The Thinker

FRIEDMAN ON
'NONE OF THE ABOVE':
THE 2019 SOUTH AFRICAN
NATIONAL ELECTIONS

KEARNEY ON
'BEYOND BREXIT:
THE POLITICS OF
IRISH UNITY

**BOSWELL, ERASMUS, JOHANNES,
MAHOMED AND RATELE ON**

RACIST SCIENCE:
The Burden of
Black Bodies
and Minds

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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

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Racist Science:

The Burden of Black Bodies and Minds

The point of our objection is that this study draws on a racist epistemological frame despite centuries of Black radical anticolonial activism and scholarship produced in opposition to these framings. The implications of this study are that Black women bear the burden of its findings, while Black knowledges are debased and erased.

By Barbara Boswell, Zimitri Erasmus, Shanél Johannes, Shaheed Mahomed and Kopano Ratele

On 26 April 2019, the authors of this piece wrote to the editors of the journal *Aging, Neuropsychology and Cognition: A Journal on Normal and Dysfunctional Development*. We objected to, and requested the retraction of, the now widely known article[1] published in its March issue by academics at Stellenbosch University (SU). The objection was posted on the Amandla.Mobi website as an open letter. With the agreement of the authors of the article in question (hereafter Article 1), the journal published its retraction on 2 May 2019 – record timing in academic publishing. At the time of writing, the petition had 10 228 signatures. The point of our objection is that this study draws on a racist epistemological frame despite centuries of Black radical anticolonial activism and scholarship produced in opposition to these framings. The implications of this study are that Black women bear the burden of its findings, while Black knowledges are debased and erased. The potential psychological damage that results from such racist studies is virtually incalculable. Furthermore, Black scholars and activists then bear the burden of responding to this nonsensical "science".

In response to the objections around this study and to a broad outcry against the history of racist science specifically at this institution, SU held a symposium on re-structuring science and research on 21 May 2019. The Psychology Society of South Africa (PsySSA) and the Psychology Department at SU published statements calling for the said article to be retracted. Soon after these objections entered the public domain, the University of Cape Town (UCT) withdrew its affiliation to a study reported in the article 'Intelligence and Slave Exports from Africa' and published in the March 2019 issue of the *Journal of Interdisciplinary Economics* (hereafter Article 2). One of the authors is an academic from UCT's Graduate School Business (GSB), while the other is from the University of Kinshasa, DRC. On 16 May 2019, the *Cape Times* reported that the UCT academic had resigned from his post. The research project from which Article 1 emerged was approved by SU's ethics committee. Article 2 did not have ethics approval from GSB. Both articles claim that there is a relationship between race, more specifically blackness and African-ness, and impaired cognitive function. Here we focus on Article 1.

'Race' and the category 'Coloured'

Our objection to Article 1 is premised on its racist ideological underpinnings, reproduction of colonial stereotypes about African people – African women in particular – as cognitively deficient, and its reproduction of harmful stereotypes of women classified as 'Coloured' in South Africa. The authors ignore a large body of postcolonial, decolonial, and critical race theory that shows that a) 'race' is an idea created by Europe, not a biological fact; b) the idea of 'race' is a set of articulated political relations, not a human trait to be used as a scientific variable; and c) that racial categories – even when used as markers of self-identification – are highly unstable, fluid, and provisional. Instead, they uncritically use the apartheid racial designation 'Coloured' with their definition of the term:

The term 'Colored' is a product of the Apartheid era (1948–1994). It describes a 'mixed race' ethnic group consisting of 32–43% Khoisan, 20–36% Black African, 21–28% White and 9–11% Erasmus Asian clans (et al., 2012). The Colored community is, in terms of social class, considered the most homogenous group in South Africa and are

> **" This definition does not problematise the idea of 'mixed race'; presupposes the idea of racial purity; incorrectly suggests that 'Colored ethnic groups', though supposedly 'racially mixed', are a homogeneous class; conflates 'race' and ethnicity; and suggests what can only be read as percentages of biological inheritance by 'race' and 'clan'. "**

generally described as a poor, lower working-class community (du Plessis & van der Berg, 2013). (Nieuwoudt, Dickie, Coetsee, Engelbrecht and Terblanche, 2019: 1–2)

