Old and New Testaments, some oppressive and discriminative interpretations of biblical texts still exist. It explores how interpretation of disability in 2 Samuel 9 and among Bamasaaba can transform religious perceptions on disability inclusion. Through interpretive hermeneutical approach and historical-critical methods, the article establishes that aspects of identity, social status and perception as interpreted in 2 Samuel 9 correspond to how Bamasaaba construct disability phenomenon in their socio-religious contexts. Contextual interpretation of disability inclusion is significant for the liberation, inclusion, and empowerment of people with disability to actively participate in society. Using African disability hermeneutics, biblical texts can be interpreted to transform the negative attitudes, theological views and religious perceptions on disability. Arguably, transforming the religious perceptions is necessary to removing barriers to inclusive religious and social participation of persons with disability.

Key words: African Hermeneutics, Disability in Africa, Inclusive participation, Bamasaaba, African Religion

Introduction

African communities have ultimate causal explanations for existential phenomenon of disability. The perceptions of the society towards inclusive development are greatly shaped by the African religious discourse on disability. African religious values are traditionally believed to create shared values, individual well-being and unity. The limited participation of people with disabilities

in religious activities or society is rather an irony (Chibaya, et al., 2021; UDSA, 2020; Ojok and Musenze, 2019). Davis (2013) acknowledges that the complexity of understanding being, and post-identity requires biblical scholarship to appreciate disability research as an important aspect for understanding human relations and construction of human identities. Therefore, this article explores how the African interpretation of 2 Samuel 9 can shape religious perceptions on disability inclusion among Ugandan communities.

The concept of disability has attracted several debates among academicians, social scientists and disability movements. According to Okola (2021), the World Council of Churches notes that disability is used to mean people who have capacities in different ways. Disability, therefore, is socially constructed by the people without impairment within society. In this regard, disability is used in this article to mean a situation of having an impairment and socially limited by the environmental (social and religious) barriers. People with disability include those physically impaired, visually and intellectually impaired. In African communities, disability among households is not separable from cultural belief systems, which are the basis for how the community understands and responds to disability among children. Ojok and Musenze (2019) argue that persons with disabilities were accepted and included in ancient Africa, and disability was not always seen as a "handicap."

In contrast, in today's Africa, persons with disability are increasingly becoming objects of pity and abuse because of ignorance and harsh economic conditions. Evidence of denying the identity of persons with disability abounds in churches where pastors exercise miraculous healing (Boaz, 2015, quoted in Ned, 2022:492). Additionally, certain persons with disabilities, particularly people living with albinism, are being killed because of the false belief that burying their heads in the foundation of a building makes the house owner rich (Ojok and Musenze, 2019). Historically, the challenges to disability inclusion in Africa are "Indigenous, colonial and post-colonial stigmas, legacies of armed conflicts and vast rural areas with epidemiological risks" (Falola and Hamel, 2021: 1). Scholars assert that persons with disability experience diverse challenges due to the religious and cultural beliefs regarding disability (Mukushi et al., 2019; Nyangweso, 2021).

Research Methodology

We conducted this study in randomly selected communities in Sironko and Manafwa districts of Eastern Uganda. This selection was based on the Uganda Disability Status Report (2019), which indicated that Districts in Eastern Uganda present the highest prevalence rate of 21.1% and the prevalence being high among Bugisu region, 37.8% in Sironko and 34.9% in Manafwa. The rationale for studying the Bamasaaba community was based on the need to consider the frameworks based on indigenous experiences and cultural contexts, when studying disability inclusion in the Global South (Nalugya et al., 2023: 404). We used the mixed method approach within the explanative sequential design to extensively study the research questions. Through a household survey, findings on Bamasaaba religious beliefs and perceptions of disability were obtained and analysed using descriptive statistics. The qualitative phase included interpretative hermeneutics, in-depth interviews and review of literatures on the study subject.

The component of biblical interpretation was completed through an interpretative hermeneutical approach based on historical critical method which was used in the exegetical study. During the hermeneutical analysis of disability in 2 Samuel 9, the process of interpretation considered the literal, functional dynamic meanings of the text based on contextual background. The exegetical analysis included an analysis of the historical context of 2 Samuel 9, the syntax analysis of words/phrases and how they are used in the text, and textual analysis to discuss the emerging themes on visualisation of disability inclusion in 2 Samuel 9. Through an intercultural iterative approach,

"The concept of disability has attracted several debates among academicians, social scientists and disability movements."

the exegetical findings on the interpretations of disability in 2 Samuel 9 are compared to the Bamasaaba religious interpretations of disability.

African Religious Discourse of Disability Phenomenon

We used data obtained from oral interviews with participants and literature reviews to discuss the African religious perspectives on disability. Efforts were made to express how the African religious beliefs and practices have been the basis for responding to disability challenges. Before engaging with the findings on religious perceptions and practices regarding disability among Bamasaaba, we explore the significant concepts and relationships regarding disability within African religious communities.

Religion and Disability in African Society

Religion, for centuries, has influenced how communities live with people having any disability. Etieyibo and Omiego (2016:2) state that religion

> means a set of shared attitudes, beliefs, values, goals and practices that characterizes an institution, an organization or a group...Religion... may be defined as a belief in the existence of a deity or supernatural power, a being that created and controls the universe and who is worshipped on the basis of such belief

Religion, as defined above consists of belief in the existence of deity and divine powers. It is thus an institutionalised system of religious beliefs and attitudes, as well as practices, in worship of God or a deity (Ned, 2022). For this article, religious traditions include: Judeo-Christianity, which holds beliefs in the biblical God, who created mankind in His image; and the African Traditional Religion which holds beliefs in the existing deity and supernatural being that has authority over life and controls what happens to the community. Religion in African societies is perceived as a contributor to Ubuntu Philosophy that promotes African humanism. Religious beliefs, values and practice influence how communities perceive and respond to disability among households. In African communities, disability is inseparable from cultural belief systems.

Imhoff (2017) has attested to the vital role played by the religious and theological interpretations of disability. From the perspective of social construction of disability meaning, religion and theology has been looked at as key factors that shape the cultural construction of disability. The religious communities construct their perception regarding disability and inclusion based on their religious backgrounds. This places religious context at the focal point for discussing disability.

The link between cultural practices and religious rituals is essential in understanding how religious communities perceive disability. In traditional African perspective, disability is influenced by the social treatment offered to persons with impairment (Falola and Hamel, 2021) and religious perceptions of disability (Bennett and Volpe, 2018). The perceptions and social norms can be biblically and theologically founded or culturally constructed. The biblical perspectives have historically shaped how society relates with persons with disability (Otieno, 2009). The biblical texts have served as liberative or oppressive passages considering people with disability (McLachlan, 2018; Otieno, 2009; Hedges-Goettl, 2002; Rose, 1997). Visibly, religious traditions have a bearing on how people with disability (PWDs) are perceived and treated (Mukushi, et al., 2019:103).

Bamasaaba Religious Beliefs of Disability

This section presents findings on the traditional religious beliefs regarding disability among Bamasaaba, who are the decedents Masaba living in slopes of Mt Elgon, in a culturally sensitive community, found in Eastern Uganda (Khamalwa, 2018). The traditional religious beliefs among Bamasaaba saturate their social and cultural life style, influencing their perceptions and practices when it comes to living with disability. This section addresses the question of religious perceptions of disability from interviews and how they shape the response of Bamasaaba to disability challenges and participation of people with disability in society.

The Bamasaaba's key religious beliefs regarding disabilities include it being the will of God (60%), blessings from gods (10%), curse of disobedience (7%), work of spiritual demons (7%), punishment for sin (7%), unclean before God (3%) and others (8%). From the findings, one can see that majority of the respondents attribute disability to God or the ancestral gods. The Bamasaaba, religiously

Table 2.1: Survey responses on religious beliefs regarding disability among Bamasaaba, n=312

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percent %
Religious Beliefs by Bamasaaba Community	Blessing from gods	29	9.6
	Work of spiritual demons	20	6.6
	Unclean before God	9	3
	Curse of disobedience	21	7
	Punishment of sin	20	6.6
	The will of God	179	59.3
	Other, not on list	24	7.9

Source: Primary data November 2022.

attribute disability to the work of God and ancestral spirits. Ancestral spirits are responsible for interpretations of the circumstances that would have caused disability in the family.

In his words, a cultural leader asserted that whenever a person is born with disability, *Wele musambwa* (Lit., Ancestral spirit) would say that this child is born but is not a true human being" *(*Oral Interview with cultural leader, 16 Nov 2022). Because of this religious belief, most persons living with disability are alienated on grounds of not being fully human. The religious leader (2022) noted,

> In most cases they push them behind, because they think that the disability come from curses, which may have resulted from their parents being disobedient and rebellious to their parents. When a woman is pregnant, they are cursed. So, they think that disability is as a result of being cursed *(*Interview, 14 November).

The most common religious notions are centred on disability being a curse from *Wele* (God). The communities have also popularly attributed disability to demonic spirits, which they argue that whenever a pregnant woman meets with ghosts or demonic spirits, the evil spirits make the child in the womb to get a disability. This has resulted to religious rejection of individuals with congenital disabilities compared to those with acquired disabilities.

In order to appease the *Basambwa*, (ancestral spirits) to take away the curse, 'a goat was slaughtered, roasted with Matooke' (Cultural Leader, 18 Jan 2023). There was also a traditional belief that there are supernatural powers behind disabilities. The belief is that for a disability to occur, then *weles (ancestral gods)* are not happy. Traditionally, Bamasaaba hold that, when one is indebted to someone or grab their land and does not want to pay back, *Wele* will punish them through bringing disability to the household. In this narrative, disability is presented as an imagery to explain the consequences of injustice, dishonesty, lack of integrity and many other vices. This reveals the cultural conscience of how the Bamasaaba handled disability.

Bamasaaba Perceptions on the Causes of Disability

We asked participants about the perceived causes of disability among Bamasaaba. Our findings are presented in table 2 below. The main views of the people in the community include the curse from parents (18%), sickness of the mothers (13%), misfortunes during pregnancy (11%), premature birth (8%), practising divination (5%), displeasure from the gods (5%), alcoholism during pregnancy (3%) and others (37%), that included accidents, family inheritance, delayed delivery, demonic attacks and perception that it can happen without cause. During oral interviews, religious leaders indicated that any impairment was seen as an abnormality which was as a result of a curse, and the majority of the Bamasaaba assume that a person wishes to be physically impaired. One religious leader (2022) revealed that 'Persons with disability were perceived to be the reason for their disability. But this defers with the level of knowledge one has about living with disability and those who are religiously informed' *(*Interview, 14 November).

Table 2.2: Perceived causes of disability

People's view on disability cause	The Curse on parents	54	18.2
	Misfortunes during pregnancy	32	10.8
	Displeasure of the gods	16	5.4
	Sickness of the mother	37	12.5
	Premature birth	24	8.1
	Alcoholism during pregnancy	8	2.7
	Practicing divination	15	5.1
	Other, not on list	111	37.4
Total		**297**	**100**

Source: Primary data collected using Household Survey, November 2022.

One cultural leader (2023) noted, "Bamasaaba traditionally understand that disability can be related to sickness and other disabilities are congenital. There are disabilities that are acquired in one's adulthood, accidents that happen to young people" (Interview, 18 January).

The perception that having a disabled child may imply that one has been influenced by evil powers that deform them is very problematic. This creates divisions regarding how persons with disability interact socially within religious communities. The idea that disability is a burden leaves persons with disabilities socially and religiously alienated from those without disability.

McMahon-Panther and Bornman (2023) discover that perceived causes create environmental factors that become persistent obstacles that hinder religious participation of persons with disabilities in the religious communities and life of the church. Ault et al., (2023) discover a positive correlation between perceptions regarding disability and participation of persons with disability in society. Arguably, transforming perceptions and interpretations of disability phenomenon is crucial for inclusive participation. This is the subject of the subsequent section.

2 Samuel 9 on Disability Inclusion

To address the above perceptions and promote participation, a distinctive African disability theology is necessary to construct positive reflections regarding disability within biblical texts and African religious communities. This section presents the interpretation of 2 Samuel 9 from African religious perspective using the disability theology lens.

Reading the Bible in the Context of Disability in Africa

African perspectives, in this study, include the Bamasaaba religious perspectives that shape how they use the Bible to respond to the disability question. The role the Bible plays in the life of Africans depends on how the Bible is interpreted and appropriated. The Bible is popularly regarded as God's divinely inspired and communicated to human beings and can hence be used for liberation and redemption.

Arguably, the Bible is a religious book containing significant sacred texts with a relevant message for

> "Efforts were made to express how the African religious beliefs and practices have been the basis for responding to disability challenges."

African socio-cultural contexts. The Bible speaks into the cultural life of Africans. Most Africans view their cultures as a medium of traditional religious practices. Cultural practices that encourage stigma, discrimination, negative attitudes towards people with disability can be addressed through the teaching of the Bible. The Bamasaaba readers of the Bible have used it to address challenges in their social and religious life. This is because the sacredness of biblical texts can be used as tools for liberation in the socio-cultural contexts of people living with disability.

The Bible has also been recognised as a spiritual resource. For instance, when viewed as a spiritual resource, it is considered as a book for spiritual development and edification. The persons living with disability equally have a soul and spirit that need spiritual nurture. They also struggle with spiritual warfare, evil and demonic attacks. This makes the Bible very relevant in their spiritual lives, since it is perceived and trusted as a book with spiritual powers among Africans (Ukpong, 1995).

Interpretation of Disability Phenomenon in 2 Samuel 9 and Among the Bamasaaba

Interpretative Context of Bamasaaba

The socio-religious context of constructing disability and interpreting disability phenomenon among Bamasaaba is based on the social and religious realities of Bamasaaba. As an indigenous community, within their socio-cultural contexts, the Bamasaaba understand disability as a congenital burden, personal tragedy and spiritual curse. This understanding emerged from the social realities that the family or persons with disability experience. From our findings, when a child is born with a disability, the Bamasaaba consulted their ancestral spirits to understand why this burden is given to them. To those who revealed themselves as Christians or Muslims by religious affiliation recounted that they perceived disability as a burden given by God to reveal their love for Him and for the people of God. This construction can be regarded as religious ethos for disability inclusion, but perceiving disability as a spiritual curse from ancestral spirits constructs disabling theologies that limit inclusion.

Findings from the previous section show that living with disability is challenging because of how

“The persons living with disability equally have a soul and spirit that need spiritual nurture.”

the community constructs the phenomenon of disability. The Bamasaaba use disability language and imagery to express their social and religious connotation of disability. They are largely inclined to the perception that disability is a curse brought by God or ancestral spirits. This influences their attitudes and behaviours regarding disability inclusion. Specially constructing disability as the will of God, and congenital burden correspond with the presentation of the disability of Mephibosheth in 2 Sam 9.

Exegetical Analysis of 2 Samuel 9 on Disability Inclusion

The context of the Book of 2 Samuel is religious, since it presents the history of God’s dealings with national leadership of Israel. Mathew (2010) notes that 2 Samuel continues the story of Israel’s monarchy, tracing the history of David’s reign from its triumphs to its troubles. Brueggemann (1990) affirms that the text is historically reliable concerning the life of Israel during this period. The text is theologically self-conscious but not in an excessively pious manner.

Throughout the passage, we observe that the narrators record how people are talking to one another and how their talking matters a lot. Interpreting the Book of 2 Samuel would therefore require consideration of both the narrative criticism and hermeneutical assumptions. As Firth (2019) points out, narrative criticism is a key tool for interpreting Samuel. Reading the text evokes a fresh discernment of life as a place where the power of speaking and listening matters to God and to us. Power, personality and providence are all present in the text (Brueggemann, 1990). This has an implication on how we read disability from this text. Our study approached the text of 2 Samuel as a living text to give hope for new insights regarding interpretation.

Scholars have argued that the Books of Samuel have a blend of genres, and so consist of various literary forms. The literary style and genre of 2 Samuel is related to the genre and writing style of former prophets. The dominant literary style of the books of Samuel being a narrative discourse and prophetic discourse (Brueggemann, 1990). The narrative genre covers much of the content as the authors employ it to indicate the transition period in the leadership history of Israel (Davies, 2009), making 1&2 Samuel constitute one of the finest historical narratives in all biblical literature (Letellier, 2023). Davies (2009) argues that containing the different literary forms give the books of Samuel depth and richness in content, with theological, literary and historical significance.

This study focused on the analysis of David's reign. This is sometimes called succession narrative or court history of David, because it is composed from the succession narrative source (Craig, 2013:5). 2 Samuel particularly contains records of the Israel's monarchy under the reign of king David. The background to 2 Samuel also reveals how book continues the story of how God established His kingdom through the leadership of Israel's monarchy (Matthew et al., 2012:97). In this study, we analysed 2 Samuel 9 with focus to the larger story of God's faithfulness to fulfil his promise to His people, based on His love covenant with His people. Faithfulness is a central theme in the Book. Based on this context, 2 Samuel 9 was chosen to visualize disability inclusion, since the text contains a context that can be used to universalize the faithfulness and love of God. Considering the perspective of love covenant was regarded as all-inclusive in nature. 2 Samuel 9 is read from a disability perspective to reveal that no man should look down on any person with disability, because before the Lord, all human kind are not above God. Focus is on the characters who the narrator considers as complex and uses them to understand the interpretation of the disability phenomenon in 2 Samuel 9.

Mephibosheth's Identity *(4:4; vv.3, 6, 13)*

This textual theme is presented to underscore the identity of persons with disability. Mephibosheth who is representing persons with disability is first introduced in 2 Sam 4:4, and later introduced in 9:3, at the request of King David. The passage of 2 Samuel 9:3, 6 is interpreted regarding the identity of persons with disability. With reference to social construction of disability, vv.3, 6 are analysed to reveal the textual construction of the identity of Mephibosheth, amidst disability and how the presentation of Mephibosheth reveals the notion of disability and identity crisis.

In verse 3, the phrase **נָֽתָנוֹהיְל ןֵ֣ב** (translated as 'Son of Jonathan) is used to introduce the son of Jonathan, who qualifies to receive the kindness of the king, as declared in verse 1. The phrase is used in the domain of kinship, to mean a direct or indirect descendent, child or offspring of Jonathan. The identity of the son of Jonathan is not fully introduced here though. Ziba, the servant in the household of Saul decided to introduce this son by nature of physical appearance. It is recorded: "**רֶמאֹ֤יַו אָבִיצ֙ ֹֽלא־הֶ֔מֶלַּ֣ד ֗עוֹד ןֵ֥ב ֽנָתָנוֹהיְל הֵ֥כְנ םִֽיָלְגַר:**," (Ziba answered the king, yes there is still a son of Jonathan whose feet are crippled"*)*. The phrase: **םִֽיָלְגַר הֵ֥כְנ** holds the purpose of providing a description of the nature of the person who had remained in the house of Saul. From the narrative, it is not clear whether David knew about this son. Early in 2 Samuel 4:4, this son is introduced and the author provides us some hint regarding their identity. In 4:4, an account on the family background of this son is given. The term, **הכנ** can be translated as being stricken, to be struck down or lame as used in 2 Sam 4:4 (Chine, 2009:273). However, the narrative indicates that the son was crippled, and after falling down, become lame (v. 4c). Notably, when one is stricken in feet, such one can be considered lame.

The narrator indicates that he is Jonathan's son and that he is disabled, before mentioning his name. This reveals an identity crisis due to disability. When Ziba is introducing Mephibosheth to David, he does not use his name, rather his embodiment (9:3). Ziba is seen to have had the history of how persons with disability were treated in their communities. So, he chose to introduce Mephibosheth by his disability. The narrator redirects our attention to this reference in 9:13. The disability status denied him the privilege of being the claimant of the throne of his grandfather and identity of royalty. Craig (2013) argues that we learn that as a member of the Saul's bloodline he is a claimant to his grandfather's throne. The day that his father and grandfather died, Mephibosheth's nurse, recognising that the young heir's life could be at risk, rescued him. As they fled, the boy fell and

was permanently maimed. Infirmity follows him like a refrain through the David narrative (Cf. Sam 9:3, 9:13, and 19:26) argues Craig (2013: 63).

The Social Status of Persons with Disability *(vv.3-4)*

The phrases: **רִיכָמ תיֵּב** ('house of Machir', and **רָבְד וֹל** ('Lo-debar') in verse 4 guide our understanding of the social status of Mephibosheth. The house of Machir is very significant in this narrative. Particular interest is in who Machir is in the narrative of David and Saul. This phrase is important in discussing the household for people with disability. Although Mephibosheth was impaired, the text indicates he belonged to a household of Machir in Lo-debar. Craig (2013) recounts that according 2 Sam. 17:27, the exact location of Lo-debar is unknown, but it seems to have been in Northern Transjordan.

Two aspects explain the social status of Mephibosheth. First is the location and household where he lived, Lo-debar (9:3). He was found somewhere, with people that knew him. This implies that people with disability need people that can introduce them, advocate and speak for them, where they cannot be present. Social and religious belonging within society is the basis for one's social status. Although one lived with disability, the social status of the family where they belong has a great impact on how the community perceives them. To encourage participation and inclusive development, persons with disability must be advocated for to have a place where they belong in society. In verse 6, the narrator begins with introduction of Mephibosheth arriving before David. Not to leave us guessing, the narrator mentions him as **ןָתָנוֹהְי־ןֶבּ תשֶׁבִיפְמ** (Lit. 'Mephibosheth son of Jonathan'). What could be interesting is the assumption of the narrator that David and other readers already know that the son of Jonathan was Mephibosheth. Since he had been talked about in 2 Sam 4:4, it could be considered that the author is aware that readers of this narrative will resonate the narrative of chapter 4 and that of chapter 9. Although this could be the case, the nature of how Mephibosheth's account is engaged could be associated with nature of being disabled.

In the presence of David, Mephibosheth prostrates. This act of **ויָנָּפ־לַע לֹפִּיַו** (translated as 'falling on faces') is historically symbolic for honouring the king. Given that Mephibosheth was from the royal family line, it can be assumed that he was aware how one behaves before kings. It is also possible that Mephibosheth prostrates plead for life. This can be indicated by David's opening words to Mephibosheth in verse 7. David said: **אָרִיתּ־לַא** (Translated 'Not you fear'). This is an indication that David is aware that Mephibosheth would actually be afraid to meet him. We can attribute this to the history of how David had delt with Saul's household.

To calm the environment in Mephibosheth's mind and also to affirm his previous words of אָרִיתּ־לַא, David goes to assure him that, **דֶסֶח ךְמִּע הֶשֱׂעֶא** (translated as 'I will show to you kindness). The verb, **הֶשֱׂע**, translated, "to perform something according to something, or do as someone has done," (Chines, 2009: 347), is often used when making reference to the practice of an individual, as they observe kindness (Cf. Gen. 19:19), exercise kingship (Cf 2 Kings. 21:7) or bestow life and kindness upon (Cf Job 10:12). David's kindness is for Jonathan's sake (ןָתָנוֹהְי רוּבֲעַב).

Contextual Interpretation of Disability Phenomenon

The exegetical analysis indicated that the identity of Mephibosheth (representing persons with disability) is compromised by the authors because of the cultural representation of disability. Among Bamasaaba, the identity of persons with disability is also compromised by the cultural view of disability. In both cultural contexts there is an identity crisis presented, which is attributed to use of cultural nicknames in place of personal names for individuals living with disability. The identity crisis challenges the Ubuntu worldview that is characteristic of African community. Denial to identify persons with disability by their proper names leads social exclusion in schools and religious communities. Persons with disability should be part of the narratives and interaction in society and accorded dignity by identifying them by their proper names rather than nicknames. This can encourage them to find a sense of belonging in community.

The discourse on disability phenomenon in the text and among Bamasaaba also indicates that identity construction of persons with disability among Jewish and Bamasaaba communities is linked with the cultural ideology of how disability

is represented in the respective communities. This influences how individuals form the concept of self, which is necessary for positive identity formation (Murugami, 2009). The cultural systems and religious values have also been argued by other studies to be serious constraints to the identity of persons with disability (Mugeere et al., 2015; Murugami, 2009). Within an environment of religious and cultural diversity, disability is constructed differently. The environment that side-lines impairment, such as the one indicated in text (2 Sam 9) and among Bamasaaba can greatly impact the identity of persons with disability. From a social constructivist perspective, positive identity of persons with disability is constructed by challenging the social construction of normal bodies embracing the diversity created by impairments (Murugami, 2009).

In 9:8, Mephibosheth refers to himself as 'a dead dog' when he met with David. In the context of Mephibosheth meeting with David, the reference to himself as a dead dog would be polite for one pleading for his life. At the invitation of David, Mephibosheth sees himself unfit for the palace because of his disability. This negative self-image by persons with disability is equally common within African society. Notably, "people with disability hate themselves and are often tough in their interaction with other people in society" (Interview with religious leader, 14th Nov 2022). The phrase 'dead dog' would mean one who is seen as useless. This corresponds with how Bamasaaba locally identify persons with disabilities. Persons with disabilities among Bamasaaba in Uganda do not receive education training, religious attention and discipleship, something that leaves them to live socially and religiously deprived lives.

Although Mephibosheth is presented as a cripple, and views himself as 'dead dog,' the text shows David being hesitant to reject Mephibosheth (vv.7,8-13). David's actions defy the Hebrew traditions that disrespected people with disability. David poses another enigma in his response to the servant Ziba. He demonstrates how a covenant keeping God would respond to His people that live with disability. David's perception disagrees with religious model of disability that indicate how disability is considered as sin and punishment (Lopez, 2016:7). The African religious communities and community leaders need to embrace a positive image of persons with disability. This is fundamental to promotion of inclusive social and religious development.

As indicated, persons with disability may often develop negative perceptions of themselves, especially in interaction with the society. Importantly, the leaders should have a positive perception. Our findings among the Bamasaaba indicate that inclusive policies exists but the attitudes of religious leaders towards inclusion are largely negative. Religious leaders adopt a discourse that focuses on healing for people with disabilities. This challenges the self-image of people with disability. By using disability-related imagery, Belser (2019) argues that narratives create social challenges that make bodies with disability to serve as social inadequacies, hence making disability hinderance to service at the altar. Comparatively, where King David shows a positive perception, the religious and community leaders among Bamasaaba need to move an extra mile of transforming their perceptions regarding persons with disability. The difference in the findings is attributed to the socio-religious contexts that shape both Jewish and Bamasaaba communities.

Conclusion

In this paper, we analysed the narrative of 2 Sam 9 on Mephibosheth. We have argued that disability inclusion can be visualised in the Hebrew Bible. From the socio-religious context of Bamasaaba and the text of 2 Sam 9, impairments are used to introduce persons with disability; found to belong somewhere; perceived as outcast who do not deserve recognition. Arguably, the main issues of identity, social status and perception as interpreted in 2 Sam 9 correspond with how Bamasaaba construct disability phenomenon in their socio-religious contexts. Although the text of 2 Sam 9 does explicitly address inclusion, the narrative themes that emerge from the disability interpretation can be used as a model for promoting inclusive participation of people with disability in society.

This article reveals the ways through which comparative interpretations of disability in the Bible can contribute to academic debates on inclusivity for persons with disability. An interpretation of 2 Samuel 9 on disability emerged with three themes

that are critical for consideration. They included: Identity of people with disability; their social status of, and the perception of leaders towards people with disability.

By investigating the historical narratives on religious perceptions of disability, our study has highlighted the negative religious beliefs and harmful cultural practices regarding disability, that originate from religious and cultural perceptions of disability. Adopting an African disability hermeneutics, biblical texts can be interpreted to transform the negative attitudes, theological views and religious perceptions on disability.

References

Ault, M. J., et al. 2023. Perceptions of Faith Leaders on the Inclusion and Participation of Individuals with Disabilities in their Communities', *Journal of Disability & Religion*, 27(1): 138-159.

Belser, J.W., 2019. Priestly Aesthetics: Disability and Bodily Difference in Leviticus 21, *Interpretation*, 73(4): 355–366. https://doi.org/10.1177/0020964319857605.

Brueggemann, W., 1990. First and Second Samuel: *Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching*. Westminster: Johnknox Press.

Chibaya, G., Govender, P., & Naidoo, D. (2021). United Nations Convention on the Rights of Person with Disabilities (UNCRPD) Implementation: Perspectives of Persons with Disabilities in Namibia. *Occupational Therapy International*, 52(1): 16-23 https://doi.org/10.1155/2021/6693141

Clines, D. J. A., Stec, D. M. and De Roo, J. C. R., 2009. *The Concise Dictionary of Classical Hebrew.* http://ci.nii.ac.jp/ncid/BB01603035.

Craig, E. M., 2013. '2 Samuel,' In Jerome T. W.(ed), *Berit Olam: Studies in Hebrew Narrative Poetry.* Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, pp.1-344

Davis, J. L., 2013. *The Disability Studies Reader,* 4th Edition. New York, London: Routledge

Etieyibo, E. and Omiegbe, O., 2016. 'Religion, Culture, and Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities in Nigeria,' *African Journal of Disability*, 5(1): 192. https://doi.org/10.4102/ajod.v5i1.192

Falola, T. and Hamel, N., 2021. Africanizing Disability: Towards on Articulation of African Studies. In T. Falola & N. Hamel (eds.), *Disability in Africa: Inclusion, Care, and the Ethics of Ubuntu*, University of Rochester Press, Rochester, NY. pp. 1-46.

Hedges-Goettl, B. J., 2002. Thinking Theologically About Inclusion. *Journal of Religion, Disability and Health*, 6 (4): 7-30. http://dx.doi.org/10.1300/J095v06n04_02

Imhoff, S., 2017. Why Disability Studies Needs to Take Religion Seriously, *Religions*, 8(9): 186-197. https://doi.org/10.3390/rel8090186.

Lopez, M., 2016. *An Old Testament Theology of Disability,' A Doctor of Philosophy Dissertation*, School of Theology, Fuller Theological Seminary.

Khamalwa, J. P. W. (2018). *Identity, Power, and Culture: Imbalu: Initiation Ritual Among the Bamasaaba of Uganda*. Kampala: Makerere University Press.

Mathew, A. K., 2010. The Historical Books. In Dockery D. S. (ed.), *The Holman Concise Bible Commentary.* Nashville: B&H Publishing Group.

Matthew, K.A., Bergen, R.D and Beyer B.E., 2012. '1 and 2 Samuel,' In *Holman Illustrated Bible Handbook*. Nashville, Tennessee: Holman Bible Publishers, pp.87-99.

McLachlan, D., 2018. A Critical Examination of the Interaction of Disability Theology and Ideas of Atonement. Doctor of Philosophy Thesis, University of Manchester.

McMahon-Panther, G. and Bornman, J., 2023. The Perceptions of Persons with Disabilities, Primary Caregivers and Church Leaders Regarding Barriers and Facilitators to Participation in a Methodist Congregation. *Journal of Disability & Religion*, 27(1): 39-85.

Mukushi, A. T., Makhube J.C., and Mabvurira V., 2019. Cultural and Religious beliefs and Practices Abusive to Children with Disabilities in Zimbabwe. *Global Journal of Health Sciences,* 11(7):103-112.

Nalugya, R., Nimusiima, C., Kawesa, E.S., Nambejja, H., Van Hove, G., Seeley, J. et al., 2023. *Obuntu Bulamu*: Parental Peer-to-Peer Support for Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in Central Uganda. *African Journal of Disability* 12(0): 1-11. https://doi.org/0.4102/ajod.v12i0.948

Ned, L. Y., 2022. African Renaissance as a Premise for Reimagined Disability Studies in Africa. *Journal of Black Studies*, 53(5): 485–504. https://doi.org/10.1177/00219347221074391

Nyangweso, M., 2021, 'Disability in Africa: A Cultural/Religious Perspective', in T. Falola & N. Hamel (eds.), *Disability in Africa: Inclusion, Care, and the Ethics of Ubuntu*, University of Rochester Press, Rochester, NY. pp. 115-136.

Okola, A. 2021. Introduction: Changing Scenes of Disability in Church and Society. In Kabue, S. Kalengyo, E. Ndavula, J. and Okola, A. (eds). *The Changing Scenes of Disability in Church and Society: A Resource Book for Theological and Religious Studies.* Nairobi: WCC-EDAN. Pp. ix-xxi

Ojok, P. & Musenze, J. B., 2019. A Defence of Identity for Persons with Disability: Reflections from Religion and Philosophy versus Ancient African culture. *African Journal of Disability*, 8(0): 1-6. https://doi.org/10.4102/ajod.v8i0.490

Otieno, P. A., (2009. Biblical and Theological Perspectives on Disability: Implications on the Rights of Persons with Disability in Kenya. *Disability Studies Quarterly*, 29(4). n. page. https://doi.org/10.18061/dsq.v29i4.988.

Rose, A., 1997. Who Causes the Blind to See': Disability and Quality of Religious life. *Disability & Society,* 12(3):395–405. https://doi.org/10.1080/09687599727245

Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2018. Uganda Functional Difficulties Survey 2017. Kampala, Uganda.

Ukpong, J. S., 1995. Rereading the Bible with African eyes: Inculturation and Hermeneutics. *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa*, 91: 3-14. https://ixtheo.de/Record/164003448X

Whither Individuality? A Re-reading of Segun Ogungbemi's Scholarship on Individuality-Community Debate in African Philosophy

By Dr. Sunday L. Oladipupo

Abstract

Human nature in Africa, especially among the Yoruba, is a subject of contention in contemporary age. It is, however, important to mention that existing literature abound that suggests the Yoruba as a communalistic society. Thus, the is perceived as a corporate entity where communal living is placed above individual existence. Against this background, Segun Ogungbemi contends in his article "An Existential Study of Individuality in Yoruba Culture" that this age-long belief about Africans being communalistic in nature seems to have reduced the possibility of individuality in Africa because it is western-directed. Using the analytical method of philosophy, this study attempts a further interrogation of Segun Ogungbemi's perspective on the place of individuality in understanding human nature within the Yoruba cultural context. This is because, the challenge of this possibility has opened a new vista in the narrative of scholars of African studies. The idea of holistic communal nature of the Africa and Africans has been redirected such that we now have two camps on the belief system, namely radical and moderate communalism. In spite of the dichotomy and the contention of these two camps, each of them still recognises the place of community or sense of collectivity in Africa. While the radical school of thought places the community far above the individuals, the moderate school of thought is of the view that the individual makes up the society/community. Therefore, the claim is *we are because I am, and since I am, therefore we are*. This is against Mbiti's view that "I am, because we are; and since we are, therefore I am." While the latter represents the view of the radical camp, the former is a representation of the moderate camp. It is the contention of this discourse that Ogungbemi's postulation tends towards radicalising the individuality far above the communal nature of the

essence of the individual in Africa society. Hence, a re-reading of his argument within the prism of the moderate communalism in which Ogungbemi's contention is considered western-centric.

Keywords: Individuality, Communalism, Segun Ogungbemi, Yoruba, African Philosophy

Introduction

The question of existence and essence is fundamental in philosophy. World cultures have their different understanding of the inherent reality and interpretation of the existential model of cohabitation. While some cultures conceive human existence as that which is livable individually, others view it from a corporate perspective. This fundamentally gives credence to the essence of collectivism and individualism discourse in philosophy. This article beams a searchlight on the history of human development in Africa, especially among the Yoruba in the current age. It reflects on the profound existing literature that suggests Yoruba as a communalistic society; that is, a society where corporate existence permeates people's activities with little or no place for individual identity. Thus, the aims of this article are first, to examine Ogungbemi's position on this debate, and, second, to interrogate his defense of individuality in the Yoruba culture.

Against this backdrop, this article re-evaluates the age-long belief of Africa and Africans in communalism with the inevitability of the essence and place of the individual that seems to be discouraged in African traditional society. This is done through a re-reading of Segun Ogungbemi's (1992) argument in his article, "An Existential Study of Individuality in Yoruba Culture." The idea of the holistic communal nature of Africa and Africans has been redirected such that we now have two camps on the belief system, namely radical and moderate communalism. Though each of the two camps still recognises the place of the community or the sense of collectivity in Africa, they have their point of departure. While the radical school of thought places the community far above the individuals, the moderate school of thought believes that the individuals make up the society/community. Therefore, rather than the dominant view of J. S. Mbiti that: "I am, because we are; and since we are, therefore, I am," a more recent perspective is that "*we are, because I am, and since I am, therefore, we are.*" While the former represents the view of the radical camp, the latter is a representation of the moderate camp.

Ogungbemi's article under review is more of the moderate view. The context herein is not on the two camps as that is sufficient as the subject matter of a discourse on its own. Hence, this current re-reading sets to examine pungently Ogungbemi's contention on the place of the individual in the African worldview. His seminal article on "An Existential Study of Individuality in Yoruba Culture" (1992) shall be critically engaged with a view to showing the relevance of transformation in human cultural development. This discourse therefore explores Ogungbemi's argument within the understanding of communalism, as a cultural belief that needs adjustment to meet up with the current reality that Africa contends with. Though, as an advocate of cultural rebirth, some of Ogungbemi's analysis and/or criticisms of the African communalistic nature is abnegated in this discourse, his position serves as an eye opener to the introduction and internalisation of individuality in African cultural belief. This is suggestive of the fact that communalism, though considered as one of the natural structures of the African worldview, is not devoid of flaws. This reasoning is one of the major features that defines Africa and African worldview.

"The idea of the holistic communal nature of Africa and Africans has been redirected such that we now have two camps on the belief system, namely radical and moderate communalism."

Using Ogungbemi's argument as a premise, this article, therefore, projects the inevitability of the advancement and changes in the human society, and cultural beliefs in an ever-evolving universe that is occupied by rational beings. This prepares the ground for a situational interrogation of the possibility of individuality in the African society and culture without total rejection of the Yoruba communalistic belief as one of the major beliefs of Africans. Hence, the argument of this paper hinges on the fact that such a cultural belief evolution, as championed by Ogungbemi's idea of individuality in Yoruba, could reflect the dynamics of Africa and African societies. This is followed by a critical reflection on the possibility of individuality in Yoruba without necessarily disavowing Yoruba communalistic belief as one of the major doctrinal beliefs of the people which is the fulcrum of this discourse.

A Conspectus of Segun Ogungbemi's Arguments

The central argument of Ogungbemi as chronicled in the paper vitalises the existence of individuality in African culture as against the age-long belief that Africa is a communalistic society. Ogungbemi opened up his argument with the recognition of the importance of the corporate nature of humans in Africa and particularly in the Yoruba culture. He, however, refutes the way in which such belief was exaggerated by scholars such as Collin M. Turnbull, John S. Mbiti, and E.A. Ruch (see Ogungbemi, 1992: 98). His argument against the claim of these scholars is that the individual is holistically a representation of the larger society, as popularly echoed in Mbiti's assertion, "I am, because we are; and since we are, therefore I am" (Ogungbemi, 1992: 98). To Ogungbemi, Mbiti's assumption is merely a way of denying the possibility of the individual in attaining his innate potentials, outside the dictate of the society.

Ogunbemi in his argument articulates four points to argue for the plausibility of individuality in Africa. These points form the fulcrum of his argument against the idea that Africans are purely communalistic in nature. The starting point of his argument is built around his claim that the obsession with which Mbiti (1969) and others emphasised the communal nature of humans in Africa, without a recourse to individuality is exaggerated; hence, his critique of their view. By individuality, Ogungbemi (1992) contends that the over-bloated idea of communality in Africa suggests a lack of understanding of the significance of the individual as a major player in community development. Thus, one is poised to reiterate here that individuality as used by and interpreted through this piece, is that which recognises the indispensability of the individual right to decision and self-discovery in the African society.

It is from the above view that he argues that they have carried their generalisation too far. This he tries to puncture with inherent evidence from the Yoruba concept of individuality as envisaged in their creation story and some of their sayings and proverbs that reflect the idea of individuation in human society *a la* Yoruba culture. Ogungbemi argues further that communal existence is basically the nature of humans but as humans become more aware of themselves, and with the influence of technological and industrial revolution, the concept of individuality becomes more pronounced. Ogungbemi thinks that the more a society is governed properly, with the basic infrastructures put in place with security, the less dependent on the communal existence he or she is. This is built on his idea of self-consciousness and desires. Corroborating this, Ogungbemi (1992) argues that when a conducive environment is emplaced, there will be room for creative reasoning, thinking and writing which we have witnessed in Europe and America that promote the existential stage of the individual in human and societal development.

Ogungbemi furthers his argument that Africans are poignant with their cultural belief in corporate existence only to savour material and psychological benefits that could result from such a relation and pointed out that, this is not only applicable to the Africans (Ogungbemi, 1992: 98). This position is not but necessarily connected to Plato's theory of human nature that reveals man as ineradicably social. But despite this preponderant reality, one cannot rule out the possibility of individual traits in humanity since "there is the manifest fact that different individuals have different aptitudes and interests; there are farmers, craftsmen, soldier, etc., each fitted by nature, training, and experience to specialise in one kind of task" (Stevenson, 1974: 27). Invariably, one is perturbed to accept this reality as it suggests the fact that no human can live in

isolation because an individual can never provide all that is needed by him-/herself since man's want is insatiable. This seems to imply that corporate existence, that is being aggrandised by African scholars to be the foundation and fundamental attribute of Africans, is not limited to Africans, in Ogungbemi's view. It is also a practice in other climes since it is natural for human beings to live in society, as anything otherwise, makes human less than human in the rational sense of what humanity entails. Thus, it is fathomable from Ogungbemi's view that corporate existence is only possible via the individuals.

In driving his conviction to a logical conclusion, Ogungbemi, in his existential philosophical analysis, argues that the belief in interpersonal relations is prevalent both in Africa and in Western Europe, but that the degree differs. He jagged out some of the effects and reasons that culminated in Africans' zeal in holding corporate existence tenaciously. He suggests that it is not unconnected with lack of industrialisation, which has boosted individual achievement in the Western Europe, as well as lack of existentialist' scholars that could write on individualistic nature of humans as done by Western scholars (Ogungbemi, 1992:99). Ogungbemi therefore showcases the chance of individuality in Africa with a particular reference to the Yoruba society.