This definition does not problematise the idea of 'mixed race'; presupposes the idea of racial purity; incorrectly suggests that 'Colored ethnic groups', though supposedly 'racially mixed', are a homogeneous class; conflates 'race' and ethnicity; and suggests what can only be read as percentages of biological inheritance by 'race' and 'clan'. The latter is both akin to eugenics and reproduces twenty-first century technologies of 'race' that are premised on particular misinterpretations and abuses of genomic science.

The epistemically violent idea of 'mixed race' erroneously implies that there are such things as 'pure races'. People historically classified 'Coloured' are not of 'mixed race', 'mixed ancestry', or of 'mixed origins'. Communities so classified refer to South Africans 'loosely bound together for historical reasons such as slavery, creolisation and a combination of oppressive and selective preferential treatment under apartheid. "Coloured" is neither a common ethnic identity nor a biological result'. (Erasmus, 2017: 112). With respect to 'social class', these communities are far from homogeneous. In this regard, the authors of Article 1 ignore the latest data from Statistics South Africa about economic activity, labour force, poverty, and indigency, instead electing to cite incorrect, outdated sources in order to support their argument. This data confirms that racialised capitalism legitimates political domination and economic exploitation.

Bad data and a flawed methodology

In our objection we illustrate that Article 1 is scientifically flawed. Its title, abstract, and introduction infer that the results are applicable

> **❝** The authors of Article 1 use a cognitive measurement instrument that has been demonstrated to be *deficient and inapplicable* to South African contexts. Moreover, they acknowledge that their normative sample data is dated and drawn from a population of white, adult Americans. **❞**

to all 'Coloured South African women'. This is despite the authors' acknowledgement that they draw on a small sample size; the fact that the 60 participants were from only one geographic community; and the authors' admission that their methodology produced a result that 'is likely not fully representative of the larger Colored population of SA' (p. 14). Significantly, the instrument used to measure cognitive function, the Montreal Cognitive Assessment (MoCA) has been shown, in the South African context, to yield results that are fundamentally flawed. Robbins, Joska, Thomas, Stein, Linda, Mellins and Remien (2013) found that HIV-negative Xhosa-speaking South Africans tested with this instrument performed similarly on several tasks to *North Americans aged 70 and over who had Alzheimer's disease*. This led them to conclude that:

> … the normative data from the MoCA samples is likely wholly inappropriate for this [South African] population. Using [this data] … may lead to misclassification of healthy individuals as impaired in populations similar to our sample. Further research is needed to establish locally appropriate normative data and to determine the most sensitive and specific cut-off scores. Most participants in this study, regardless of HIV status, would be classified as impaired when compared to the MoCA normative sample. (Robbins et al., 2013: 450)

The authors' own data (Table 1) shows that the group of women aged 40–49 are within their 'normal' range, attaining an average MoCA score of 26.1. They fail to explain this as it contradicts not only their claim of age-related decline but also their spurious link to educational level. This group had the second-lowest average education level, namely 10.3 years of formal schooling. The authors do not

discuss this discrepancy. Coen, Robertson, Kenny and King-Kallimanis (2015), in their examination of the strengths and limitations of MoCA, posit that it is a measure of mild cognitive impairment; it is not robust; it requires a longitudinal study; it cannot be viewed as a substitute for in-depth neuropsychological assessment; and it is a more accurate and reliable indicator when a MoCA upper limit of mild cognitive impairment is set at 22 and at 17 for Alzheimer's disease. The authors of Article 1 did not use a longitudinal study and all the average MoCA scores in their study were above 22 for all age groups.

The CNSVS data in Figure 1 of Article 1 contradicts the reported data. The graph shows that 55% or more of the women attained scores ranging from low average to average and above average, i.e. above a score of 80. Yet the authors report that 55% of the women scored less than 80 in three or more categories and they report that only 22% of the women scored above 80. These inconsistences show, at the very least, careless editing. The CNSVS data does not substantiate the MoCA results, which are also contradictory.

Thormann, Goettelb, Monschb, Berresd, Jahne, Steinderb and Monscha (2018) in their work on a German-speaking cohort (sample size 283) also caution against the use of a 26–30 MoCA score as the 'normal cognitive range', which they claim is too conservative and has a high risk of a false positive. They report that results are influenced by demographic factors that are yet to be adequately determined. They viewed their own results with caution as there was no normative standard set in Germany, and demographic and cultural differences along with other factors may have resulted in the normal cognitive range being quite different from the American norm.

The authors of Article 1 use a cognitive measurement instrument that has been demonstrated to be *deficient and inapplicable* to South African contexts. Moreover, they acknowledge that their normative sample data is dated and drawn from a population of white, adult Americans aged 7 to 90 years (see p. 10 of the article). The value of comparing their sample of 60 'Coloured' women to *this normative sample* is highly questionable. It also makes white westerners 'normative', ascribing any difference in scores to cognitive deficiency. The CNSVS programme was

only tested on eight women, which in not enough for any standard to be set.

In sum, their argument is circuitous and biased. They begin with the premise that 'Coloured' women are at 'increased risk for low cognitive functioning"' (p 1) and work from this assumption to confirm that these women are 'at high risk...for low cognitive functioning' (p. 10). For them, one of the possible explanations for these findings is that 'the very low cognitive scores are attributed to a combination of low education level, poor quality of education and socio-demographic factors such as *ethnicity*, employment, marital status, income and health status...' (p. 10, emphasis added). In other words, without a comparison or matching group, the authors conclude that low cognitive scores are attributable to *ethnicity* (i.e. what they define as being 'Colored'). However, their own data does not support their assertions. There is no new finding here. This is a repackaged Verwoerdian paradigm.

The genesis of the idea of 'race'

The use of 'race' as a classificatory system within modernity finds its genesis in colonisation and European imperialist expansion. European race theorists from the 1700s onward provided the science behind imperialism's drive to 'other' and to rationalise conquest and enslavement. This intellectual project created the global system of racism, which infuses hegemonic knowledge and marginalises the global south. Carl Linneaus, born in 1707 and considered the 'father' of racial classificatory systems, identified four races, each of which is provided with characteristic features. He then ranked humans in a hierarchy of superiority with Europeans at the top and the Africanus at the bottom. He further named a sub-species, *Homo Monstrous*, a category that is not-quite human, which included the 'Hottentots' of Southern Africa. He asserted that:

> The American is reddish, choleric, erect; the Asiatic, yellow, melancholy, tough; the African, black, phlegmatic, slack. The American is obstinate, contented, free; the European mobile, keen inventive; the Asiatic cruel, splendour-loving, miserly; the African, sly, lazy, indifferent. The American is covered with tattooing, he rules by habit; the European is covered with close-fitting garments and

> rules by law; the Asiatic is enclosed in flowing garments and rules by opinion; the African is anointed with grease and rules by whim. (Linneaus cited in Kwah Praah, 2002: 22).

The preamble to the USA's Declaration of Independence (1775), seen by many as an enduring statement of human rights, draws on race science. For Thomas Jefferson – a founding father of the USA, the third American president, and drafter of this document – the 'men' to which he refers excludes those enslaved on his plantation in Virginia. Jefferson encouraged scientific racism by calling on scientists to determine 'the obvious inferiority' of African-Americans to justify slavery. In his 'Notes on the State of Virginia', Jefferson described Black slaves as follows:

> 'They seem to require less sleep. A black after hard labour through the day, will be induced by the slightest amusements to sit up till midnight or later, though knowing he must be out with the first dawn of the morning' (1784: 143). Colonial conceptions of indigenous and colonised populations as less than human were seen to justify conquest, land dispossession, slavery, genocide, and white 'stewardship' of supposedly deficient Black people.