The reflection on the possibility of individuality, according to him, could be settled with myths that support individuality. The central argument of Ogungbemi in respect of myths in support of individuality is buttressed with the creation story as understood and believed in the Yoruba mythological account of human creation. He emphasises the fact that *Orisa-Nla* that was saddled with the responsibility of moulding the body did it individually as well as *Olodumare* who breathed the breath of life into the lifeless body did so individually (Ogungbemi, 1992:100-101). This in Ogungbemi's view, presupposes the authenticity of individuality in Africa, especially in the Yoruba culture.

The enigma of individuality in Africa in Ogungbemi's analysis is equally visible in his argument from self-consciousness. To him, human consciousness in Yoruba thought is attributable to all human beings who are capable of breathing or have bodily sensations. This, however, is not sufficient in Yoruba worldview as the totality of what confirms a human to be man. In the light of this, Ogungbemi raises the possibility of individuality in Yoruba from the fact that when the Yoruba talk about a person, they ordinarily exclude some categories of people, for instance infants, mentally defective human beings, the insane and idiots. However, those with deformity are classified as human beings but not persons because of their inability to be self-conscious. In Ogungbemi's view, the "individual becomes aware of himself that he can actually know that self-awareness individuates. Since individuation is a means to self-actualisation or self-authentication, it differentiates the quality of individuals" (Ogungbemi, 1992:102). This in Ogungbemi's analysis reveals the potency of the fact that when human being first appeared on earth he or she was a solitary individual. Though it would amount to a great disease to be in isolation, that however does not obliterate individuality as reflected in some of the Yoruba sayings such as; '*emi lo ni ara mi*' – I own myself; '*mo mo iru eniyan ti mo je*' – I know the kind of person I am, as identified by Ogungbemi (1992:101-103).

Ogungbemi further argues for the possibility of individuality in Yoruba culture with an argument that the individual is a free being. Ogungbemi pungently articulates his argument of individual freedom in the Yoruba society with reference to the Yoruba belief in their metaphysical concept of *ori*, (destiny). Ogungbemi tries to establish individual freedom from the Yoruba concept of *ori* with reference to Idowu's narratives that:

> It is not clearly stated in the oral traditions what the pre-existent state of a person is before he comes into the world. But it occurs in the sayings that it is the *ori* that kneels before Olodumare to choose, receive, or have the destiny affixed to it. The picture, therefore, is a complete "person" knelling before Olodumare to choose or receive (Ogungbemi, 1992:105).

It is from Idowu's submission that Ogungbemi fathomed what he refers to as the existential ontological freedom of an individual in the pre-existent life, namely freedom of choice, freedom of action and responsibility. This he links with the fact that individual made his or her choice in the primordial existence and thus, an individual is the architect of his or her own destiny. Thus, to

Ogungbemi, an individual living a self-conscious life is an offshoot of the individual's disposition and that is why when an elderly person discusses an important matter with young adults or with his or her peer, one often hears a statement like *"Eje ki n lo rori si"* – Let me go and think about it (Ogungbemi, 1992:106). This reflects the inevitability of individuality in decision making as such precipitates responsibility because when an individual is not free to choose and act on the dictate of his or her choice, he or she cannot be held responsible for his or her action. Given this possibility, the idea of reward and punishment would be reduced to absurdity.

Argument from conflicting and/or different desires is another fundamental element of individuality orchestrated by Ogungbemi in his bid to showcase the belief in the existence of individuality in the African (Yoruba) culture. In his defense of individuality in Yoruba culture, he opines that "it must be acknowledged that the desires of individuals are sometimes different" (1992:108). The implication of this is evident in the fact that wishes and aspirations of individuals in a given society differ which could not be dissociated from the dynamics of human nature. The viability of individual desires and aspirations in getting their expectations in the real sense of its manifestation in the African (Yoruba) society seems to encumber the irrevocability of the African communalistic nature. This reality, according to Ogungbemi, is obvious in the light of the fact that:

> Nobody can have the desires of others, because everyone is different and our interests are not always the same. And because an individual is characteristically unique in himself (sic), his impulses are experientially subjective (Ogungbemi, 1992:109).

Thus, the dynamics that permeate human activities as exemplified in creation story, self-consciousness, individual freedom, different desires, as pointed out by Ogungbemi, seems to have made individuality inevitable in Yoruba culture. Despite the inevitability of individuality in the Yoruba culture, as obtained in Ogungbemi's argument, it is not projected as a replacement for corporate existence of the Yoruba people.

Rethinking Ogungbemi's Concept of Individuality in Yoruba Thought

The reality of human existence presupposes individuation and corporation. This claim is not unconnected with the fact that the essence of humanity could be meaningfully achieved through the incorporation of individuals to the whole. The logic of this possibility therefore provokes the propensity of union of opposite in a dialectical manner. The coming together of the individuals to work out their desires in sustaining their corporate existence in the Yoruba society and culture cannot be overemphasised. The union, though a product of two different postulates, does not represent a contradiction, but an affirmation of the fact that no individual can live and succeed in isolation. It is within this reality that individuality and collectivity is considered two sides of a coin of which no part could meaningfully attain its essence without the other. It is arguable, therefore, that the relationship between individuality and collectivity in Yoruba culture could be assumed as symbiotic.

Communalism or corporate existence is the practice which pervades traditional Yoruba culture; it is one of the Yoruba ways of life that predisposes members to voluntarily cooperate with the dictates of the community. It is sacrosanct with the Yoruba culture. This reality is not unconnected with the fact that there is no society without its own history despite the fact that social change is inevitable. One cannot gloss over the preponderance of corporatism in the Yoruba culture. This reality is well captured by Olufemi Taiwo (2011:37) when he observes that, "before the irruption of Christianity and colonialism into their land and mindscapes, communalism was the dominant and preferred mode of social living and principle of social ordering in much, if not all, of Africa."

Corporatism avidly reveals the communal nature of the Yoruba worldview. It is a principle of social ordering under which, in the relationship between the individual and the community, the community is held superior to the individual, and where their interests come into conflicts, those of the community should prevail. And it should not be forbidden to bend the will of the individual or sometimes abridge his or her interests, if doing so would serve the ends of the community (Taiwo, 2011:37). This propensity, however, does not rule out

the reality of individuality holistically as there are some attributes of individuals that are retained in so far as the individual is willing to be subsumed in the group. Such attributes include names, mine and thine, heroism, and so on (Taiwo, 2011:39). It is in the light of this that the Yoruba often distinguish the individual in their saying: *tori a ba da ran n la n fi l'oruko* – individual is given a name for ease of identification. Thus, the individual at some stage will be the ultimate judge of his or her action in the sense that in some cases, the individual could only be advised by the society, but it solely rests with such an individual to determine and/or decide "what to do with societal advice; whether or not to accept such an advice" (Taiwo, 2011:48).

Ogungbemi pensively argues for the viability of individuation in the Yoruba culture with reference to self-consciousness. His argument on self-consciousness as articulated in the previous section of this article is onerous. Yet, if taken within the Yoruba cultural heritage, it may not necessarily disentangle the individual from the community where his or her existence gains its essence. That is, the essence of the individual can only be sustained within the community and not in isolation. Recourse to self-consciousness, as raised therefore by Ogungbemi to justify his position for a holistic individuality in Yoruba culture, is suggestive of a western-centric claim that "foster rugged individualism in the order of Rene Descartes' *Cogito ergo Sum* – 'I think therefore I exist' – which is diametrically opposed to African '*Cognatus Sum, ergo Sumus*" (Ezekwonna, 2005:60). While Ogungbemi's conjecture is holistically western-centric in my view, it is apposite to argue that evidence abound from a Yoruba saying that self-consciousness, though an attribute of individuals, does not serve as a yardstick in seeing it as the crux of Yoruba lifestyle. Hence, a popular saying that "*ogbon ologbon ko je ki a pe agba ni were"* literally means shared wisdom makes a person wise. The implication of this is the fact that no matter how self-conscious an individual is, it cannot be quantified with the gains of coming together and sharing one's life with others.

Ogungbemi, while trying to justify his argument on the existential analysis of freedom as that which is individuated in the Yoruba culture with reference to the Yoruba metaphysical concept of *ori* makes recourse to Karim Barber contention that:

> Yoruba cosmology presents a picture of man, a solitary individual, picking his way (aided by *ori,* destiny chosen by himself before coming to earth) between a variety of forces, some benign, some hostile, many ambivalent, seeking to placate them and only himself with them in an attempt to thwart his rivals and enemies in human society (see Ogungbemi, 1992:105).

Ogungbemi's reference to the individual *ori* that triggers individual license to his or her way of life still reflects Euro-Western understanding of Yoruba belief. It is fundamental to mention that the individual *ori,* so chosen in the pre-existence life, is an enigma that could only be explained within the society where such a belief is held. It follows therefore that despite the necessity of individual freedom of choice that could galvanise moral responsibility, the Yoruba still believe that individual freedom could only be exercised within the communal freedom. This is aptly captured by Bujo (1998:73) who argues that:

> No member of any African society can develop outside the community. According to the African understanding of interaction, the individual is an incomplete being who basically depends on the community. On the other hand, the community dissolves without individuals. Where the initiation rite is practiced, e.g., it has as its effect that the individual ceases to exist as a being for himself, so as to become a "being" existing for the community. The individual is no longer an "I-for-myself," but has to become an "I-in-the-community-for-others."

Bujo (1998:75) further explains:

> Such an understanding of freedom necessarily challenges the traditional Western doctrine of conscience. Whereas from a Western perspective the individual has only to follow his/her conscience as the last instance, the situation in Africa is different. Individual conscience is not the last instance without a common listening to each other; the "conscience" of the community might eventually be the last instance for individual action, because one does not feel cheated by the community. Instead, the individual knows that the community is positively oriented towards him or her. On the other hand, one considers conformity with the community as being decisive for the whole

> ... If the individual conscience is thus coupled with the conscience of the community, then one understands the marked inclination of the African for common responsibility.

Given the above reality, it will not be out of logical reasoning to suggest that Ogungbemi's validating his profound possibility of individuality in the Yoruba culture is not Yoruba-inclined, but a clash of cultural belief that is informed by his western existential potentials. The preponderance of this argument is well represented in the Yoruba belief and saying that *Ai kowo rin ejo n lo seku pa won* – A lone ranger snake makes an easy prey. This implies that coming together is more reasonable than being alone as that will go a long way to salvage one from untoward danger that could overcome one, if alone. Thus, the claim that the individual could exercise his or her freedom without necessarily depending on the community seems to be wrongheaded. This is evident in the Yoruba society where the individual is considered to have attained the essence of humanity through the process of incorporation. The implication of this ambivalence is that individual freedom though individuated, could only be meaningful within the confines of the community. Menkiti (1984:172) seems to have made relevant submission in this regard when he claims:

> In African thoughts, person become person only after a process of incorporation. Without incorporation into this or that community, individuals are considered to be mere danglers to whom the description 'person' does not fully apply, for personhood is something which has to be achieved, and is not given simply because one is born of human seed... Whereas Western conceptions of man go for what might be described as a minimal definition of the person – whoever has soul, or rationality, or will or memory, is seen as entitled to the description 'person'... Hence, the African emphasised the rituals of incorporation and the overarching necessity of learning the social rules by which the community lives, so that what was initially biologically given can come to attain social self-hood, i.e, become a person with all the inbuilt excellences implied by the term.

The logic of Menkiti's argument crisply analyses the nature of individuality in the Yoruba culture as a being for others and not a being for itself as assumed by the western existentialist philosophical thought, exemplified in Ogungbemi theorisation. Though, the reality of the individual's freedom is undeniable in the real sense of it; however, "the individual is required to achieve but expected to turn around and give back to the community" (Taiwo, 2011:27). This possibility in Yoruba community does not necessarily imply that the community is instrumental to the achievement of the individual but rather, it is a way of reinvigorating the individuals such that the Yoruba would say *bi ori kan ba suwon a ran igba ori* - If an individual is successful and the success is sustained, it will aid the prosperity of others. This is profound as the individual's success is more appreciated when shared and when it is used in the challenges of other. From this saying, they are aware of individuality, but to them the essence of such an individual could only be meaningful to the extent that such individuals relate and affect the community at large. Hence, as he would be identified as individual, he would also be seen as communal being whose meaning is emboldened within the kernel of the community. This further reflects another understanding of freedom from the Yoruba culture where it is believed that "the community must not destroy individual freedom but has the task of making freedom possible. The community has to prevent the individual from arbitrary action, so that one's life and that of the clan experience more opportunities for development" (Bujo, 1998:74). Though, Bujo speaks from a Southern African perspective, his claim resonates with the Yoruba proverb *A ki i ba ni tan ki a fa ni nitan ya* – it is untoward to make one/other miserable because of common origin. Hence, when an individual success is enjoyed by the community, the community should not turn out to abuse the opportunity.

It is, however, pertinent to mention that despite the belief in the uniqueness of corporate existence in the Yoruba culture, the concept of individual freedom is fundamental in determining human life in society for it underlies human thought and behaviour. This reality is fathomable as individual co-exists with social cohesion. This cannot be glossed over as one of the major components of human life in the society. The consequence of this is that the votary of individuality notwithstanding in the Yoruba culture, social cohesion is still dominant

over individuality. Nevertheless, one needs to state that individuality could be positive, and it could be negative. It is negative when individuality tends towards promotion or the pursuit of ego or selfish interest, and it could be seen as positive if it has a utilitarian posture towards the society as a whole. This responsibility of the individual makes collective/social cohesion meaningful.

Given the foregoing, it is necessary to explain that in the Yoruba society and cultural belief, a person as an individual may have all it takes to exercise his freedom and demonstrate his individuality existentially. As such, he is not necessarily compelled to be a conformist to the social ethic. However, such a person would be expected to have a moral obligation to behave and exercise his freedom in a manner that would galvanise social ethics. This is because the social ethic within the Yoruba cultural parlance is the application of individual ethics cum morality. This brings to light Kantian's categorical imperative that states "act according to that maxim by which you can at the same will that it should become a universal law" (Kant, 1959: xiii). This implies that while the individual is morally bound to promote the common good, society also has the moral obligation to ensure the integrity of the individual. This in a way justifies the symbiotic nature of the relationship between the individual and the community as suggested earlier.

This is suggestive of one of the fundamental roles of the society as observed by Wiredu's (1980:21). According to him, social cohesion is that which "enables society to be held together; great value was placed upon communal fellowship in the traditional society, which fellowship infused African social life with a pervasive humanity and fullness of life." Wiredu, however, quickly reiterates the viability of authoritarianism in African collectivity and/or corporatism. To him, authoritarianism refers to any human arrangement which entails any person being made to do or suffer something against his will, or which leads to any person being hindered in the development of his own will. He qualifies this conception by saying that what is authoritarian is the unjustified overriding of an individual's will (Wiredu, 1980:21).

It needed to be pointed out that one way of showing and demonstrating authoritarian nature of collective principle in the Yoruba culture is the claim of the elders to knowing all, that is, elders claim to know what is good or right for the society. So, their ideas often are imposed on the non-elderly, forgetting the Yoruba beliefs and sayings that *omode ni se, agba ni se la fi da Ile-Ife* – It was division of labour between the elders and the youths that brought about the existence/creation of Ile-Ife and *owo omode o to pepe, tagbalagba o wo keregbe* – As children's hands cannot reach the rafters/shelves, the elders' fists cannot take items from inside the gourd, we need to help one another among others. The point here is that the young are not ontologically less human than the elders in social organisation.

It is therefore logically deducible that given Ogungbemi's arguments, one may tend to agree to the seeming fact that community cannot be totally opposed to individuality. According to Gyekye (1992) "the well-being and success of the group would depend on the unique qualities of its individual members – that is, on the intellectual abilities, talents of various kinds, characters, dispositions, share-able experience, etc., of each individual person." The profundity of Gyekye's submission is not too far from the Yoruba worldview where it is believed that nothing is as good and rewarding as collectivism, as enshrined in their corporate existence. This reality they often displayed through countless proverbs such as; *agbajowo n la n fi n soya, ajeji owo kan o gbe eru dori* – cooperation gives credence to existence or it is when our fingers are rolled into a fist that we can boldly beat our chests, a single hand cannot lift a heavy load onto one's head, *ka fowo we owo n lowo n fi mo* - It is only when the two hands wash each other that they become clean, and *ka rin ka po yiye ni ye ni* - when we walk in groups, we achieve more, just to mention a few.

Conclusion

This article interrogated Ogungbemi's argument for individuality in the Yoruba culture. It demonstrated that Ogungbemi's argument for preponderance of individuality in the Yoruba society as delineated in his analysis is considered western-centric. Suffice is to say that this re-reading of Ogungbemi's contribution to the debate on 'Individuality-Community Debate in African Philosophy' through his four major arguments, as discussed earlier, is an eye opener to the potency of the individual in

the African society. Thus, it is arguable to contend that individuals make up the society, but that does not debunk the age-long doctrinal belief of the Yoruba being communalistic in their worldview. This submission is not unconnected with the fact that in the Yoruba cultural belief, a person as an individual may have all it takes to work-out his freedom and determine his individuality existentially. Nevertheless, such an individual is not necessarily compelled to be a conformist to the social ethic. However, it is expected that such an individual would have a moral obligation to behave and exercise his freedom in a manner that would galvanise social ethics.

Dedication

This article is dedicated to the memory of my Grandmother Mama Atoke – Ala Atitebi, a traditional worshipper, the Atokun of Abilere and Arosoju Masquerades before old age sets in and the immediate past Iya Agan Olorisa Parapo, Bonni, Igboho, Oyo State. She was the Matriarch of Atitebi Compound, Okeloko, Igboho, Oorelope Local Government, Oyo State who joined her ancestors on May 9, 2023 at the estimated ripe age of 150.

References

Bujo, B., 1988. The Ethical Dimension of Community: *The African Model and the Dialogue between North and South.* Nairobi: Paulines Publications.

Ezekwonna, F. C., 2005. *African Communitarian Ethics: The Basis for the Moral Conscience and Autonomy of the Individual – Igbo Culture as a Case Study.* Bern: Peter Lang.

Gyekye, K., 1992, Person and community in African thought. *Ghanaian Philosophical Studies,* 1:101-122.

Kant, I., 1959. *Foundation of Metaphysics of Morals and What is Enlightenment.* Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merril Publishing.

Kingongo, J. K., no date. "The Concepts of Individuality and Social Cohesion: A Perversion of Two African Cultural Realities," www.cwp.org/book/series02/II.2/chapter_iv.htm

Mbiti, J. S., 1969. *African Religions and Philosophy.* London: Heinemann.

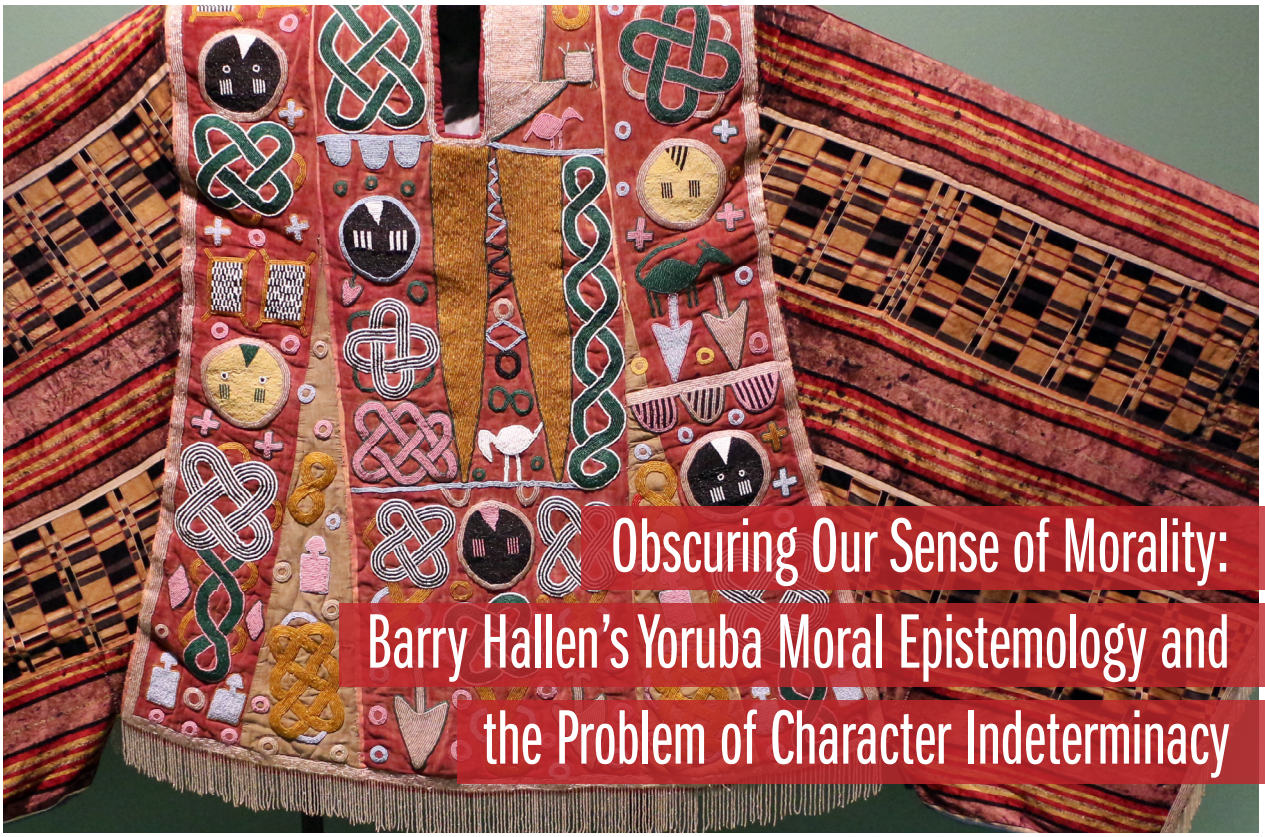
Menkiti, I. A., 1984. "Person and Community in African Traditional Thought," R. A. Wright (ed.) African Philosophy: An Introduction. Lanham, MD: University Press of America.

Ogungbemi, S., 1992. "An Existential Study of Individuality in Yoruba Culture," *Orita: Ibadan Journal of religious Studies* XXIV (1). 99-110.

Olufemi, T., 2011. *Africa Must Be Modern*. Ibadan: Bookcraft.

Stevenson, L., 1974. *Seven Theories of Human Nature*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Wiredu, K., 1980. *Philosophy and an African Culture.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.



Obscuring Our Sense of Morality: Barry Hallen's Yoruba Moral Epistemology and the Problem of Character Indeterminacy

By Dr. Babalola J. Balogun & Dr. Aderonke A. Ajiboro

Image: Nigeria, yoruba, tunica, da okuku, 1916-34 ca.jpg / commons.wikimedia.org

Abstract

Barry Hallen's critical engagements with the African (Yoruba) philosophical scholarship have earned him a place among African intellectual giants of the 20th century. Among his diverse contributions to African philosophical discourse is his Yoruba moral epistemology thesis. Built on his canonical distinction between knowledge (*ìmọ*) and belief (*ìgbàgbọ*) within the Yoruba linguistic framework, the Yoruba moral epistemology thesis suggests that knowledge of human character could be modelled alongside a similar pathway with knowledge of other propositional items where knowledge claims are made based on evidence obtained via first-hand information. Using Yoruba ethnological/linguistic resources as a methodological standpoint, our critique of Hallen's Yoruba moral epistemology is primarily motivated by three fundamental observations: a. that the acclaimed distinction between *ìmọ* and *ìgbàgbọ* on which the thesis is based, is faulty; b. that the thesis does not agree to a certain conception of personhood within the Yoruba metaphysical worldview; and c. that the behaviourist implications engendered by Hallen's Yoruba moral epistemology do not adequately represent the deeply spiritual essence of human conducts in Yoruba ethical system. We conclude 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.

Keywords: Yoruba morality, Moral epistemology, Barry Hallen, Character Indeterminacy

Introduction

Barry Hallen belongs to a group of scholars whose professional accomplishments and contributions to African scholarship continue to defy every cultural criterion for delineating who an African philosophy is. Although an American by birth, Hallen's scholarship on African philosophy has so greatly impacted a vibrant generation of African philosophers that it would be a matter of racial chauvinism to deny him a foremost place among the primogenitors of professional African philosophy. Significantly, Hallen has bequeathed to African philosophy the ordinary language approach to philosophical investigation. In this article, we examine one of the fallouts of this approach. Three principal objectives are thereby aimed at. One, the article shows that Hallen's Yoruba moral epistemology thesis is a consequence of his analytic experiment with the Yoruba concepts of *ìmọ* and *ìgbàgbọ*. Two, the article tries to understand Yoruba morality in the light of Hallen's specific encounter with moral epistemology. Three, the article raises some objections against Hallen's moral epistemology thesis.

There are four sections in all. The first section describes the nature of moral epistemology in general. Section two traces Hallen's specific encounters with moral epistemology thesis and posit that Hallen's Yoruba moral epistemology is an epistemological thesis rather than an ethical one. Section three provides a link between moral epistemology thesis and the determination of epistemic reliability in terms of transitioning second-hand information to knowledge (*ìmọ*). The last section raises some critiques against Hallen's Yoruba moral epistemology.

Moral Epistemology Thesis

Like other traditional branches of philosophy, epistemology is a transdisciplinary area of study. With subject matters covering trans- and multidisciplinary boundaries, epistemological questions can be legitimately asked in almost, if not all, disciplines both within and outside philosophy. This observation is considerably valid because epistemology, being primarily concerned with the nature, sources, scope and justification of knowledge (Hamlyn, 1970), has the legitimacy to probe into the affairs of other disciplines insofar as there are no disciplines in which knowledge claims are not regularly made. In probing into the cognitive affairs of other disciplines, epistemology is primarily interested in (in)validating the claims to knowledge made therein through critical assessments of their possibility, methods, scopes, and justification. This makes epistemology a sort of stinging fly to all other disciplines in matters of knowledge generation. Moral epistemology comes because of this second-order activity of epistemology.

The central focus of moral epistemology is the question of how moral knowledge is possible (Campbell, 2019). We take the thesis of moral epistemology to be that it is possible to establish a set of normative principles through which human conducts can be appropriately situated and evaluated within a moral context. That human beings somehow know that actions are either right or wrong is not inherently controversial. It is based on this knowledge that various societies develop some punitive systems which either serves to deter people from engaging in wrong acts or as a retributive measure for punishing wrongdoings. The rules may differ from one cultural setting to another. What is of importance, however, is the fact that each of the cultures can recognise not only that there are morally reprehensible actions that must be condemned, but also that individual persons have been socialised in a way that they are able to know and distinguish between morally right and wrong actions. The interest of moral epistemology lies in understanding how people come by this knowledge.

Hence, the thesis of moral epistemology is built around two basic assumptions. The first is the view that there are general normative principles that can be used to determine the epistemological values of propositions about natural objects, events and processes. Call this "the ontological claim". The ontological claim affirms the existence of some epistemological principles for ascertaining propositional knowledge about the world around us. One undisputed feature of the world is that it is full of facts about which there can be agreements and disagreements. When an epistemic agent makes an assertion that correctly reflects a situation in the world, we readily refer to the assertion as true, and if otherwise, as false. This indicates that truth and falsity, being prominent markers of knowledge

> "In probing into the cognitive affairs of other disciplines, epistemology is primarily interested in (in)validating the claims to knowledge made therein through critical assessments of their possibility, methods, scopes, and justification."

or lack thereof, are impossible to determine except in relation to facts. Given this important role of facts in the formation of beliefs about the universe, and barring the unsustainable arguments for global scepticism, the possibility of knowledge claims about the external world is incontrovertible.

The second assumption holds that the normative principles identified in the ontological claim are applicable to the evaluation of the epistemological values of human conducts. Hence, moral knowledge is possible. Call this the "moral knowledge claim". The moral knowledge claim attempts to extend the principles used in determining the epistemological values of propositions about the external world to the realm of human conducts. This may be due to the contentious assumption that human conducts are part of the furniture of the external world. However, for the moral knowledge claim to be able to consistently maintain this extension, it must acquiesce to the existence of moral facts, that is, the sort of entities that moral adjectives such as right, wrong, good, bad, etc. qualify. In like manner with propositions about the external world, moral facts must play some role in determining truth and falsity of propositions about human conduct and on the basis of which knowledge of human conducts is founded.

The ontological claim has received wider acceptance from scholars. There is a sense in attributing the whole edifice of epistemology to demonstrating this point beyond the reach of scepticism (Hamlyn, 1970). This is to be expected. With an appropriate method of verification, propositions about natural facts can be evaluated on the scale of truth and falsity. Matters are not as clear in the case of moral knowledge claim, however. If facts make propositions either true or false, then it is a genuine concern to ask if there are moral facts which may help determine the truth-value of moral propositions. Are there moral facts? If yes, what is their nature, and how do they help us determine the truth value of moral propositions, and help secure moral knowledge?

Philosophers have not agreed on how to answer these questions. The controversy surrounding the questions is whether a value judgement can be validly inferred from facts (Òkè and Esikot, 1999). Basically, there are two theoretical standpoints to this debate, namely, moral realism and anti-moral realism (Smith, 2013; Dancy, 2016). Moral realism is the view that there are facts of the matter about which actions are right and which wrong, and about which things are good and which bad (Dancy, 2016). The sense of existence of moral facts needs some clarifications. According to the moral realist, moral facts are not natural facts; like the scientific facts, they are abstract facts in the same category with mathematical facts. Despite this, however, they are easily recognised in the evaluation of moral acts and are potent in the formation of beliefs about moral agents. Moral anti-realism, on the other hand, denies that there are moral facts. For the anti-realists, what makes moral acts right and wrong are not matters derivable from facts because moral issues are not cognitive issues (Ayer, 1952). Hence, as a non-cognitivist moral position, antirealism denies the existence of moral facts, and instead opines that moral judgments are merely expressions of likes and dislikes towards things that people do or fail to do (see Ayer, 1952; Stevenson, 1945).

The article is not straightforwardly an exercise in meta-ethics. However, we must note that

traditionally speaking, moral epistemology is an ethical thesis on the thematic categorisation of acts into right or wrong, good or bad, etc. However, Hallen's moral epistemology thesis is more of an epistemological thesis than a meta-ethical concern. In contradistinction to the traditional moral epistemology where epistemological principles are used to determine the moral value of acts, Hallen's moral epistemology thesis is one in which ethical considerations motivate epistemic agent to either accept or reject epistemic claims. In the ensuing section, we discuss how Hallen discovered this sense of moral epistemology, using Yoruba epistemological concepts of *ìmọ* (knowledge) and *ìgbàgbọ* (belief) as conceptual devices.

Hallen's Specific Encounter with Moral Epistemology Thesis

Hallen, like Descartes, was searching for a secure footing for the Yoruba epistemologies of knowledge and belief. In *Knowledge, Belief and Witchcraft* (thenceforth, KBW), Hallen and Sodipo (1997) undertook a conceptual journey into the meaning of Yoruba epistemological concepts of *ìmọ* and *ìgbàgbọ*. They attempted an analysis of the concepts of knowledge and belief from the ordinary language methodological perspective of the Yoruba speaking world. They hoped, thereby, to understand these concepts vis-a-viz the equivalent concepts of "knowledge" and "belief" in the anglophone ordinary language context.

Through the assistance of various *oníṣègùn*, who for the purpose of the research, played the role of local informants and indigenous language experts of Yoruba language, Hallen and Sodipo came to the following observations. One, that the concept of knowledge, which the Yoruba call '*ìmọ*', is used to denote a piece of information that is acquired first-hand through empirical, and most especially, visual means. They emphasise the role of sighting as key to claims to knowledge. The analysis of ìmọ reveals that it implies truth (*òótọ*) and inner witness (*ẹrí-ọkàn*). Hallen and Sodipo (1997) accept the impossibility of having ìmọ without the duo of *òótọ* and *ẹrí-ọkàn*. *Òótọ* (truth) is obtained through the phenomenon of first-hand visual perception (*ìrí*) and the witness of the heart or mind (*ẹrí-ọkàn*). Hence, *ìmọ* is a piece of information obtained first-hand through visual apprehension, accompanied by mental awareness that one has seen or is seeing.

Two, that the concept of belief, which the Yoruba call '*ìgbàgbọ*', is used to denote a piece of information acquired second-hand, i.e., through testimonies or reports from others who presumably experienced the event constituting the information first-hand. According to Hallen and Sodipo, *ìgbàgbọ*, a noun, is derived from the verb *gbàgbọ* (to believe). Etymologically, *gbàgbọ* is a conceptual amalgam of *gbà* (to accept) and *gbọ* (to hear), which together mean "agreeing to accept what one hears from someone else" (Hallen and Sodipo, 1997:64; see also Hallen, 2000; 2004). Because the truth-value of second-hand information is subject to further investigations, *ìgbàgbọ* does not have the condition of *òótọ* (truth) as a necessity. Whereas ìmọ has the mark of *òótọ*, the identity marker of *ìgbàgbọ* is what Hallen and Sodipo (1997) call *ó ṣe é ṣe* (lit.: it is possible). For Balogun (2021: 293), the epistemological value of "*Ó ṣe é ṣe* speaks of the possibility that what one accepts is likely to turn out true, but unless this is confirmed on the first-hand basis, it is never affirmed." Given its source from other epistemic agents, *ìgbàgbọ* qualifies for what is called "propositional knowledge" or "knowledge-that". This may include knowledge of "the things one is taught in the course of a formal education, what one learns from books, from other people, and, of particular interest in the special case of the Yoruba, from oral traditions" (Hallen, 2000: 17).

The third observation directly flows from the nature of *ìgbàgbọ* already established above. This is that as a non-literate linguistic culture, the Yoruba operate a predominantly oral epistemological doctrine that relies so much on the testimonies of others. For Hallen, "The *moral* underpinnings to this discussion of Yoruba epistemology become evident once one recognises that the primary source of propositional or 'second-hand' information in a culture that is significantly oral is other persons" (Hallen, 2003: 86). For an average epistemic agent, there are limits to what information one can obtain first-hand in a lifetime (see Hallen, 1998). Human beings depend largely on information obtained second-hand. This puts us in a precarious and vulnerable position because much information at our disposal may turn out to be false. Now, to forestall being led into making errors because of false information, there is the need to be sure that the channels of information at one's disposal are solid enough to serve as reliable sources of knowledge.

Hence, having knowledge of other persons' moral character (*ìwà*) – their honesty, their reliability as a source of information, etc., becomes a fundamental criterion for evaluating the reliability of second-hand information (Hallen, 2000, 2003, 2004). Hallen's moral epistemology is basically a search for epistemic certainty, or systematic avoidance of error in ascribing *òótọ* (truth) to false pieces of second-hand information. This is a point where ethics becomes instrumental to epistemological pursuits. In this case, ethics serves as a "quality-assurance officer" for ascertaining the reliability or trustworthiness of information not obtained first-hand. In contrast to the traditional moral epistemology wherein epistemology is employed to resolve issues in ethics, Hallen's moral epistemology is an attempt to use ethics to resolve issues in epistemology.

Yoruba Moral Epistemology Explained

Working within the framework of *ìmọ* and *ìgbàgbọ* as first-hand and second-hand information respectively, Hallen reaches some conclusions about the Yoruba moral epistemology. First, that knowledge (*ìmọ*) of another person's character (*ìwà*) is obtained from observing (first-hand) their outward behaviours (*ìṣesí*) (Hallen, 2003: 86). On its own part, *ìṣesí* is a broad and complex phenomenon, comprising both bodily and verbal (*ìsọrọsí*) dispositions overtly displayed to the recognition of the community. The verbal and non-verbal behaviours play an important role of serving as hard evidence or, perhaps, a motivation for risking to accept that a person's testimony is true, and therefore, knowledge. Hallen gives the impression that this is to be expected given the Yoruba culture's strong inclinations for hard evidence. "For the point is that a person's verbal and non-verbal behaviour are construed as first-hand evidence (*ìmọ*) of their moral character (*ìwà*)" (Hallen, 2003: 86).

Further, the knowledge of a person's moral character involves a kind of inference drawn from observing multiple individual actions to a generalisation about his/her character. The role of observation in the Yoruba knowledge acquisition process has been well argued in Hallen and Sodipo's analysis of *ìmọ* and *ìgbàgbọ*. What needs to be said more is that, in the case of knowledge of human character, the level of observations required is accumulative in nature. By this, we mean that knowledge of human conducts is acquired through a long process of observing moments and instances of a person's social interactions with the community. This, in turn, is ultimately aimed at a sort of inductive generalisation about the character of the human agent involved. For example, when someone's previous claims have consistently been verified to be true (*òótọ*), there could be readiness on the part of the observer to take the person information as epistemically reliable, and therefore forming the basis for the latter's knowledge (*ìmọ*) of the person's character, etc.

There is a need to be more emphatic on the knowledge of human characters being a product of inference from previous actions and inactions. Although there is a sense in which human characters are empirically verifiable, it by no means follows that they are of the same physical valuation with other physical components of the world. That is, this heavily behaviourist system of knowledge acquisition process does not commit us to pitch human conducts in the same tent with ordinary physical object of everyday experience. The posit of Hallen's moral epistemology is that, in the case of human character, one should have kept a track record of truth of the informant's narratives for a reasonable length of time before one can accept the authenticity of the report as knowledge.

Hallen's observation finds support in some Yoruba oral literature. There are Yoruba sayings which clearly show the place of observation to reliability of first-hand experience. For instance, *ìròyìn ò tó àfojúbà* (to witness an event oneself is more believable than when it is reported); *ojú ol'ójú kò jọ ojú ẹni* (one's direct experience is more reliable than another's); among others. These proverbial sayings demonstrate, in clear terms, that there are no perfect substitutes for first-hand experience. These sayings suggest, among other things, that the Yoruba language users are primarily concerned with what, in contemporary philosophy of mind, is called qualitative experience (Nagel, 1974). Yoruba place such a high premium on first-hand experience. This may not be due to a lack of general trust towards other persons, but to enable them to clear all doubts occasioned by the imperfection of the human memories, inaccurate linguistic presentation in transmitting first-hand experience and deliberate distortion of the experience of

others. Concerned about the last in the series, for example, the Yoruba would say *ká s'ọrọ ká ba bẹẹ ni iyì ọmọ ènìyàn* (It is honourable for a person to speak truthfully). All this aligns perfectly well with Hallen's outline of the Yoruba moral epistemology.

Many issues arise from the foregoing. One, to be able to generalise about a person's moral character, which then strengthens his or her epistemic reliability as a secure source of knowledge, Hallen thesis requires us to look at his or her antecedents. Does the person have a reputation for telling the truth? Is he or she a habitual liar? For Hallen, antecedents are all there are to answering this sort of question. By this, however, Hallen is committed to the inductive doctrine that the past observations of the person's moral character, especially as it relates to the epistemological issues of truth and falsity of claims, will provide a guide to predicting their present or future claims to be true or false. This is a problematic position considering Hume's continuous spell on the reliability of induction as a guide to future epistemic claims. Hume's famous assault on the principle of the uniformity of nature appears to us more potent in the realm of human character than in the realm of inanimate objects (Hume, 1896).

Hallen is probably aware of this implication of making inductive inferences on the testimonies of others; hence, he insists on accepting others' testimonies only tentatively. This tentative acceptance of their information becomes knowledge only when we have had first-hand experience of their claims. Now, this leads to our second observation, namely, that not all claims made by others can ever be experienced first-hand by a third party. No doubt, some testimonies may be verified first-hand in the way that Hallen envisions. However, quite a few of the information that forms the core of our lives as epistemic agents is not accessible in this way. Some pieces of information, by their very nature, are not reproducible. For instance, the knowledge of historical events such as the Nigerian civil war can only be known through the testimonies of those who had first-hand experience of those events. Hence, when a historian interested in investigating this event is out on a fact-checking exercise, he or she does not set out on the assumption that history repeats itself, in which case, the event would have played out to him or her in a first-hand manner. What is considered the best thing to do in this case is to rely on the information received in discussions and interviews from veterans of the war, journalists, or consult war memoirs, archives and museums. Comparing and contrasting information derived from these various epistemic sources may help the investigator to arrive at a rough estimate of what happened in the war.

Yoruba Morality Does Not Work Like That

In this section, we adduce some objections to Hallen's thesis of the Yoruba moral epistemology on three mutually related grounds, as follow. One, we argue that the knowledge-belief distinction on which foundation the thesis is built, is conceptually faulty from the Yoruba linguistic point of view. Two, we raise some critical concerns about the Yoruba metaphysical notion of personhood that is difficult to marry with Hallen's thesis of moral epistemology. Three, we argue that Hallen's behaviourist approach to Yoruba moral epistemology encounters the epistemological problem of other minds. The problem, which arises in the current context from the duality of behaviour and intention, reinforces our criticism of Hallen's behaviourist approach to Yoruba moral epistemology.

In our first case against Hallen, we note the impression that Yoruba moral epistemology is built on the foundation of the conceptual distinction between *ìmọ* and *ìgbàgbọ*. The Yoruba moral epistemology thesis sits on a foundation provided by this distinction, which Hallen and Sodipo intended to use in comparison with knowledge and belief in the English-standard conceptual framework. However, the distinction has attracted so many criticisms that virtually every scholar that has considered the matter seems to have criticised it. The popular opinion in the literature is that the *KBW*'s analysis of knowledge and belief fails to correctly represent the ontological meaning among Yoruba speakers (Balogun, 2021, 2023; Bello, 1998; Kalumba, 2008; Oke, 1995, 2009). There are at least three categories of issues raised against *KBW*'s analysis. One, criticisms have been expressed about the identification of *ìmọ* with visual experience. Balogun (2021) thinks that this error results from the ambiguity of the Yoruba verb *rí* (to see) which is not necessarily restricted to only cases involving the instrumentality of sight. A similar case has been raised concerning *òótọ*. Oke (1995), for instance, has

noted that the *KBW*'s analysis of *òótọ* is committed to empiricism, and thus impoverishes its meaning within Yoruba linguistic convention.