Feminist historian Yvette Abrahams, in her essay, 'The Great Long National Insult: "Science", Sexuality and the Khoisan in the 18th and Early 19th Century', shows that these conceptions underpin the sexualised dehumanisation of Sarah Baartman by French scientist Jacques Cuvier, who used Baartman as a human specimen. A century later, in 1937, SU enlisted 133 men in a study that claimed to determine 'racial type' by distinguishing white Afrikaners from 'Coloured' men based on skin colour, eye colour, hair texture, and more than 80 other measurements of the head and body (Kuljian, 2019). After the Second World War, the use of Nazi-eugenics to murder six million Jews and millions of opponents of fascism prompted UNESCO's statement on race in 1950, which denounced race as a biological fact and declared it a social myth. But the *effects* of race are neither mythical nor illusory to those who carry its burden.

Whose burden?

Historically, responding to racist science has

largely been the burden of Black and of other negatively racialised bodies and minds worldwide. The class and geo-politics of Euro-centric racialised conceptions of 'the human' are as central to this burden as they are to Euro- and American-centric mainstream knowledge. These conceptions of 'the human', which remain premised on European 'Man' as the measure of all things human, were key to racialised slavery, colonialism, and racialised capitalism. Scholars refer to the imbrication of these systems of power and dominance and to their traces in the present as modernity-coloniality or colonial modernity. Nazi science of 1930s and 1940s Germany was premised on this Euro-phallo-centric notion of 'the human'. The articulation of 'race' and what it means to be human accounts for the history of human experiments on negatively racialised and poor human bodies. Cuvier's dissection of Sara Baartman's body in his attempt to 'prove' the 'missing link' between animals and humans is familiar to most South Africans. Further afield, the Southern slave-owner James Marion Sims, who is considered the 'father' of modern gynaecology and who invented what we now know as the vaginal speculum, performed his experiments on 'enslaved black women without anaesthesia' in the nineteenth century (Holland, 2017). The U.S. Public Health Service's 40-year long Tuskegee Syphilis Trials (1932-1972) left Black American participants in the trials untreated. There are countless examples of such unethical scientific practice.

The Stellenbosch study discussed above did not in a literal sense violate the physical bodies of the participants in the ways that Cuvier, Sims and the Tuskegee Trials did in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. However, this does not make it 'less racist', a notion which is itself problematic. The point of our objection is that this study draws on the same epistemological frame *despite* centuries of Black radical anticolonial activism and scholarship produced in opposition to this framework. The implications of this study are that Black women bear the burden of its findings and that Black knowledges are debased and erased. The potential psychological damage that results from all these racist studies is virtually incalculable. Furthermore, Black scholars and activists are then obliged to respond. Yet in response to our objection in a radio interview, one of the authors

of Article 1 remained oblivious to the weight of this multi-pronged burden.

Our objection to this work and our demand for its retraction is not a call for the authors to be expelled. The Symposium held at SU on 21 May restated the historical argument that such epistemic violence is endemic to dominant knowledge frames and called for restorative epistemic justice. As scholars, activists, and a thinking public, it is our ethical responsibility to name this violence; to be conscious of the ways in which it is perpetrated; to be conscious of who benefits from it; and to be conscious of who repeatedly 'does the race work' of resisting and surviving this violence. The deafening silence to date on the part of the authors of Article 1 can be read in several ways. Possible explanations are a stubborn defence of whiteness as 'all-knowing', which reveals indifference to its injustices, and a cowardice that hopes to hide until 'the storm passes' and 'business as usual' is resumed. ∎

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(Endnotes)
1   'Age- and Education-related Effects on Cognitive Functioning in Colored South African women' by Nieuwoudt et al.

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'None of the Above:

The 2019 South African National Elections

There was no great battle between parties: which party would win was never in doubt. The parties made no serious attempt to debate polices and half the eligible voters cast no vote at all. It is also reasonable to assume that more than a few of those who did vote chose not what they would prefer but what they thought was least likely to do damage.