Another category of objections against *KBW*'s analytic experiment on *ìmọ* and *ìgbàgbọ* revolves around the alleged distinction between the two concepts. Hallen and Sodipo (1997) opined that the distinction lies in one involving first-hand information and the other involving second-hand information. This distinction has been found not to exist in the way these terms are used by competent Yoruba speakers. Oke argues that "[i]n ordinary Yoruba language usage, the problematic epistemological "know-believe" distinction probably does not exist as such (2005: 145). Balogun indicates that in some instances, readiness to believe among competent Yoruba speakers is motivated by seeing. Such instances of seeing satisfy the "on spot sighting" condition, but for Hallen and Sodipo, it is a case of *ìgbàgbọ*, not *ìmọ* (Balogun, 2021: 295).

In the third category of problems identified against Hallen and Sodipo's analysis of *ìmọ* and *ìgbàgbọ*, scholars have rightly questioned the methodology of this discourse, especially the legitimacy and expertise of the *oníṣègùn* as reliable sources of correct interpretations of the Yoruba concepts of *ìmọ* and *ìgbàgbọ*. Bello (1988) insists that the choice of *oníṣègùn* is not particularly effective or interesting given that, as traditional medical practitioners, they do not possess more special knowledge of the Yoruba language than an average speaker of it. As Balogun (2021: 298) notes "he does not have better mastery of the language by virtue of which he is expert enough to be a primary source of information on the right use of *ìmọ* and *ìgbàgbọ*." For Oke (2009: 145), "[a]part from their alleged professional knowledge in their fields, the *oníṣègùn* do not possess any special training, knowledge or wisdom as a class to qualify them for the privileged role of philosophical discussants and informants of the race on correct ordinary language usage such as Hallen has given to them." This appeal to, or reliance on, inexpert authorities on the right meaning of *ìmọ* and *ìgbàgbọ* has continued to raise doubt about Hallen's disquisition into the Yoruba epistemological concepts in question.

Our second problem with Hallen's Yoruba moral epistemology arises from the concept of personhood which Hallen presumably aims to achieve as a consequence of the epistemological incursion into Yoruba ethics. One of the central theoretical consequences of Hallen's moral epistemology borders on the relation between personhood and epistemic reliability, or to put it in disciplinary terms, between ethics and epistemology. Hallen agrees to the popular normative conception of personhood in which one earns personhood. Scholars like (Menkiti, 1984, 2004; Gbadegesin, 1991, 2003; Gyekye, 1992, 1997; Masolo, 2010; Tshivhase, 2011; Molefe, 2019, 2020) agree on the normative conception of African notion of personhood, although they differ, largely, on the details. They all agree to the centrality of moral character as a proper marker of African concept of personhood. Hallen accepts this normative concept by emphasising the place of *ìwà* (moral character) (see Hallen, 2000: 41).

Now, if good character makes one, normatively, a person, bad character makes one a non-person (see Gbadegesin, 1991, 2003). It could, then, be argued that part of Hallen's intention for moral epistemology thesis is to fashion out a principle for delineating persons from non-persons within the Yoruba ethico-epistemological context. This way, to be a person is to be a reliable and trustworthy epistemic agent while to be a non-person is not. Our stance against this putative principle is that it does not align well with a more fundamental conception of personhood among the Yoruba. There is a conception of personhood in Yoruba system of thought that has not received sufficient attention in the literature. This, to us, is most unfortunate because of its epistemological implication on the sort of things that Hallen aims to achieve through his Yoruba moral epistemology thesis; more so because, *also in our opinion*, it is more fundamental than the normative conception now popular in the literature to which Hallen's *KBW* analysis subscribes.

The Yoruba have a conception of personhood (*ènìyàn*) that is fundamentally negative. This manner of thinking about personhood is suggested to us through some common linguistic utterances among native speakers of the Yoruba language. To the Yoruba, personhood is an intrinsic feature of humans. This originates from their belief that personhood is more of an inner configurative mechanism in human being that *sometimes* plays out on the surface as characters. They will say *inú*

l' ènìyàn wà (personhood is an internal trait). Also, the sort of internalism adduced to the notion of personhood by the Yoruba is one that conjures the idea of depth. Hence, the Yoruba saying *inú ènìyàn jìn* (human minds are deep). Given such depth, being persons comes with a certain sort of uncertainty that plays out remarkably in the possibility of sometimes deviating from the moral track (such as truth telling) that hitherto forms part of one's identity as a moral being.

To illustrate this possible moral inconsistency, consider a case where someone betrays the trust reposed in him or her, leading to the feeling of disappointment on the part of the one betrayed. A plea to forgive may come as a way of reminding the betrayed party that the former is only a human, and at an appropriate opportunity, anyone could behave in a similar manner! In this case, the Yoruba would say *ènìyàn ni ènìyàn yíò ma jé* (persons will always be persons). While it does not exonerate the betrayer from the guilt and blameworthiness associated with the act, this saying strikes us not as an acknowledgement of the inherently reliable status of personhood. On the contrary, it is a way of reminding the betrayed that his or her disappointment in the betrayer is a product of reposing too much confidence in a mere mortal. Such realisation may fuel the attitude of doubt in matters not witnessed first-hand. Of course, this resonates the Yoruba penchant for hard evidence, which Hallen recognises. However, it sharply deviates from the normative tradition of personhood accepted by Hallen in that it leads more readily to scepticism rather than epistemic reliabilism.

The last objection we put up against Hallen's Yoruba moral epistemology is inspired by what, in the philosophy of mind, is called the problem of other minds. Basically, there are two problems of other minds, namely, the epistemological and conceptual problem of other minds (Balogun, 2022). Whereas the first asks an epistemological question of how it is possible to know what others have in minds (i.e., How do we know the states of their minds; their beliefs, intentions, motives, desires, etc.?), given that there are no objective ways of ascertaining such, the second asks a conceptual question of how we come to have the meaning of mental concepts used by others, given that we lack direct access to their mental states to which the mental concepts presumably refer. For our criticism against Hallen's moral epistemology, we shall be restricted to the epistemological version of the problem of other minds.

As revealed in a previous section, Hallen's Yoruba moral epistemology is heavily behaviourist. As he argues, morality is all about what people say and do. This raises the question of how we come to know whether verbal and non-verbal behaviours are truly expressive of people's intention for acting in particular ways. We may call this the problem of character indeterminacy. The problem of character indeterminacy arises when the obtainable number of behavioural outputs of an organism is insufficient to determine the character of that organism in a precise manner. This plays out most significantly in the character of human beings. The nature of human beings represented in the linguistic convention of the Yoruba (see Balogun, 2016) readily leads to the falsity of the logical behaviourist thesis.

Hallen's understanding of the Yoruba's demand for hard evidence can be categorised under logical behaviourist approach to the problem of other minds. The troubling question, however, is whether reliance on a person's verbal and bodily movements enough "hard evidence" to guarantee the knowledge of their epistemic reliability or otherwise. In response to this question, Balogun's (2016) engagement with the logical behaviourist approach to the problem of other mind from the Yoruba linguistic perspective suggests the contrary. As he reveals, "[T]he Yoruba linguistic framework offers some interesting grounds against the logical behaviourist thesis that "what one directly observes is all there is" (Balogun, 2016: 161). Thus, our position is that Hallen's over-reliance on behavioural outputs as methodological guides to epistemic reliability, cannot be sustained in its current form without incurring the logical behaviourist infelicities.

Conclusion

The central claim of this article is that Hallen's Yoruba moral epistemology thesis is false. The article provided three grounds on which Hallen's Yoruba moral epistemology thesis stands rejected. The first set of grounds was targeted at the very foundation of the thesis, namely, the distinction between *ìmọ* and *ìgbàgbọ*. Second, the article faulted the conception of person aimed at in the thesis. It was argued that accepting the normative

thesis, for Hallen, is to view an epistemic person as one who is epistemically reliable as a source of second-hand information. However, it was revealed that there exists a more fundamental conception of personhood most relevant to epistemological discourse among the Yoruba. This essentially negative conception of personhood does not guarantee epistemic reliability from persons, but rather suggests the Yoruba scepticism about second-hand information. In the third objection, it was argued that character determination based on verbal and bodily behaviours faces a special problem from the problem of other minds.

A substantial bulk of issues with Hallen's thesis of moral epistemology arise from the methodological standpoint of his analysis. Hallen adopts ordinary language method of analysis to arrive at his conclusions both on his distinction between *ìmọ* and *ìgbàgbọ*, and the resultant analysis of Yoruba moral epistemology. (Balogun, 2021, 2023) has shown that this method of analysis does not adequately capture issues as they occur to African intellects. While acknowledging the originality, depth and rigour exhibited in Hallen's analysis, we argue that Hallen's minimal consultation with Yoruba ethnographic materials in his studies of the Yoruba epistemology contributes significantly to some of the errors, in his work, identified in this article.

References

Ayer, A. J. 1952. *Language, Truth, and Logic.* Courier Corporation. Available at: https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=syRgDwAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA2&dq=language,+truth+and+logic&ots=hRov7h9GBi&sig=Bf1gILvEdUIDH-evkb8F78bsdHY (Accessed: 10 February 2024).

Balogun, B. J., 2021. Rethinking the Aptness of the Analytic Method in African Philosophy in the Light of Hallen and Sodipo's Knowledge-Belief Distinction. *South African Journal of Philosophy,* 40(3): 290–303.

Balogun, B. J., 2022. The Priority Debate between Hyslop and Nagel: A Unificationist Reconciliation. *GNOSI: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Human Theory and Praxis*, 5(2): 40–54.

Balogun, B. J., 2023. Decolonising philosophical analysis: In defence of "ethnolysis"'. *South African Journal of Philosophy,* 42(2): 144–159. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/02580136.2023.2273125.

Campbell, R., 2019. Moral Epistemology. In: E.N. Zalta ed. *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Winter 2019. Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University. Available at: https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2019/entries/moral-epistemology/ (Accessed: 8 July 2023).

Dancy, J., 2016. Moral Realism. In: *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. 1st edn. London: Routledge. Available at: https://doi.org/10.4324/9780415249126-L059-1.

Gbadegesin, S., 1991. *African Philosophy: Traditional Yoruba Philosophy and Contemporary African Realities*. New York: Peter Lang.

Gbadegesin, S., 2003. Eniyan: The Yoruba Concept of a Person. In P.H. Coetzee and A.P.J. Roux eds. *The African Philosophy Reader*, 2nd edn. (pp. 208-228). New York: Routledge.

Gyekye, K., 1992. Person and Community in African Thought. In K. Wiredu and K. Gyekye eds *An Essay on African Philosophical Thought: The Akan Conceptual Scheme*. (pp. 101–122). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Gyekye, K., 1997. *Tradition and Modernity: Philosophical Reflections on the African Experience*. Oxford University Press.

Hallen, B., 2000. *The Good, the Bad, and the Beautiful: Discourse About Values in Yoruba Culture.* Indiana University Press.

Hallen, B., 2003. Ethical Knowledge in an African philosophy. *Florida Philosophical Review*, III(I): 81–90.

Hallen, B., 2004. Yorùbá Moral Epistemology. In K. Wiredu ed. *A Companion to African Philosophy*. (pp. 296–303). Malden: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

Hallen, B., and Sodipo, J. O., 1997. *Knowledge, Belief, and Witchcraft: Analytic Experiments in African Philosophy*. Stanford University Press.

Hamlyn, D. W., 1970. *The Theory of Knowledge*. Macmillan London.

Hume, D., 1896. *A Treatise of Human Nature*. Clarendon Press.

Kalumba, K., 2008. Four problems with Barry Hallen's Analytic Experiments in African Philosophy. *Quest: An African Journal of Philosophy*, xxi: 141–154.

Masolo, D. A., 2010. *Self and Community in a Changing World*. Indiana: Indiana University Press.

Menkiti, I. A., 1984. Person and Community in African Traditional Thought. *African Philosophy: An Introduction*, 3: 171–182.

Menkiti, I. A., 2004. On the Normative Conception of a Person. In K. Wiredu ed. *A Companion to African Philosophy*. (pp. 324–331) Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

Molefe, M., 2019. *An African Philosophy of Personhood, Morality, and Politics.* Springer.

Molefe, M., 2020. Personhood and a Meaningful Life in African Philosophy. *South African Journal of Philosophy*, 39(2): 194–207.

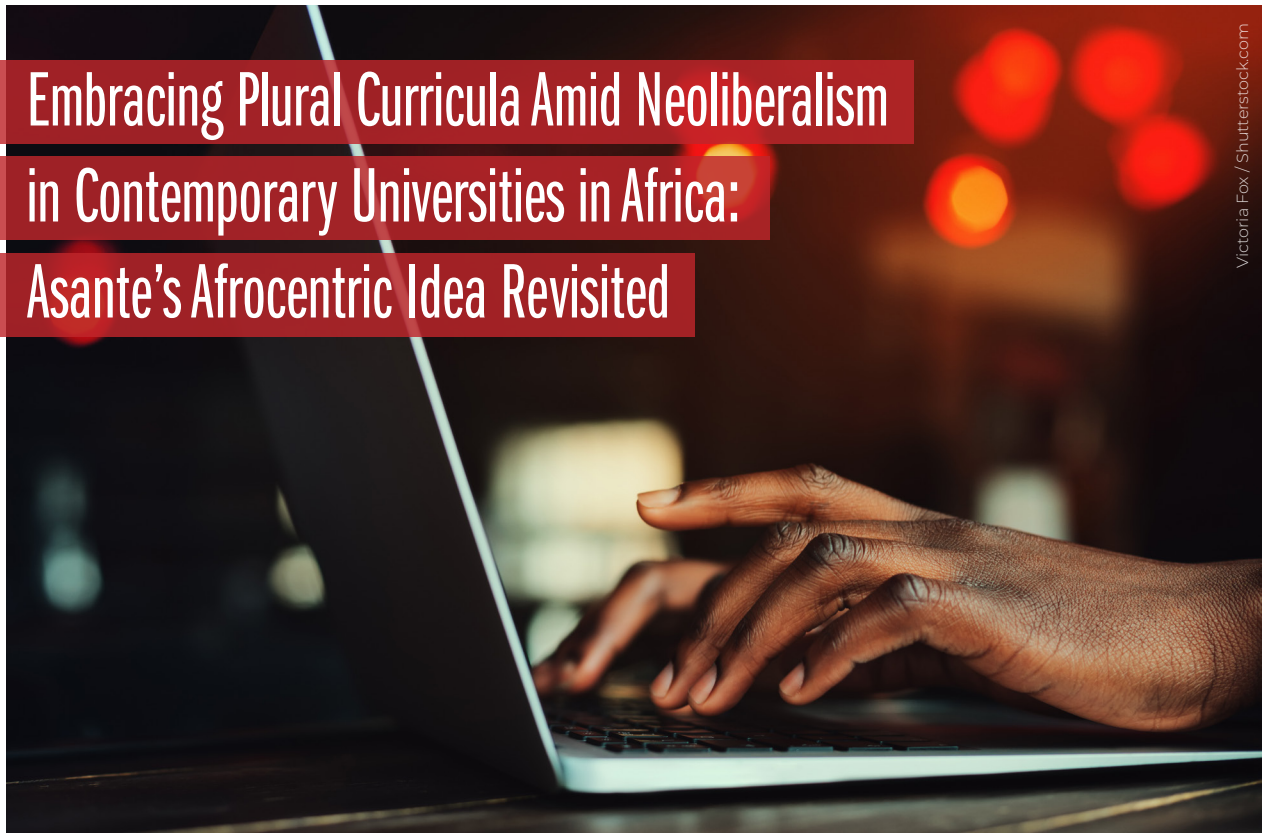
Nagel, T., 1974. What Is It Like to Be a Bat? *The Philosophical Review*, 83(4): 435-450. Available at: https://doi.org/10.2307/2183914.

Òkè, M. and Esikot, I. F., 1999. *Elementary ethics*. Lagos: Minder International.

Smith, M., 2013. Moral Realism. In H. LaFollette and I. Persson, eds *The Blackwell Guide to Ethical Theory*. 1st edn. Wiley, pp. 15–42. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1111/b.9780631201199.1999.00003.x.

Stevenson, C. L., 1945. *Ethics and language.* London: Yale University Press.

Embracing Plural Curricula Amid Neoliberalism in Contemporary Universities in Africa: Asante's Afrocentric Idea Revisited



By Dr. Phefumula Nyoni & Dr. Otilia Chiramba

Abstract

This paper 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 terms of methodology, the paper constitutes a conceptual treatise that draws from previous empirical research that focused on Afrocentricity and a plural programme – the extended curriculum programme within a university context where neoliberalism remains dominant. In this regard, the paper combines an extensive review of empirical cases and the authors' experiences of the extended curriculum programmes in diverse South African universities. Literature was reviewed from a wide range of sources that included Afrocentricity and curriculum transformation through plurality at individual and institutional pedagogic levels. The paper explores 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. The paper thus highlights how Afrocentricity transcends simplistic notions of intellectual discussions as it highlights serious and practical realities that shape the identities, ideals, aspirations, and values of students from disadvantaged backgrounds. In the process, ways in which pedagogic educational aspirations of the students could be redefined through an Afrocentric approach together with constraints are discussed. The individualist-oriented complications posed by neoliberal ideals that tend to contradict and, in some instances, hinder the Afrocentric core principle of inclusivity have left African universities at a crossroads with little to show in terms of progress in the transformation agenda. The paper concludes that Afrocentricity and its basis in cultural reconfiguration aims to ensure that people recognise their agency and affirm

their identity and ability to draw from their existing agency to holistically transform the various aspects of their lives by overcoming the socio-economic and intellectual constraints.

Keywords: Afrocentricity, Extended Curriculum Programmes (ECPs), Neoliberalism, Plurality, Post-colonial University.

Introduction

This paper focuses on the contributions of Asante's ideas of Afrocentricity as part of the decolonial struggles towards repositioning African voices in contemporary historical narratives. This follows concerns that the lasting impact of colonialism could have impacted efforts to enhance agency among Africans to free themselves from some of the negative influences of the colonial past where African ways of knowing were questioned and mainly sidelined despite their provenance. The paper focuses on the complex nature of pedagogic transformation amid the persistence of Western principles where scholarship and other practices across universities in Africa tend to be inevitably shaped by neoliberalism. Of importance in the arguments shaping this paper is the view that Afrocentricity transcends simplistic notions of intellectual discussions as it highlights stern and practical realities that shape the identities, ideals, aspirations, and values of Africans.

Experiences of students from disadvantaged backgrounds particularly those in the extended curriculum programmes (ECPs) are used to understand the challenges and possibilities of drawing from Afrocentricity to recentre pedagogies from which lessons could be drawn to aid the transformation of higher education in Africa. The reason why the paper has chosen to focus on the ECP mainly relates to the structure of the programme as representing plurality as opposed to the homogenising curricula. The latter features the post-apartheid curricular structuring in which physical and epistemological access and pedagogical practices and policies are mainly drawn from neoliberal-inclined principles. This has meant that injustices that characterise the social, economic, political, educational and other institutions have become deeply entrenched within the higher education system and institutions thus negatively affecting individuals and groups from disadvantaged backgrounds while favouring those from advantaged backgrounds. The ECPs have thus been driven by principles of innovative and responsive teaching anchored upon a philosophy of plurality at the curriculum level (Fomunyam & Teferra 2017). In addition, the ECPs' holistic approach to student support in which academic and lifestyle management skills are integrated makes them stand out as essential, particularly in a decolonising context seeking to affirm pedagogic practices founded upon firm Afrocentric principles. While challenges of under-theorisation and reluctance in the uptake of research on the programme by staff have been explicitly reported by McKenna (2014) and Boughey (2014), this paper seeks to explore the broader neoliberal influences on the post-apartheid university curricula particularly the continued precarity that students from disadvantaged backgrounds have continued to experience.

This paper is written within a context where concerns have been raised by decolonial scholars such as Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2017; 2021) whose view on what he calls an "unfolding Euro-modernity" alludes to the deeply entrenched colonial legacy among academics cannot be ignored. Of importance is the view that to free Africa from the clutches of colonial power, culture and knowledge matrices that still define Africa as highlighted by Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013), there is a need for universities in Africa and South Africa in particular to embrace locally derived and contextual relevant epistemologies that are acceptable (Eybers 2019). The paper's context also draws from the challenges that have characterised the post-colonial African university that Woldegiorgis and Doevenspeck (2013) outline, particularly the historically changing roles of universities and realignment of their roles to the market. Equally, drawing from Gwaravanda (2019) and Gwaravanda and Ndofirepi (2021) who present an important critique of the Eurocentric pitfalls in the practice of African philosophy predominantly in African universities, the paper grapples with challenges affecting South Africa's university curricula, especially within a context dominated by neoliberalism in which exclusion tends to produce curricula that are exclusionary of students' philosophical and cultural underpinnings. Specific reference is made to students from poorer backgrounds. The curricula are not only alienating

many students but are culturally hegemonic with the potential to disrupt the academic project for all students (Eybers 2019). This thus represents a decolonial approach to issues in which ways of disrupting the current Eurocentric-linked curricula are explored particularly from an Afrocentric perspective. It is envisaged that academics can explore a social realist ontology when formulating Afrocentric curricula that can enhance epistemic inclusivity as noted by Mignolo (2009) – plurality at the individual cultural level, plurality at the institutional cultural level, and plurality at the academic and pedagogic levels.

The paper is based on a conceptual review of empirical cases and the authors' experiences of the ECPs in diverse South African universities. Literature was reviewed from a wide range of sources that included Afrocentricity and curriculum transformation through plurality at individual and institutional levels. The key question upon which this work is foregrounded is: How could Afrocentricity assist in understanding plurality associated with the ECPs in South African universities?

Extended Curriculum Programmes as Pedagogic Alternatives – A Contextual Overview

The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) introduced ECPs in the early 2000s as part of equity-related strategies aimed at dealing with access and success challenges particularly targeting students from historically disadvantaged backgrounds (DHET, 2019). The ECPs have emerged as essential interventions because of a low graduation rate that saw 36.9% of students surveyed between 2009 and 2015 completing their three-year programmes at the end of the fourth or fifth year (DHET 2020). While ECPs have had their fair share of challenges, especially the criticism that the throughput rates have not been as high as anticipated, success rates have remained encouraging. Considering the low graduate rates and throughput in three-year programmes, the focus of the ECPs becomes essential in ensuring broadening access to students who although meeting the university entry due to their disadvantaged backgrounds would not have made it to university because of multiple disadvantages they face. In addition, the ECPs tend to embrace a decolonial approach that aligns with Afrocentrism especially where the targeted support to these students in the form of financial and other resources is concerned. The programme thus stands out as an important policy instrument that if implemented accordingly can deal with both access and success of students, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds who usually find the university environment alienating (Nyoni 2022). The support mechanisms found particularly in the foundation phase of ECPs remain a valuable mechanism towards enhancing the success of students from disadvantaged backgrounds, thus posing as an important instrument when discussions on an Afrocentric approach are pursued. Equally, the support in ECPs has resulted in the establishment of 'family bonds' among students, thus enhancing their integration into the university environment culture. The ECPs can generally be viewed as a mechanism aimed at disrupting some regular programme tendencies that hinder epistemic access, especially considering the emergence of the #FeesMustFall, #RhodesMustFall, Black Student Movement, #OpenStellenboschCollective

> "... the view that Afrocentricity transcends simplistic notions of intellectual discussions as it highlights stern and practical realities that shape the identities, ideals, aspirations, and values of Africans"

and more recently the #Asinamali protests (Hlatshwayo 2022). These protests are key as they highlighted the slow pace of transformation at the pedagogic and curriculum levels – the ECPs and the support associated with them have come in handy to provide an alternative.

An Overview of the Problem

The problem being pursued in this paper is founded upon the broader context of decolonisation of the curricula and other educational pedagogies experienced in Africa's universities. Most challenges facing African institutions, be it at economic, sociocultural, religious and of late technological levels, can be explained within the context of the colonial experiences and post-colonial redress efforts. These painstakingly slow-paced changes point to the complexity of reaffirming and dislodging the deeply entrenched colonial legacy responsible for perpetuating injustices, particularly among previously disadvantaged groups. Giroux (2014) argues that neoliberalism and its influences on the curricula and pedagogic institutional practices have since the 1980s been at the centre of some of the challenges that continue to affect students and universities. Fataar (2023) describes the situation as having universities turned from 'public goods' into 'private goods' as individualism, marketisation and managerialism set in. Giroux (2014) and Fataar (2023) concluded that the setting of managerialism and marketisation has fuelled severe competition that favours students or institutions from more privileged backgrounds at the expense of the disadvantaged.

The problem can further be expanded by adopting the views of Fataar (2023) who indicates that the African university system remains the least developed. Despite the significant growth in student enrolment, no appropriate support is provided to the university system. Other scholars have gone further by outright dismissing post-colonial Africa's higher education as unsuitable for its context (Rufai, Adedeji & Musa 2021). Such a situation then passes on the financial and other support mechanisms to students and their families as explained by Masutha and Motala (2023) and it is mainly students from working-class families who suffer the most, most of whom are disadvantaged. Of importance in the foregoing argument is the view proffered by Fataar (2023) who highlights how the structural adjustment programme-related pressures of the 1980s manifested in challenges within the areas of gender, ethnicity, class, status and physical location of universities. It is within this context that the paper refers to the ECP in an attempt to explore the possibilities of implementing a flexible, plural curriculum with broader student support and sensitivity to students' backgrounds as opposed to the rigid mainstream programmes that have a one-size-fits-all tendency derived from neoliberal influences. The paper thus explores ways in which the ECP could be understood from an Afrocentric lens, particularly concerning the cultural plurality associated with it.

Conceptualising Afrocentricity

Asante (1999: viii) states that Afrocentricity constitutes a fundamental necessity for African liberation at diverse levels and these include the psychological, social, cultural and economic aspects. Asante further asserts that Afrocentricity involves the relocation and repositioning of the African into a space of agency in which African voices can be heard as opposed to occupying a spectator role. Just like *ubuntu* and its conceptions of humanity, Afrocentricity can be viewed as an important theoretical philosophy that can be used to empower Africans. Asante views Afrocentricity as a philosophical theory just as in the structure of a curriculum. This means that the philosophy acts as an important block in efforts aimed at creating a common black consciousness underpinned by meaningful identity, political strength and the political will for effecting the requisite social and economic transformation of Africans and other formerly oppressed groups such as African Americans. Afrocentricity is thus an empowerment counter-hegemonic philosophy that seeks to question epistemological conceptions that tend to be founded upon European cultural realities. Exploring issues from an Afrocentric lens can thus be equated to Kaupapa Māori struggles for recognition and emancipation in New Zealand highlighted by Nyoni (2023) especially considering the integration of philosophical and practical action in challenging the hegemonic dominance of the mainstream curriculum and its entrenchment to western epistemologies. In the process, it is envisaged that such an epistemological approach could assist in shifting, constructing, critiquing and

challenging knowledge production founded upon a European cultural construct to embrace one that is positioned within an African cultural construct.

Whatever disagreements might exist in the conceptualisation of Afrocentricity, in arguments pursued in this paper, it remains essential to see it as an educational, philosophical and theoretical approach that can be used in educational and societal settings to achieve African people's empowerment. The Afrocentric idea is premised upon a recognition of the challenges that have underscored African ideas especially how they have been marginalised or subverted despite their richness. Of importance in the Afrocentric approach is a combination of defensive and redemptionist strategies that seek to relocate and reposition Africans within a space where their agency is embraced and enhanced to ensure that their voices are heard (Asante 2017). The paper equally draws from other decolonial approaches that seek to combine theory and practical actions to deal with the sidelining and misrepresentation of African voices in their historical and current experiences.

Exploring the Concept of Neoliberalism and its Influences on the Post-Colonial African University

Neoliberalism has been broadly explained and has a wide range of features that include a free-market system where competition is mainly at the individual level and the exchange of goods and services is done privately with the involved individuals' property and other rights guaranteed however, critics have argued that the system is devoid of equity (Vlasov 2021). On a similar note, Badat (2023) argues that theoretically, neoliberalism represents political economic practices in which human wellbeing would mainly be advanced through freeing individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills. This is meant to operate within an institutional framework featuring free markets and free trade underpinned by property rights. In the process, the state is expected to play a role in creating and preserving an institutional framework meant to support the practices, including legislative and repressive mechanisms for ensuring that property rights are secured and markets function properly.

Pennington et al. (2017) argue that neoliberalism relates to a market-based view of citizenship that stands in contrast to a rights-based view of social service provision in areas of the economy, healthcare, education and welfare provision in particular. According to Vlasov (2021), some of the features of neoliberalism include having persons who are rational self-seeking individuals, free-market efficiency mechanisms for resource and opportunity allocations, a commitment to free trade and a laissez-faire setting. This is mainly because the services are seen as private instead of a public good. In relating neoliberalism to a university context, Pennington et al. (2017) highlight the challenges of fee increases, student debt and outsourcing as traceable to the neo-liberalisation of higher education institutions. It is from this angle that neoliberalism has often been criticised for creating a situation devoid of accountability for private power. In addition, neoliberal politics such as deregulation, privatisation, suppression of trade unions, outsourcing and competition in public services broadly adopted across the globe since the 1980s are mainly responsible for deeper inequality and perpetuating poverty.

The entrenchment of culturally hegemonic curricula shows the influences of neoliberalism on post-colonial university systems not just in South Africa, as reported by Eybers (2019). For instance, the former vice-chancellor of the University of Cape Town (UCT) Mamokgethi Phakeng, lamented how 'black pain' is still being experienced by black students who do not even have first-hand information about apartheid (Etheridge 2018). Of importance in this argument is that issues that students must deal with transcend their class and racial profiling –even though in terms of class it is mainly those from historically disadvantaged backgrounds who bear the brunt of a flawed post-colonial curricula configuration whose neoliberal influence has resulted in the reproduction of the past injustices. It might sound strange to suggest that in many instances, this reproduction of past injustices by the post-colonial university curricula is overt considering the context of a dominant neoliberal culture that has little or no sympathy for previously disadvantaged students.

Cultural Underpinnings of Afrocentric-Oriented Teaching Pedagogies

There is no doubt that culture plays an essential role in shaping successful and intellectually em-

powering pedagogies that might be relevant to the African university context. It is through conscious engagements on power relations and ensuring that positions of resistance holistically form part of the core philosophies of identity and indigeneity that defines what has come to be termed 'culturally relevant teaching'. As argued by Chiramba and Motala (2023), emphasis ought to be on a pedagogy that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally and politically in which cultural referents are used to impart knowledge, skills and attitudes.

With the Afrocentric idea being underpinned by a conscious understanding of individuals' historical and current experiences of marginalisation that ought to propel them towards resistance, the significance of embracing a culturally relevant pedagogy remains essential. This is critical especially if academic success is to be championed within the current university settings across Africa, particularly in South Africa, where there is the continued dominance of neoliberalism in defining university practices and processes that influence students' academic success. Placing students' background experiences at the centre of their learning, particularly when it comes to students in extended programmes, ought not to provoke sentiments of negative perceptions about their preparedness but rather it should inspire the teaching pedagogies of academics or those providing requisite support. It is, therefore, through various traits such as knowledge of individual circumstances, self-respect and resilience, coupled with an edge to succeed, that students who mostly come from disadvantaged backgrounds consciously draw from and use as some agency to navigate the challenges encountered within the university environment and ultimately succeed.

In elaborating the nature of pedagogic practices founded upon Afrocentric ideas, especially in pursuit of students' academic success, culturally relevant teaching remains essential. As argued by Chiramba and Motala (2023), this implies teaching in which academics engage in student-centric practices that aim at ensuring that their academic needs are met to gain quality intellectual capabilities and attain academic success as opposed to non-comprehensive strategies. The latter have come to define current university teaching pedagogies and heavily draw from the dominant neoliberal

"In elaborating the nature of pedagogic practices founded upon Afrocentric ideas, especially in pursuit of students' academic success, culturally relevant teaching remains essential."

ideals where students' socio-inequalities are noted but rarely adequately factored into institutional planning and academic practices. Such strategies can therefore not be relied upon for dealing with the socio-economic and academic precarities that define the experiences of students in African universities especially those from poorer backgrounds.

While the paper does not directly deal with the issues around neoliberalism, it is imperative to draw from Badat (2023), who in presenting four effects of neoliberalism highlighted the willing or imposed neoliberal thinking and ideas and how a culture of materialism has been rampantly introduced into the higher education system. Of importance in his views are the impacts of globalisation and the dominance of neoliberalism within the universities in Africa and how these have combined to define the unprecedented crises confronting universities and academics. The culture of materialism following the entry of private players in higher education is the resultant transformation of the higher education space in which Badat (2023: 16) borrows a concept of "Narcissist hedonism" from (Nayyar, 2008: 5) in which the culture of neoliberalism is blamed for displacing "a reasonable utilitarianism" that characterises universities in Africa. It can therefore be argued that suggestions on the need for culturally relevant teaching as part of an

Afrocentric linked pedagogic transformation are cognisant of the deeply entrenched neoliberal-driven pedagogies that universities and academics as well as middle-class students that could stand in the way of the necessary transformation. It follows that reorienting pedagogies to embrace culturally relevant teaching must not be isolated from the broader efforts aimed at extricating other institutions within the political, economic, social and of late technological spheres where the dominance of neoliberalism has posed the greatest challenge. An acknowledgement of such challenges does not however render the task of creating pedagogies informed by the Afrocentric ideas insurmountable. The message of hope is well spelt out by Woldegiorgis (2023), who argues that despite the raging debate on the extent to which African higher education systems have lived up to African societal expectations in terms of executing their role and functions, societies have prided themselves on the high-level expertise that exhibits knowledge and how such knowledge has been used to support change. In essence, he further adds that higher education institutions have been driven to negotiate changes within the complex socio-economic and political contexts.

The Afrocentric Philosophical Influences on African University Curriculum

The development of South Africa's higher education, in particular, at the curriculum level since 2015 and the emergent #feesMustFall protests have been defined by practices that have represented a rejection of what could be viewed as Eurocentric principles (Eybers 2019). Questions have thus arisen on the implementation of mainstream curricula that embrace democratisation and justice. In this regard, a democratised and just educational space has been found to be quite important. In a similar line of argument supporting the democratisation of South Africa's higher educational settings, some scholars have advocated a need for students to develop skills in literacy and numeracy while also expanding their technological, social and political abilities as part of ensuring that participation is within a democratic space (Chiramba & Motala 2023). It has been noted that the mainstream curricula that have formed part of South Africa's higher education system have allegedly marginalised students particularly as the interaction with course content, expert voices and teaching methods has remained isolated from their lived realities (Shizha 2013). It is therefore important to note that any curriculum that lacks consciousness of one's lived realities can by no means form part of emancipatory curricula especially as it would be lacking standards that can model it along Afrocentric ideas. These Eurocentric curricula and their rigidity have failed to enhance plurality in knowledge production across South Africa's higher education system since the dawn of democracy. This has resulted in epistemic hegemony, something that requires critical attention.

A shift away from Eurocentric curricula to embrace Afrocentric curricula underpinned by a decolonial path in which Afrocentric curricula are used as enablers for redressing epistemic injustices associated with Eurocentric curricula. The redressive process through embracing Afrocentric curricula involves dealing with the epistemic hegemony and arrogance associated with mainstream curricula that are founded upon a Eurocentric philosophy. Equally, some of the epistemic silences associated with African universities especially the risk of implementing ethnocentric curricula highlighted by Young, Haffejee and Corsun (2017) can be dealt with by implementing flexible curricula that are conscious of and value the local context. What could also be of importance is the need to ensure that students' experiences within and outside the university are explored with the idea of understanding their influence on the learning environment. An educational approach, particularly at the curriculum level that puts students' cultures and experiences at the centre becomes important in creating an inclusive learning environment – something Asante (1991; 1999) emphasises as the centrality of the African person in the curriculum and classroom setting. It, therefore, becomes important to ensure that Afrocentric entrenched epistemic processes that embrace a holistic view at theoretical and practical levels are used not only for ensuring the adoption of fluid curricula and pedagogic processes in African universities but also for ensuring that African issues are explained from a local context and solutions are relevant for Africa.

It can thus be argued that 'real empowerment' at the curriculum level can mainly be understood by how the students concerned are able to acknowledge being part of the curriculum while equally seeing

their reflection in the curriculum taught (Eybers 2019). Since teaching is mainly construed as a communication process, it can be argued that the academic literacy, lifestyle management and critical thinking associated with the foundation components in ECPs are at the fore of addressing historical intellectual gaps – connecting students with their cultural backgrounds and traditions while ensuring that they understand challenges faced from familiar life and pedagogical practices. It is through such an approach that students can easily comprehend the institutional culture and deal with complex academic and related obligations found in educational spaces.

Homogeneous and Plural Modes of Curricula Implementation Amid Extended Curriculum Practices

The adoption of ECPs in South African institutions has been founded upon an agenda of broadening epistemological access to qualifying students who due to other circumstances such as their socio-economic backgrounds would not gain university admission despite meeting minimum entry requirements. According to the Department of Higher Education (2020), ECPs focus on students who meet the requirements for university entry but due to previous educational and socio-economic disadvantages tend to be in a precarious position that could impede their academic success. In essence, such students would have accessed schooling that is inadequate to prepare them for university. This argument needs to be taken further to explore how the educational gaps that students from poorer backgrounds experience at high school that put them in a precarious position at university ought to be laid squarely at the broader post-colonial education system whose dominant neoliberal values continue to perpetuate the precarity of disadvantaged groups. It can thus be argued that the government's approach towards introducing the ECPs can be viewed as a noble idea for disrupting homogenous neoliberal entrenched curricula that have defined South Africa's post-apartheid universities. Beyond such a disruption, efforts have thus been commendable towards embracing plural modes of curricula implementation as shown by the four models underpinning the ECPs and the flexibility that is contained in their design and implementation.

Looking into the realities, particularly when it comes to a lack of interest in understanding and embracing ECPs coupled with negative attitudes associated with academics in mainstream programmes, one cannot help but point the finger at the structural faults that the post-colonial university system has produced. This sad situation is what the authors call 'academic imperialism'. This 'academic imperialistic' situation which has remained concealed by the skewed neoliberal value-dominated post-colonial university is responsible for the under-theorisation argued by McKenna (2014) and Boughey (2014). This paper thus argues that while under-theorisation of the programme and reluctance in the uptake of research by staff, most of whom are casual, are undoubtedly issues as reported by Fomunyam and Teferra (2017), it is important to locate the problem within the broader structurally skewed post-colonial university setting that is still reeling under the clutches of neoliberalism. It is thus important to highlight that to deal with the epistemological and pedagogic injustices that continue to affect students from disadvantaged backgrounds besides those in ECPs, it remains imperative to confront the structural faults posed by the neoliberal value dominance at institutional and broader systemic levels.

It must be emphasised that curricula that are suitable for African universities could address the multiple and complex pedagogic and epistemic challenges in such a way that students' culture and identity are consciously embraced. In addition, it is important to ensure that students are not just able to be conscious of who they are but equally hold awareness of the suitable ways in which they can express themselves at pedagogic and epistemic levels. It is this manner of expression that scholars such as Maina and Maringe (2020) and Chiramba, Banda and Mwebesa (2021) have positioned as an essential foundation of epistemic justice in which student voices ought to be at the core of any just teaching and learning processes. Scholars have also referred to the process of creating a just epistemic and pedagogic educational environment as the demarginalisation of the history, culture, and agency of Africans (Angu 2018; Kumalo 2018; Nyoka 2013). It is therefore important that students' belonging, and agency are reflected in the curricula.

Conclusion – Towards an Afrocentric Curricula

It needs to be emphasised that coming up with an inclusive curriculum within a space dominated by neoliberalism might prove to be challenging. Although the implementation of the ECPs may also have its challenges, when it comes to a flexible curriculum that can cater for the needs of students from poorer backgrounds, there is a chance that the programmes can provide an alternative to the mainstream curriculum that is usually criticised for being rigid and influenced by Eurocentric values. The Eurocentric values are mainly underscored by the neoliberal ideas and practices that dominate post-colonial African universities. An inclusive Afrocentric curriculum that could go beyond what the ECP in its current form can offer, is therefore one that is capable of deconstructing hegemonic practices within a curriculum. Such a deconstruction effort ought to be done to ensure that students are assisted to consciously develop an inspiring identity in which they are able to express and assert themselves in ways that can promote their academic advancement. The best way to create a curriculum that is founded on Afrocentric values is thus to have a multipronged holistic approach to curriculum formulation in which diverse academic literacy and lifestyle management are infused, since empowering learning can be drawn from pedagogic practices that transcend the classroom and university settings.

It is also important that in implementing an Afrocentric curriculum, African academics play a central role not only in developing scholarship knowledge but also in ensuring that different types of knowledge are used in building an Afrocentric curriculum. While the dominance of neoliberalism within post-colonial African universities has meant that those who control the political and economic resources shape ideas including setting the curriculum agenda, it is important to note that the flexibility of the ECPs allows students to draw from their agency to enhance their life and academic skills thus in the process broadening their prospects for academic success. It is these initiatives associated with the ECPs that set them apart from what critics call a rigid mainstream curriculum. This further calls for academics and other disciplinary experts to be empowered to embrace the agency of marginalised individuals and groups in their pedagogies and other academic practices. It is through enhancing student agency, especially for those from marginalised backgrounds, that South Africa's university curricula can rid itself of culturally hegemonic curricula and embrace inclusivity while also presenting decolonised curricula founded upon Afrocentric values.