By Steven Friedman

In India and a few other countries, ballot papers include a line that reads 'None of the Above'; voters who reject all the candidates can say so directly rather than relying on an ambiguous spoiled ballot that could, after all, be seen as simply a sign of incompetence (Merelli, 2019). If this option had been available to South Africans on May 8, 'None of the Above' may have won a working majority.

Media, commentators and many politicians tend to approach elections through the lens of a civics textbook. What is happening, we are asked to believe, is an intense battle for public support between rival parties earnestly trying to convince voters that their policies are best. Voters decide upon which offering they prefer and cast their votes accordingly. Yet, just about none of this was true of this election and the reasons for this say a great deal about the state of politics here.

There was no great battle between parties: which party would win was never in doubt. The parties made no serious attempt to debate polices and half the eligible voters cast no vote at all. It is also reasonable to assume that more than a few of those who did vote chose not what they would prefer but what they thought was least likely to do damage. The message sent here was clear,

although ignored by most of the commentary: there is a huge hole in the middle of South African party politics that needs to be filled if elections are to do what civics textbooks say they do.

The Phoney War

The election was the most competitive national ballot in the country's democratic history. However, it was essentially a battle between two factions within the governing party rather than between it and the opposition.

The governing African National Congress's share of the vote peaked in 2004 when it won almost 70% in the national ballot. Since then it has been declining at each election (IEC, 2019). Initially, it suffered a slow leak rather than a sudden puncture – its vote declined slowly and steadily until 2016 when, in local elections, it dropped to 54%. This result was widely interpreted, with justification, as a sign that it could drop below 50% this year: while the earlier setbacks were limited and were the result of splits that siphoned off ANC votes to new opposition parties established by former governing party politicians, between 2014 and 2016, it lost 8% despite the fact that there was no split (IEC, 2019). This decline explains why this was the first election since 1994 in which the result seemed to be in doubt, a perception that prompted far more debate among citizens of the likely result than in any previous poll.But such debate missed an obvious reality. Even where the ANC vote edged towards or fell under 50% it was, both nationally and in every province besides the Western Cape, so far ahead of its rivals that there was no prospect at all of another party winning anything close to a majority.

The ANC vote this year was 57,5%, which is the first time in a national ballot it had sunk to below 60%. In Gauteng, where it had lost control of two metropolitan governments in 2016 and held onto a third by a coat of varnish, it scraped 50,2%. But even in these straitened circumstances, it was 37% ahead of its closest national rival and 22% ahead in Gauteng – a margin that would be regarded as a super-landslide in most democracies (IEC, 2019).

Given this reality, the ANC can, under present circumstances, lose control of national government or in eight provinces only through an alliance between the second- and third-largest parties, the Democratic Alliance (DA) and the

> **"The election was the most competitive national ballot in the country's democratic history. However, it was essentially a battle between two factions within the governing party rather than between it and the opposition."**

Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF). While this is precisely what happened in a few cases at the local level, it is far less plausible in national or even provincial government, where their positions on issues such as land expropriation are diametrically opposed (ANA Reporter, 2018). Given this reality, even an unexpectedly sharp drop in the ANC vote would not have removed it from government but would have prompted it to form coalitions with small parties.

The Battle Within

Yet while the election was never likely to threaten the ANC's hold on government, it was still vital to its future and that of the country because it had a direct bearing on a crucial conflict within the governing party. The decline in the ANC's electoral fortunes was a direct consequence of the presidency of Jacob Zuma, which triggered two splits in the governing party. Shortly after Zuma began his second term as ANC president, in 2013, differences within the ANC began to crystallise into a factional battle. This divide is reflected in the country's economic path since 1994.

The constitutional settlement of 1994 was not accompanied by a similar negotiation on the economy. In consequence, the structure of the economy remained intact and a tacit consensus between the new political elite and the old economic equivalent assumed that the country's goal was to incorporate black South Africans into the pre-1994 economy. The inevitable result of trying to open what had been designed for some to everyone was that it incorporated only some black people and continued to exclude many others (Lipton, 2016).