References

Angu, P.E., 2018. Disrupting Western Epistemic Hegemony in South African Universities: Curriculum Decolonisation, Social Justice, and Agency in post-Apartheid South Africa. *The International Journal of Learner Diversity and Identities*, 25(1): 9-22.

Asante, M. K., 1991. The Afrocentric Idea in Education. *The Journal of Negro Education*, 60(2): 170-180.

Asante, M. K., 1999. *The Painful Demise of Eurocentrism*. Trenton: N.J. Africa World Press.

Asante, M. K., 2017. The Philosophy of Afrocentricity. In Afolayan, A. & Falola, T. (eds) *The Palgrave Handbook of African Philosophy.* (pp.231-244). Palgrave Macmillan.

Badat, S. 2023. Re-envisioning Universities in Africa as African Universities. In Woldegiorgis, E.T., Motala, S. & Nyoni, P. (eds) *Creating the New African University*. (pp. 12-39). Brill: Leiden/ Boston.

Boughey, C., 2014. The Significance of Culture, Structure and Agency in Supporting and Developing Student Learning in South Africa. In Dhunpath, R. & Vithal, R. (eds) *Alternative Access to Higher Education*. Cape Town: Pearson.

Chiramba, O. & Motala S. 2023. Towards Transforming Teaching and Learning in Higher Education: Interrogating Poverty Through a Decolonial Perspective. *Curriculum Perspectives,* 43 (Suppl 1): 11-21.

Chiramba, O. Banda, T. & Mwebesa, C.C., 2021. Affordances and Constraints in Researching Social Justice in Higher Education: An Emerging Model for Ameliorating Methodological and Ethical Challenges. *Journal of Educational Studies*, 20(2): 19-39.

Department of Higher Education, 2012. *Foundation Provision in Ministerially Approved Programmes.* Pretoria: Government Printers.

Department of Higher Education and Training, 2019. *Ministerial Statement on University Funding 2020/2021 and 2021/2022.* Pretoria: Government Printers.

Department of Higher Education, 2020. *2000 to 2017 First Time Entering Undergraduate Cohort Studies for Public Higher Education Institutions*. Pretoria: Government Printers.

Etheridge, J., 2018. New UCT Vice-Chancellor on Black Pain, #RhodesMustFall and Everything in between. *News24* [Online], 18 April 2018. https://www.news24.com/news24/new-uct-vice-chancellor-on-black-pain-rhodesmustfall-and-everything-in-between-20180418 [Accessed10 July 2023].

Eybers, O., 2019. A Social Realist Ontology for Developing Afrocentric

Curricula in Africa. *Journal of Decolonising Disciplines*, 1(1): 47-63.

Fataar, A., 2023. Placing knowledge at the centre of an alternative public good imaginary of African universities. In Woldegiorgis, E.T., Motala, S. & Nyoni, P. (eds) *Creating the New African University.* (pp. 198-220). Brill: Leiden/ Boston.

Fomunyam, K.G. & Teferra, D., 2017. Curriculum Responsiveness Within the Context of Decolonisation in South African Higher Education. *Perspectives in Education*, 35(2): 196-207.

Giroux, H.A., 2014. Neoliberalism's War Against the Radical Imagination. *Tikkun*, 29(3):9-14.

Gwaravanda, E.T., 2019. An Epistemological Critique of the African University Education System. In Porto, G. (eds) *Education Systems Around the World.* (pp.1-23). Intech Open: UK.

Gwaravanda, E.T. & Ndofirepi, A.P., 2021. Beyond Rhetoric: Towards the Africanisation of the Teaching of Philosophy in Zimbabwean Universities. In Ndofirepi, A.P. & Gwaravanda, E.T. (eds) *Mediating Learning in Higher Education in Africa*. (pp. 79-97). Brill: Leiden/ Boston.

Hlatshwayo, M.N., 2022. The Rise of the Neoliberal University in South Africa: Some Implications for Curriculum Imagination(s). *Education as Change*, 26(1): 1-21.

Kumalo, S.H., 2018. Explicating Abjection: Historically White Universities C reating Natives of Nowhere? *Critical Studies in Teaching and Learning*, 6(1): 1-17.

Maina, G.E. & Maringe, F., 2020. Epistemological Access in Disadvantaged Schools: A Sase Study of Flood-Prone Rural Schools in Western Kenya. Ndofirepi, A.P. & Musengi, M. (eds) *Inclusion as social justice*. (pp. 14-35). Leiden/ Boston: Brill.

Masutha, M. & Motala, S. 2023. Student Funding (In) Equity in South African Higher Education: Fuelling or Failing futures? In Woldegiorgis, E.T., Motala, S. & Nyoni, P. (eds) *Creating the New African University*. (pp. 248-273). Leiden/ Boston: Brill.

Mignolo, W.D., 2009. Epistemic Disobedience, Independent Thought and Decolonial Freedom. *Theory, Culture and Society*, 26(7-8): 159-181.

McKenna, S., 2014. The Context of Access and Foundation Provisioning in South Africa. In Dhunpath, R. & Vithal, R. (eds) *Alternative access to higher education*. (pp. 51-61). Pinelands: Pearson.

Nayyar, D., 2008. Globalization: What does it Mean for Higher Education. In Weber, L.E. & Duderstadt, J.J. (eds) *The globalization of higher education*. (pp. 3-14). London: Economica.

Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S., 2013. The Entrapment of Africa Within the Global Colonial Matrices of Power: Eurocentrism, Coloniality, and Deimperialization in the Twenty-First Century. *Journal of Developing Societies*, 29(4): 331-353.

Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S.J., 2017. The Emergence and Trajectories of Struggles for an 'African University': The case of Unfinished Business of African Epistemic Decolonisation. *Kronos*, 43(1): 51-77.

Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S.J., 2021. Internationalisation of Higher Education for Pluriversity: A Decolonial Reflection. *Journal of the British Academy*, 9(1): 77-98.

Nyoka, B., 2013. Negation and Affirmation: A Critique of Sociology in South Africa. *African Sociological Review*, 17(1): 2-4.

Nyoni, P., 2022. Pedagogies of Access and Success Among South African University Students in the Extended Curriculum Programmes Amidst Covid-19 Disruptions. *South African Journal of Higher Education*, 36(4): 137-153.

Nyoni, P., 2023. The Politics of Decolonising the Curriculum Through Adopting Mother Tongue Instruction in a South African Historically Disadvantaged University Setting. *Curriculum Perspectives*, 43(Suppl 1): 47-53.

Pennington, A. Mokose, M., Smith, M. N. & Kawanu, Z., 2017. Neoliberalism and the Crisis in Higher Education in South Africa: Student voice. *New Agenda: South African Journal of Social and Economic Policy*, 2017 (64): 28-32.

Rufai, S.A. Adedeji, L.L. & Musa, B., 2021. Using African Indigenous Knowledge in Conceptualising Peculiarities-Based Teacher Education Curricula for African Universities. *Indonesian Journal of Curriculum and Educational Technology Studies*, 9(1): 1-11.

Shizha, E., 2013. Reclaiming Our Indigenous Voices: The Problem with Postcolonial Sub-Saharan African School Curriculum. *Journal of Indigenous Social Development*, 2(1): 1-18.

Van Wyk, M.M., 2014. Conceptualizing an Afrocentric-Indigenous Pedagogy for an Inclusive Classroom Environment. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*. 5(4): 292-299.

Viljoen, C.T. & van der Walt, J.L., 2003. Being and Becoming: Negotiations on Educational Identity in (South) Africa. *South African Journal of Education,* 23(1): 13-17.

Vlasov, A., 2021. *Neoliberalism and Higher Education in South Africa*. https://www.academia.edu/50925998/Neoliberalism_and_Higher_Education_in_South_Africa [Accessed 12 December 2023].

Woldegiorgis, E. T. 2023. Decolonising the African Union Regional Higher Education Policy: A Tentative Approach Against Neocolonial Entanglement. In Ndofirepi, A.P., Vurayai, S. & Erima, G. *Unyoking African University Knowledge*. (pp. 120-137). Leiden: Brill.

Woldegiorgis, E.T. & Doevenspeck, M., 2013. The changing Role of Higher Education in Africa: A Historical Reflection. *Higher Education studies*, 3(6): 35-45.

Young, C. Haffejee, B. & Corsun, D., 2017. The Relationship between Ethnocentrism and Cultural Intelligence. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 58 (2017): 31-41.

'In Comes the New Black': The Ghetto-Rural Black versus Blacksurbian Identities

By Mr Nkululeko Motha

Abstract

With the emergence of the Black bourgeoisie in Africa and the diaspora, there is a need to conceptualise the urban Black person, who, in pursuit of a better life, had to redefine, adopt, and formulate an identity acceptable within the middle and upper social classes. Inclusivity and diversity are key terms in these classes because there is a need to design urban spaces accommodative and cognisant of the history informing the diverse groups inhabiting it. This should contemplate the effects of colonialism on the urban space and how colonialism influences the formulation of the different Black identities in urban spaces. This research contends that the inequalities of the urban space have created two groups of Black people: The *Ghetto-Rural* Black and the *Blacksurbian* especially in South African and American (for African Americans) urban space. This has created a hierarchy amongst Black people which has not been mitigated because of popular culture and how it influences the consciousness of Black people on race matters. This research uses D. A. Masolo's arguments to conceptualise these concepts. Additionally, it proposes new ideas of Blackness to demonstrate dislocation and how the *Blacksurbian* influences exclusion from the urban space.

Key words: Ghetto-Rural Black, Decolonisation and Philosophy, Black Identity and Experience, Blacksurbian,

Introduction

This research is motivated by the disunity among Black people in South Africa and America despite continued exclusion and racism affecting them. Pursuits towards inclusivity enable the conceptualisation of terms such as the "Contemporary New Black" and the *Blacksurbian* that introduce new perspectives

and conversations about Black people. These are drawn from lived experiences of people who have traces of Alan Locke's "The New Negro" from the 1920s. These metamorphosised from being slaves to becoming free however limited leading to the realisation of a social class. This research considers the creation of the Black middle class, how it has been urbanised, and the impact it has on Black identities. While the focus location of the research is on Black identities in Africa and the diaspora, South Africa and America (African American) are often points of reference because of their mirroring experiences. African Americans' class advancements have been conceded to because of their country's leading financial abilities as a first-world. Nonetheless, race and class similarly affect both nations. The urban Black person is, thus, created. One of this research's investigations is who is this new Black in the 21st century especially since racial dynamics seem to be ever-changing but the result is the same. This research attempts to answer this question by formulating theories on the reinvented Black person. Why must this be probed? The fundamental aspect of this research is the urban Black person's influences in the racial conversation. Their views are dominating the social space and further creating a culture that has since invaded the Ghetto-Rural spaces which cannot sustain the ideals embodied in the urban space. This class aspirant urban Black person is becoming a representation of who is the Black person but not who is the African. These questions, especially on the Black person in the urban space are the essence of this research. As a result, this research proposes that the urban Black person ought to be understood as the *Blacksurbian*. This research further attempts to determine the possibilities of racially disassociating from Blackness. The foundation of this type of Black person is class whether achieved or perceived is a question that ought to be answered fully in a separate study. However, the research engages on these views. Why class? There is literature to answer these questions.

Coe and Pauli (2020) explore the concept of social class as a multifaceted framework for understanding individuals' status, financial situation, and societal roles, highlighting its influence on both personal and collective behaviours. They argue that while class can be aspirational and purposeful, it often lacks strategic planning. Ballantyne (2014) complements this view by noting the migration to cities is driven by aspirations for prosperity and status. In post-apartheid South Africa, Mosselson, drawing on Nutall (2008), observes the emergence of a "post-apartheid cultural habitus" reflecting the complex social dynamics within urban areas (Mosselson, 2016: 1280). This concept of habitus, further discussed by Bourdie and Reed-Danahay (2005), denotes socially acquired dispositions and values that shape groups' societal expectations. Coe and Pauli (2020) also emphasize that class is relational and subject to change, challenging the notion of a rigid social structure. Urbanism's evolution, attributed to factors like mixed neighbourhoods and industrial developments, was noted by Blokland-Potters and Savage (2008), and further critiqued by Cuthbert (2014), who argues that psychological rather than physical transformations characterize modern urban development, while also highlighting the instability and inherent racism within the capitalist system that exacerbates urban imbalances. The creation of informal settlements, as described by Dovey, illustrates the inadequacies of traditional urban planning to accommodate the needs and aspirations of all city dwellers, particularly those migrating from rural areas (Dovey, 2014).

The interconnection between urbanism, social class, colonial legacies, and apartheid is evident in the spatial and social segregation within South African cities. Bickford-Smith (2008) traces the origins of racial segregation to colonial ideologies, further analysing its manifestation in Johannesburg's urban fabric. This synthesis underscores the complex relationship between urban development, social class dynamics, and racial segregation, highlighting the enduring challenge of creating

"This research attempts to answer this question by formulating theories on the reinvented Black person."

inclusive and equitable urban spaces in the post-apartheid era. In pursuit of inclusive urbanism, there must be concession that the urban space, although its habitus may be white, is being evolved by Black people. Nqobile Malaza (2015) argues that research into Black people in urban spaces is not simply about living in those areas, but also narrates to urbanists how far countries have moved from their segregationist past. Arguably, this concession opens room for conversations concerning the class distinctions creating the Ghetto-Rural Black and the *Blacksurbian* that this research proposes. The *Blacksurbian* and the Contemporary New Black are not used interchangeably. In definition, the "Contemporary New Black" is marked by effects of colonialism such as poverty, inability to gain equal access to services, and is typically unconscious of the cause of their Black condition. This "Contemporary New Black" is in or comes from the Ghetto-Rural space. The *Blacksurbian* on the other hand forms an identity that disassociates from Blackness. The *Blacksurbian* lives in urban spaces and distinguishes himself/herself from those that do not belong to the middle or upper classes.

In this research, the Ghetto-Rural in South Africa, as a term, is not an identity marker; but it is used to contrast the conditions of the Black person at poor locations. Therefore, the "Contemporary New Black" and the *Blacksurbian* are mostly distinguished by location: one in the urban and the other in the Ghetto-Rural areas. The former is used to identify that there is a new African and Black person who perceives the world differently, whereas the *Blacksurbian* (mostly called "Coconut, Model C, Glamour Girls, Cheese Boy" by other Black people) is a categorisation of a group of people who have formed the emerging notion that Blackness can be subscribed to. As a result, they view being Black as a membership which can be subscribed to and denounced. Therefore, this research investigates the transcendence of the Black person from the introduction of Locke's (1925) "The New Negro" (typically resisting clutches of oppression through education, class status, education, etc.) and these new Black identities in the 21st century. Authors such as Antjie Krog, an Afrikaner writer, have pondered on questions around the redefinition of African and how they could fit in it (*Begging to be Black*, 2009). Thabo Mbeki, a former president of South Africa, in his 1996 speech "I am an African" did not limit his presentation of Africanness to being of African descent. Moreover, in defence of the Black urban, scholars such as Chielozona Eze (2014) have written about the relevance of Afropolitanism within a larger philosophical tradition of cosmopolitanism. In a postmodernism context, these identities have taken the form of various terms such as cultural hybridity in pursuit of inclusion. Sarah Balakrishnan (2017) unlinks Afropolitan culture from Afrocentrism and Pan-Africanism because Afropolitanism is a radical shift from Black emancipatory thought.

Notably, the "July unrest" gives rise to race questions and the position of Black people in a South Africa governed by a Black majority still enduring mirroring circumstances in America (USA) governed by white majority. Thus, this research engages the perspectives of being Black by those who would treat it as a subscription in the South African and African American contexts. The argument is that the "Contemporary New Black" person aspires to attain the middle and upper-class statuses for a semblance of the sought-after economic liberation promoted by the *Blacksurbian*. Acquiring it will enable them, if it is sufficient, to redefine, relocate and reimagine themselves in different identities brought upon by their new status. Instead of abiding by the lower-class world that society imposes on the "Negro", youths extricated themselves from the morass that sought to bury them (Cayton and Drake, 1962). The middle-class provided the way of life which paved way to the upper-class from which the Negro had been previously barred because of a lack of a conventional education (Cayton and Drake, 1962). Nonetheless, an achievement of this status turns him/her, mostly male, into a hero of the race. These aspirations mark the emergence of the *Blacksurbian identity*.

The Urban Space and the Black Person: Class in Context

Class as a system exists in the urban space particularly in Africa. While others may assert to experience it in the Ghetto-Rural spaces, this could simply be desire to achieve it portrayed through various attempts to prove to neighbours that powerlessness is not the same. The urban space is a social space with Eurocentric ideals, worldviews, and practices; therefore, Aidan Mosselson (2016)

states that housing providers in the inner-city are shaped by a socio-cultural milieu because most housing providers and investors are white. In responding to this context, preserving the inner-city as an idealised European space is undesirable. She further argues that this is a recognition of a new population with needs, cultural practices, and ways of being urban inhabit it (Mosselson, 2016).

> "This "Contemporary New Black" is in or comes from the Ghetto-Rural space."

Within the urban space especially in Africa, Black people came to the fore not simply as the working class, but also as a part of the group living in its spaces. They are also known as the urban Black or the Black urban. Malaza (2015) posits that academic and mainstream literatures do not want to move forward and make dynamic the conception of what is the "Black urban". Therefore, a deeper understanding of identity is required and how it is translated, reflected, and negotiated; and most importantly by asking "what does the Black urban look like?" (Malaza, 2015: 557). What characterises the Black urban is aspiring, achieving, and belonging in middle-class. Coe and Pauli (2020) contest the idea that there is a middle class existing in Africa. Middle class in Africa is created to turn the poor into an aspirant group (Darbon, 2018: 35) drawn from people who, in their perceptions, belong to it against those they think are below them (Coe and Pauli, 2020). Roger Southall (2020) argues that the middle class in Africa are educated, urbanised, professionalised, consumer-oriented, and aspirational. Additionally, Coe and Pauli (2020) agree that being middle class is a project pursued through education, gender relations, and family lifestyles (Donner, 2015), use of language, domestic space, and parenting styles. It appears the authors, Coe and Pauli and Southall, draw their understanding of a middle-class status from Westernisation. However, there is no disputing that countries such as South Africa have created a group of people who are above those considered to be the working class. When referring to the middle class, it is key to restrict it to South Africa from which the motivation of the research is drawn despite the view that the ideas herein can be universally applicable on Black people. This research proposes that the discussion of the Black middle class must be split into two: firstly, against White middle class and, secondly, a Black-on-Black middle class must be acknowledged. It appears that the urban space is foundational marker of the middle class; however, an expanded focus on this will demonstrate how other Black people perceive a particular group of Black people to be within the description of middle class, but cannot be the same when compared to white people. For example, if a Black/African teacher is considered to be middle class, are the conditions similar to a white teacher who is also middle class? This proposal will be investigated properly another research. The assumption here is the already perceived notion a Black middle class.

Southall (2020) states that the prospects, security, and growth of the Black middle class in South Africa are mostly tied in Affirmative Action and Black Economic Development policies. These are supported in Lenin's National Democratic Revolution on the emergence of a Black bourgeoisie as a progressive step towards deracialising capitalism (Mabasa, 2019). Khwezi Mabasa references Fanon's (1963) views where he highlights *Wretched of the Earth*'s shortcomings: that the political transition in the postcolonial were undermined by the over-emphasis on nationalistic conceptions of freedom (2019). The *Blacksurbian* ironically emerges despite these emblematic voices of the Black liberation's ideals of economic freedom. Therefore, the *Blaksurbian identity* must be accounted within the context of these literatures which will either disrupt or realign the progress that Black people have made thus far.

In-Comes the "Blacksurbian"

Being Black [a politically correct term referring to Africans] is, arguably, accompanied by having what is called "the Black experience": these are experiences of disempowerment, racism, and subjugation. However, over the years, the pursuit of middle-class by Black people has played a materially significant role in the formulation of *Blacksurbian identities*. Drawing from Sellers

(1997); Marx (1998); Gqola (2001), Malaza's (2015), the definition of Black is etymologically, historically, anthropologically, and psychologically approached. Steven Bantu Biko defines being Black as a mental attitude against the historical definition which was highly reliant on skin pigmentation (1978: 52-53). Malaza (2015) adopts Biko's definition because of its incorporation of dynamic, but subtle notions and ideas of Blackness that subvert the vagaries of collective identity and broad characterisation. However dependable these definitions have been, their limitations have sawn disunity among Black people because of their heavy reliance on the individual's ability to self-define. It is this research's view that being Black only exist as a power binary to being white. When performed and as a mental attitude, it is empowering to give consciousness for Black people to be functional and to reinvent themselves. However, the limitation is that it does not properly mitigate white definitions that instil inferiority and because, as a mental attitude, the reinvention of the self is reliant on how a Black person experiences their Blackness. In practice, this has been progressive; but it has also been divisive because the system itself is geared for the protection of whiteness despite Black people's definitions of themselves. Southall (2020) argues that there can never be a sensible conversation on class, by extension Africa, without linking it to possession of power among Africans or their relationship with the world. White definitions continue to oppress Black people because the system sustains white people for whom it was designed. Thus, power is an essential element in the definition of the self; moreover, definitions cannot neglect the person who wields it. Malaza (2015) argues that this is a fierce debate about the term "Black" itself – the substance of identity and its style in a post-apartheid urban context (Malaza paraphrased Nuttall: 200) and about how this is perceived by others and negotiated by Black people themselves. Nonetheless, there are distinctions existing that create groups in Black people, such as class that inform the existence of Black people in urban areas.

Dismas Masolo (1994), from a philosophical thought, gives a detailed transfiguration of the African-Black to justify a need for an African philosophy. Masolo states that Aime Cesaire introduced two new concepts when he published *Return to My Native Land* which would be key to the discourse on African identity. Cesaire's first concept is "negritude" which he invented in the poem "Cahier" that marks the Negritude Movement. According to Masolo, the first concept is used six times to "conceptualise the dignity, personhood or humanity of Black people" (1994: 1). Cesaire's second concept is the word "return" which appears in the title of the poem. According to Masolo, it is closely related to "negritude" where "return" gives Black people their dignity, their humanity and Africa its historicity (1994: 1). What Masolo makes of Cesaire's meaning is that these concepts have managed to turn into "consciousness" or awareness. In his explanation, Masolo states that it is this idea of "return" which paves way for the definition of negritude as a historical commitment and as a movement (1994: 1-2). To introduce the *Blacksurbian*, this research borrows the concept "return" from Cesaire to explain the different perspectives on the reading of the history of Black people, particularly, which Cesaire also addresses. In fact, the *Blacksurbian*, in the formulation of a *Blacksurbian identity*, does not concede to Cesaire's "return" which, according to Masolo (1994: 3), means the repatriation to a "geographical or perceptual space" or a metaphorical "return" to a "conceptual" or, like this research argues, a reconceptualised space. In this space, according to Masolo, culture is both field and process of "alienation and domination" which is reconceptualised to be of "rebellion and self-refinding" (1994: 3).

While the rural space is a location, it is also a representation of the cultures and traditions of the African people. It is the space in which the African thrives in his/her Africannism. The Ghetto represents the shanty and gruesome experience of the African in their transformation to Blackness. It is where cultures and traditions are unlearned to accommodate urbanism. Because of the proximity of the Ghetto to the urban space, identities are formulated that align with ideals of these spaces. Urbanism, therefore, centres the desires of the Black person to look towards the class system. In this way, the *Blacksurbian* finds comfort in his/her reinvention. The *Blacksurbian* does not acknowledge Cesaire's "return" which, in this research, is interpreted as the shedding of the 'Black experience' to contextualise *Blacksurbian Culture* marked by their geographical or perceptual space. *Blacksurbian Culture* is

typified by superfluous twanging of languages, dismounted from Black struggles, and the adoption of colonial constructs and relations accommodative of Whiteness. In this way, the formulation of *Blacksurbian identities* is not based on rebellious attitude against colonialism or its institutions and establishments: it is built upon self-finding and self-redefinition which is unrepresented in history that rejects the *Blacksurbian*'s circumstances. *Blacksurbian identity* means the actualisation of the self by the *Blacksurbian* (Black person in suburb in mind) predominantly against the African-Black context and against the perceived subordinate Black (typically taken as the attitude and perceptions against the Ghetto-Rural Black). It has been initially indicated that the Ghetto-Rural is distinct from the *Blacksurbian* by location; and, although it is not an identity marker, Black people within its boundaries are termed "Contemporary New Black". Notably, the "Contemporary New Black" and the *Blacksurbian* refer to the categorisation of Black people by Black people within Africa and of African descent in other countries whose view and experience of their Blackness is influenced by popular culture, urbanism, class, capitalism, and a new context.

The *Blacksurbian* wants to reconstruct their context to depict an understanding of themselves and by others, which is not symbolised by struggles that have affected people of African origin and the Black experience. Through this, the *Blacksurbian* appears to control the African-Black narrative within spaces which they traverse. Additionally, the *Blacksurbian* is suffering from the "*Blacksurbian Complex*": which is the performance of Blackness using the Ghetto-Rural Black's everyday experiences in furtherance of *Blacksurbian identities*. Coe and Pauli (2020) argue that social class can be performed through material objects outside the body which may impact aspects of the self, such as houses and possessions. This is typical from Black people within the political framework. According to Raymond (1999) [quoted from Canham and Williams (2016)] to further highlight this *Blacksurbian Complex*, he argued that, although there is a shift to a different class, "the marks of the earlier class experience may remain. ([Raymond, 1999: 109] Canham and Williams, 2016). Although some may perform the attitude of the *Blacksurbian*, it is important to understand that the *Blacksurbian identity* is typified by being Black, according to historical categorization, without identifying, especially expressly, as Black. As a result, *Blacksurbian identities* are, either directly or indirectly, able to relieve white people from white guilt. Hansberry states that "guilt would come to bear too swiftly and too painfully if white America were racially obliged quite suddenly to think of the Negro, quite as he is, that is, simply as a human being" (1995: 199). The *Blacksurbian*, therefore, becomes the ultimate unifier between the white person and their guilt, to let it exist, but not to sting its master because Black people can manage to 'uplift themselves'.

According to Masolo, slave trade for many Black people had provided the context for a social and racial solidarity among themselves. However, for the *Blacksurbian*, racial solidarity may hinder individual progress. Thus, talking about race or recognising it is disadvantageous and makes the *Blacksurbian* feel stuck in history that arguably encases their development. Additionally, Masolo's solidarity is inconceivable because the *Blacksurbian's* achievement of a middle-class or higher status has bought them out of the 'inconvenience' that torments the Ghetto-Rural Black. Therefore, it seems improbable to imagine social solidarity to strengthen Black people because their *Blacksurbian identities* prevent them from perceiving the Ghetto-Rural Black as an equal. If their history can be denounced, they would not be able to use oppression against white dominance because there no longer exists commonality in the incessant war in which the *Blacksurbian* does not participate. Through this, *Blacksurbian identities* challenge Cesaire's meaning of "return" and, by extension, our understanding of "negritude" (which Masolo argues is a uniting idea for Black people abroad about their common origin) concerning the entire Black population.

According to Masolo (1994), Black people wanted to reaffirm their culture [still prevails today] which was derogated and nearly destroyed by colonialism, slavery, and Westernisation. To make his argument, Masolo, quotes Langston Hughes' poem that was published in the journal on the 23rd of June 1926 titled "The Nation". He argues that it is significant because it responded to the specific "ideological Western white attitude that intended to annihilate Black culture and Black civilization" (1994: 3). This research posits that what seems to

dominate those indicted of having *Blacksurbian identities* is the fact that, although they do not want to reaffirm Black collective identities, they do want to reclaim and redefine themselves without the fear of being branded as white apologists, which is confining and alienating. What is clear, however, is that the *Blacksurbian's* geographical location has widely contributed to the foundation of the distinction between them and the Ghetto-Rural Black. This means that the struggle against white domination imprisons the formulation of *Blacksurbian identities* because it forces them to cling to Western-defined views of Black people as a collective. Why does the *Blacksurbian* refuse to identify with negritude and Africa's historicity? Because the *Blacksurbian* is still anchored to the history of Black people (not necessarily informed by the Black experience), they are eventually bound to be brought into the race wars against their white friends, colleagues, and families. Therefore, it appears that the *Blacksurbian* attempts to sever the connection with the history associated with Black people. By so doing (that is, assuming that they have 'successfully' cut-off their connection which is in essence refusing to identify with it) the *Blacksurbian* unlocks, within themselves, the seemingly accepted view that 'all Blacks are not the same'. Hence, the created notion becomes that there are Black people who 'deserve' oppression while others can be viewed as humans or have a sense of being human 'knighted' in them. The consequence of this view greatly impacts the Ghetto-Rural Black because it is against whom the burden of being categorised sub-human falls. In perpetuating this idea, the *Blacksurbian* swears fealty by ensuring that the Ghetto-Rural Black is oppressed using varied reasons to justify it. Therefore, the inherited white begotten views of oppression and discrimination is able to oppress the *Ghetto-Rural Black* in South Africa using apartheid, institutionalised ideals that are blindly reignited by the *Blacksurbian* in pursuit and in the performance of *Blacksurbian identities*.

The *Blacksurbian identity* may have begun as a positively agreeable process of formulation aimed at redress supported by the establishment of democracy. it has grown into what appears to be an unfair power struggle between two types of Blacks: the *Blacksurbian* and the Ghetto-Rural Black. This struggle began because of the narrative power that the *Blacksurbian* has because of their proximity to whiteness. Additionally, because history has allowed and encouraged white people to be ignorant to the oppression of Black people, it is possible for a white person to engage with the *Blacksurbian,* and not entertain conversations about the Black experience. The *Blacksurbian*, in such spaces, becomes a safety net for the white person while he/she finds comfort in being 'accepted'. It is not this research's argument that having a *Blacksurbian identity* does not mean the *Blacksurbian* is unaware of the condition and oppression of Black people (whether they 'experience' it or not). The distinction in their Blackness (which the *Blacksurbian* categorises as personhood) is the achievement of a different kind of consciousness. This consciousness is based on individualism as far as the circumstances define the *Blacksurbian* and their economical achievement, while the Ghetto-Rural Black is limited to their culture, their Black condition, and their traditions. Thus, Mabasa (2019) argues that race can only be solved by destroying and restructuring the socio-economic base because colonial and apartheid capitalism are inherently linked to Black exploitation and white supremacy. Curthbert (2014) argues that without properly theorising globalisation, capital formation, emergent state, and forces driving development, only the most superficial interpretations of urban planning and design can arise. This prompts the need to investigate, understand, and confront history, even for the *Blacksurbian*.

How does the *Blacksurbian* justify their *Blacksurbian identity*? Masolo uses Hegel's work to contend that history was a process of change through the invention of reason. This is because, according to Masolo, people used reason to transform their reality and through this process culture is born. Arguably, the *Blacksurbian* in Africa and the diaspora attempts to reinvent himself/herself neither as Black or white but creates *Blacksurbian identities* meant to be viewed differently to setup his/her own culture. Ali Madanipour (2014) states that the public realm in its institutional and spatial forms is where the diverse cultures (of the *Blacksurbian* and Ghetto-Rural Black when South Africa is considered) meet. To advocate for diversity, Madanipour also contends that it is the making up of the urban society wherein diverse cultures can relate to one

another and develop innovative ideas and practices (2014). Bickford-Smith posits that urban culture is increasingly globalised, and urban identities in South Africa include the transnational (2008).

Hence, to reinvent herself/himself, the *Blacksurbian* must look beyond what appears to be racial limitations whether they perceive race or are 'free' enough to look beyond it. This research argues that, because the *Blacksurbian* is trying to 'unsubscribe' from the history that marks Black people in Africa by writing their own identities: one which acknowledges and informs their circumstances. This does not mean that the *Blacksurbian* in South African or America (African American) does not know the roots and history of their Blackness; but they would rather disassociate themselves from the stain of the history that may negatively impact on them. This is possible because the *Blacksurbian* has chosen to reinvent themselves; therefore, they attempt to transform their reality through how they want to be seen and understood. It is through these transformations, according to Masolo, that culture is born: the "Blacksurbian culture". In essence, the establishment of *Blacksurbian identities* is concurrent with the birth of the "*Blacksurbian culture*". This can be deduced from various urban spaces in South Africa. Masolo (1994) concedes that, obviously, Hegel, like other scholars such as Madanipour, defined culture in terms of European cultural standards of that time. Although Masolo refers to a different question, it seems proper to use his sentiments to argue that the *Blacksurbian identity* is formed without the proper appreciation of the depth of the self and its accompanying history (Blackness) that which they are electing to live beyond it. How do they deny a self they do not fully understand, one that they view so negatively? The *Blacksurbian* will not be successful in forming a culture or history because the foundation of the "*Blacksurbian identity*" is white identity and white culture against the complexities of being Black. This is because the condition which this research argues is in-between identities is not anchored in history. In the formulation of this *Blacksurbian identity*, the *Blacksurbian* refines this white identity taken from the white urban culture and uses the experiences of being Black to pluck out what is unacceptable in such spaces. Moreover, the attainment of an acceptable social class carefully maintains *Blacksurbian identities* because it accommodates their comfortable stay in African urban spaces and in the diaspora. Coe & Pauli (2020) state, therefore, that social class can help towards understanding the conflicts and the tensions within institutions of global capitalism such as the urban space. Consequently, the *Blacksurbian* in South African and America prematurely denies what they do not know in pursuit of power and influence.

To explain Fanon's understanding of Hegel's dialectical principle explaining history, Masolo states that Fanon has beautifully held that "history is the dialectical process of otherness, intercultural and intracultural relations depend on an ability to demonstrate preferability over others" (1994: 7). This preferability, for Masolo, is based on what is emotionally and pragmatically satisfying. He contends that the world is full of examples that prove any form of supremacy based on culture which is a function of a successful process of discrimination (1994). Therefore, the established *Blacksurbian*, whose *Blacksurbian identity* is based on power gleaned from and glued on the closest example of that power, exerts supremacy over the Ghetto-Rural Black while performing their Black middle- or higher-class status. Additionally, the *Blacksurbian* successfully creates a process of discrimination categorised as the *Blacksurbian* versus the Ghetto-Rural Black. Because of this, Masolo argues that "the world is one big collection of active and emotive dialectical relations, in the sense of cultural strives, whether explicit or implicit" (1994: 9). In this strife, the *Blacksurbian* invents the bifurcation of the Black person, the Black experience, and their culture. Eric Miyeni, in his seminal text, *The Only Black at a Dinner Party*, writes that "there's something very seductive about being one of a kind" (2006: 46). He argues that, in the 21st century, Black people wanted to be the first to achieve something notable. Olufemi Taiwo, an immigrant scholar, was automatically categorised as Black in the USA despite not expressly stating that he wants this "membership" imposed on him by his "epidermal inheritance" (Taiwo, 2013). Therefore, Taiwo's views, from a metaphysical perspective, are what this research terms the *Blacksurbian identity*. This is the dissociative state of Black people who are class aspirant. Despite their efforts, it is not racially possible to unsubscribe to Blackness; it is only ideological disassociation.

Conclusion

Conversations on class wielded in the urban space to achieve inclusive urbanism must be linked to power (Southall, 2020). This research informed on the cause of exclusion in urban spaces and how this has contributed to the discord between the *Ghetto-Rural* Black versus the *Blacksurbian*. Therefore, although transferrable, the knowledge focused on the dominating conversation between the races influencing 'exclusion and inclusion' conversations. Despite power being associated with ownership of the means of resources which the *Blacksurbian* draws from the effects of colonialism that seem to behove him/her, Mabasa (2019) states that solutions to race and inclusivity cannot be narrow-minded and depended on the nationalist economic paradigm's creation of the Black bourgeoisie. Lindokuhle Shabane (2022) when reinvigorating conceptual decolonisation in philosophy proposes conversational thinking as a method in his advocacy for African philosophy. Although his arguments are grounded in philosophy, the foundation of his article is a critical view of race anchoring colonialism. It demonstrates how race shapes concepts especially in urban spaces. Additionally, the existing classes must be conscientized on how urban and rural experiences cannot inform exclusion.

Therefore, unsubscribing to Blackness only seeks to redesign and create new experiences based on the structurally White capitalist system. Therefore, *Blacksurbian identities* are unsustainable because they further the oppressive system. Thus, society has a prerogative to ensure that the race conversation is not discontinued in their pursuit of urbanism and social class. Understanding race is key to managing the urban-rural divide between the *Ghetto-Rural* and the *Blacksurbian*. The solution towards inclusivity is a complete overhaul of urban structures created by history of white supremacy which cements the urban-rural divide between races, particularly the emerging relationship of the *Blacksurbian* and the Ghetto-Rural Black.

References

Baldwin, J., 1924-1987 and Esquire (New York, N.Y.), 2020. "Dark Days" by James Baldwin. Digital Gallery. BGSU University Libraries. Available at: http://digitalgallery.bgsu.edu/collections/item/30533 [Accessed 15 July 2022].

Bickford-Smith, V., 2008. *Urban hHistory in the New South Africa: Continuity and Innovation Since the End of Apartheid*. Urban History, 35(2):288-315.

Blokland-Potters, T. and Savage, M., 2008. *Networked Urbanism: Social Capital in the City.* Ashgate Publishing Ltd.

Canham, H. and Williams, R., 2016. Being Black Middle Class and the Object of two Gazes. *Ethnicities*, 17(1):23-46.

Coe, C. & Pauli, J., 2020. Migration and Social Class in Africa: Class-Making Projects in Translocal Social Fields. *Africa Today*, 66(3-4):3-19. https://doi.org/10.2979/africatoday.66.3_4.01

Cuthbert, R., 2014. Alphaville and Masdar: The Future of Urban Space and Form? In Haas, T. and Olsson, K., (eds) *Emergent Urbanism: Urban Planning & Design in Times of Structural and Systemic Change.* (pp. 9-18). London: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315579160

Dovey, K., 2014. *Incremental Urbanism*: The Emergence of Informal Settlements. In Haas, T. and Olsson, K., (eds) *Emergent Urbanism: Urban Planning & Design in Times of Structural and Systemic Change.* (pp. 45-54). London: Routledge https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315579160

Drake, S. and Cayton, H., 1962. *Black Metropolis.* 2nd ed. New York: Harper & Row Publishers Incorporated.

Dyers, C., 2018. *The Semiotics of New Spaces*. Stellenbosch: Sun Press.

Eze, C., 2014. Rethinking African Culture and Identity: the Afropolitan model. *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, 26(2):234-247.

Johnson, H., 2018. Challenging the Myth of Black Male Privilege. *Spectrum: A Journal on Black Men*, 6(2): 21-42. https://doi.org/10.2979/spectrum.6.2.02

Haas, T. & Olsson, K., 2013. (eds) Emergent Urbanism: Urban Planning & Design in Times of Structural and Systemic Change? and urban planning and design, *Journal of Urbanism: International Research on Placemaking and Urban Sustainability*, 6:2, 95-112, DOI: 10.1080/17549175.2013.763622

Hansberry, L., Nemiroff, R., and Baldwin, J., 1995. *To Be Young, Gifted and Black.* 1st ed. New York: Vintage.

Howe, S., 1998. *Afrocentrism*. 2nd ed. London: Verso.

Krog, A., 2012. *Begging to Be Black*. 1st ed. Johannesburg. Penguin Random House.

Mabasa, K., 2019. Democratic Marxism and the National Question: Race and Class in Post-Apartheid South Africa. In Satgar, V., ed. *Racism After Apartheid: Challenges for Marxism and Anti-Racism*. (pp. 173–193). Johannesburg: Wits University Press.

Madanipour, A., 2014. Creativity, Diversity, and Interaction: Urban Space and Place-Making. In Haas, T. & Olsson, K., (eds)

Emergent Urbanism: Urban Planning & Design in Times of Structural and Systemic Change. (pp. 37-44). London: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315579160

Malaza, N., 2015. Black Urban Research: Why Understanding Space & Identity in South Africa Still Matters. In Harrison, P., Gotz, G., Todes, A., and Wray, C., (eds) *Changing Space, Changing City*. (pp. 531-559) Gauteng: Witwatersrand University Press.

Masolo, D., 1994. Logocentrism and Emotivism: Two Systems in Struggle for Control of Identity. In *African Philosophy in Search of Identity.* (pp. 1-45). Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Miyeni, E., 2006. *O' Mandingo!* 2nd ed. Johannesburg: Jacana Media.

Morrison, T., 2019. *Mouth Full of Blood*. 1st ed. London: Penguin Random House.

Mosselson, A., 2016. 'Joburg has its own momentum': Towards a Vernacular Theorisation of Urban Change. *Urban Studies*, 54(5): 1280-1296.

Parnell, S. and Beavon, K., 1996. Urban Land Restitution in Post-Apartheid South Africa: Questions From the Johannesburg Inner-City. *GeoJournal*, 39(1): 13-19. http://www.jstor.org/stable/41146909.

Shabane, L., 2022. Conversational Thinking as a Method of Conceptual Decolonisation. ARUMARUKA: *Journal of Conversational Thinking,* 1(1):79-106. DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.4314/ajct.v1i1.4

Southall, R., 2020. The New Black Middle Class in Southern Africa. The African Middle Class in South Africa 1910–1994. *The Strategic Review for Southern Africa*, 38(1): 287-310. https://doi.org/10.1080/20780389.2014.955275

Taiwo, O., 2013. This Prison Called My Skin: On Being Black in America. In Rahier, J. & Hintzen, P., (eds) *Problematizing Blackness: Self-ethnographies by Black Immigrants to the United States.* (pp.35-52). London: Routledge.