This reality was reflected in the internal ANC divisions. The faction that opposed Zuma spoke for those black people who had been incorporated into the formal economy – essentially, anyone who

earned a wage, salary or dividends. Zuma and his faction proposed no alternative to economic exclusion, but they did see it as an opportunity. One option open to some people who were excluded from the formal economy's benefits was to attach themselves to political parties and politicians in the hope of gaining access to resources. Politicians who used their position to get hold of resources, either from the public coffers or from businesses seeking political influence, could not only have enriched themselves but also bought political support by dispensing patronage. It was this brand of patronage politics that united the Zuma faction.

But the strategy suffered from a fatal flaw: there was not enough patronage to reach more than a handful of supporters. The patronage strategy was, therefore, very good at winning ANC elections but poor at winning votes. Patronage politics first alienated black middle-class voters and then began driving away working people and voters living in poverty.

2019 NATIONAL ELECTION RESULTS FOR
SOUTH AFRICA

PARTY		VALID VOTES	%VOTE	
	ANC	10 026 475	57.50%	
	DA	3 621 188	20.77%	
	EFF	1 881 521	10.79%	
	IFP	588 839	3.38%	
	VF PLUS	414 864	2.38%	
	ACDP	146 262	0.84%	
	UDM	78 030	0.45%	

VOTER STATS: SOUTH AFRICA

Registered Voters	26 779 025
Total Voter Turnout	65.99%
Total Valid Votes	17 436 144
Total Votes Cast	17 671 616
Voting Districts Reporting	22 925/22 925

Courtesy of https://www.news24.com/elections/results/npe#election=national&year=2019&map=previous

By 2016 it was becoming clear that, for the first time since 1994, what happened inside the ANC could decide whether it won more than 50% of the vote. In 2017, when the ANC met for its first conference, at least one of its power brokers, then Mpumalanga premier David Mabuza, had decided – accurately, according to polls (Business Tech, 2017) – that, if the ANC fought this year's election with a leader drawn from the Zuma faction, it would lose its majority. And so, he allowed some Mpumalanga delegates to vote for the faction's opponent, Cyril Ramaphosa, which delivered him a narrow win (Hunter, 2017).

Ramaphosa inherited a deeply divided ANC whose leadership was evenly split between supporters of the two factions (van Zyl, 2017). This limited his and his faction's options, forcing them to accept cabinet members they would rather reject and to pursue policy priorities they did not share.

The election offered a chance to change this – if Ramaphosa could show that Mabuza was right and that he could at least improve on the ANC's 2016 result, making him the first ANC president in fifteen years to lead it into an election in which it fared better than the previous. Although national elections should, strictly, be compared to other national elections – the ANC tends to do worse in local than in national ballots – during Zuma's tenure, the distinction evaporated since the ANC did worse at every election, national or local, than it had at the previous election. In the perceptions of ANC politicians, then, an improvement on 2016 would be enough to show that this bleed could be halted.

The outcome could have shaped ANC politics for a decade or more. If Ramaphosa's faction was able to increase the ANC vote, it could not only keep the ANC in government, but also show that it could expand the number of ANC seats in local councils and legislatures. Doing so would be crucial: one consequence of economic exclusion is that, for many in the ANC and other parties, winning a seat is the difference between becoming middle-class or remaining poor. If Ramaphosa and his allies could show that they could expand entry tickets to the middle-class, which Zuma's reign had reduced, their chances of retaining control of the ANC would be greatly improved.

Voters Reject the Zuma Faction

The outcome was, of course, a victory for Ramaphosa's faction because the ANC did improve on its 2016 result by 3%.

Equally important, voters signalled a clear rejection of the Zuma faction. This was the third election in a row that was fought after a battle within the ANC had produced a win for one of the factions. In each case, supporters of the losing faction formed political parties, which contested the election – in 2009 the Congress of the People received over 8% of the vote and in 2014 the EFF received over 6%. This time, three parties – the African Transformation Movement, the African Content Movement and Black First, Land First – were vehicles for disaffected Zuma supporters: they won under 0,6% between them (IEC, 2019).

In North West Province, the ANC dropped sharply in 2016 and continued to fall in by-elections for the next two years. These results suggested that, if the pattern continued, it would fall below 50% in this election (Stone and Khumalo, 2018). But after a Zuma ally Supra Mahumapelo was replaced as provincial premier by Job Mokgoro, who was chosen by Ramaphosa's group, the ANC vote began to rise again and in the May election it reached 62% (IEC, 2019). The message to the ANC was clear: it could do better at the polls only if it distanced itself from the Zuma faction.

The advantage this gave Ramaphosa's group was soon confirmed when the post-election cabinet was announced: only four of 28 ministers and 12 of 34 deputy ministers are Zuma faction members, so the Ramaphosa group is currently fully in charge of government (Friedman, 2019).

This, not the shifts between the ANC and opposition votes, was the significant outcome of the election.

What Battle, What Ideas?

If ever a country seemed ripe for an election in which parties engaged in a contest of ideas, it was South Africa in 2019. But no contest emerged.

The election was fought against a backdrop of an under-performing economy and high levels of poverty and inequality caused by the economic exclusion mentioned earlier. Racial divisions remain palpable – they express themselves directly in demands for, or opposition to, racial redress and indirectly in demands for radical policy changes such as free higher education and land expropriation without compensation (Friedman, 2018). The social fissures created by years of legalised racial domination have also produced high levels of violence.

Given this state of the country, we would expect the opposition to offer a diagnosis of these ills and an alternative way of addressing them. We would expect the governing party to respond with its own analysis of causes and its own set of promised remedies.

In theory, the electorate did get some of this. Party manifestos, particularly those of the three largest parties, the ANC, DA and EFF, were lengthy and detailed. None of them might have withstood much public debate because their diagnoses were often shallow and their remedies vague or impossible (the EFF substantially led the field on impossibility, promising an orthodontist in every school: there are some 30 000 schools and about only 6 000 dentists in South Africa) (Davis, 2019). But we will never know because the debate did not happen.

One reason is that voters do not read manifestoes. In the main, political commentators do not either. This does not indicate a lack of political enthusiasm – on the contrary, it is a rational response. Even if parties are serious about implementing the content of their manifesto (and obviously only the one or two who govern nationally or in provinces can be), they are never implemented as promised because they must be negotiated with interest groups. This is true of every election in every democracy. But manifestoes may still indirectly dominate the campaign because parties may rely on the ideas they propose in their campaigning. They may turn them into slogans and speeches and advertisements.

In this election, however, the slogans and the

> ❝ The election was, therefore, essentially about public trust – the ANC tried to win it back and the opposition tried to persuade voters that it remained untrustworthy. These are not trivial issues as it is essential that citizens trust their government. But they monopolised the campaign and so there was no battle of ideas: the outcome showed who voters trusted, not whose plans were more credible. ❞

speeches and the advertisements were not about the ideas. The opposition insisted, rather, that the ANC was incompetent and corrupt and that they were not. The ANC, guided by polls indicating that Ramaphosa was more popular than it (Mvumvu, 2019), stressed the difference between him and Zuma: a recurring theme, emphasised by Ramaphosa himself, was that the ANC was sorry for the breach of trust during the Zuma era and promised to do better now (Feketha, 2019).

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These are not trivial issues as it is essential that citizens trust their government. But they monopolised the campaign and so there was no battle of ideas: the outcome showed who voters trusted, not whose plans were more credible.

The problems that parties failed to address still face the country – the campaign confirmed that, if it is to debate how to address them, political party contest is unlikely to be the arena in which the debate happens.

None of the Above

One of the key stories of this election was voter turn-out – or, more accurately, its relative absence. Since 1994, South Africa's turnout has been consistently high by international standards. As

recently as 2016, 58% of voters turned out to vote in local elections, which is high: in the United States, the figure is around 20% (Maciag, 2014). But this may no longer be the case – in this election, the turnout was around 66%, which is average. But the actual level of participation in elections is much lower than thus figure suggests. According to the Independent Electoral Commission, some 9,2 million eligible voters are not registered (Dhlamini, 2019). This means that only around 50% of eligible voters went to the polls, thus around 28% of people eligible to vote voted for the ANC, 10% for the DA and 5% for the EFF.

These numbers do not make the government illegitimate – democratic governments represent citizens who vote, not those who choose to stay at home. But it does raise important questions about the health of party politics. The standard explanation of low turnout is apathy but in this country the argument lacks evidence: why would voters who have been going to the polls in their numbers as recently as three years ago suddenly decide that they have better things to do? Interest in politics throughout the society is high (Naki, 2019). A more plausible explanation, therefore, is that many voters do not feel that there is a party on the ballot for which they want to vote.

The middle-class black voters who rejected the ANC during the Zuma period have not returned. While some have moved to the EFF, many more are uncomfortable with this option. Few have moved to the DA, which many still see as the party of suburban white people. But these voters are not alone. Black voters who are not middle-class face the same problem – they may have moved away from the ANC, but they see no attractive alternative. Many voters spent the weeks before the election agonising over who to support, not because they felt that they are spoiled for choice, but because none of the available options were attractive.

As long as this issue persists, governing parties, national and provincial, are likely to be far less effective than they might hope unless they recognise that their mandate to govern is even more qualified than it usually is. In any democracy, parties that win a majority – even on a high turn-out – soon discover that they cannot do what they promised to do unless they are willing to negotiate their plans with citizens. Voting for

a party signals a preference that it should govern and only that: the voter who endorses every policy of the party they select is rare. In reality, just about everyone chooses the party closest to them, even if they reject some of its policies. As such, voting for a party does not necessarily signal support for any particular policy that it wishes to implement (Riker and Ordeshook, 1968) and governments need to negotiate with all affected interests if they want to avoid tacit or overt resistance.

But a governing party that enjoys a mandate of only 28% of eligible adults cannot assume that a majority of citizens wants it to govern, let alone that they are willing to endorse what it does in government when its actions affect their interests. South Africa's major parties will always need to enhance their understanding of, and their willingness to, listen to the citizenry. But they need to devote particular attention to this when high rates of non-participation leave them with, at best, a tenuous mandate from citizens.

Prospects for Change

What, if anything, might reverse decreasing voter turnout, where election results reflect the voice of a diminishing minority?

South African electoral politics is firmly shaped by identity. Voters do not select a party as a shopper might select a product, i.e. by comparing what is on offer and deciding on the offering that most meets their needs. As in many parts of the world, including the older democracies which may consider themselves immune to this, voters choose the party that, they feel, speaks for people like them. A racial affinity may be important, but voters here and elsewhere are influenced by many other identities, including language, religion or region. Clearly, the South African party spectrum, which is a product of the society's identity divisions, is no longer speaking for many of the people whose identity it once expressed.

But this does not mean that identity no longer matters to voters. Evidence that it does is provided by the 2016 local government elections, in which unusually high numbers of suburban voters turned out to vote against the ANC, while many people in townships and shack settlements stayed away. The fact that traditional ANC voters did not support another party shows that their identity still draws them to the ANC.

Given this, it seems unlikely that participation in elections will be revived even if new parties emerge that break with the identities that have governed voting up to now. It is far more likely to be a product of change which persuades voters that their identity is once again expressed by one of the parties.

One possibility is a rejuvenated ANC able to win back those who have moved away from it. Another is a new split in the governing party – and perhaps in the bigger opposition parties too – which may produce a politics again in tune with the identities of most voters.

Until then, winning elections will, at best, be a mandate not to impose plans on society but to connect with, and to begin hearing, citizens, including that half of the citizenry that prefers 'None of the Above' to either the governing party or its opponents. ∎

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Dissecting the 'Decolonisation Movement'

at South African Universities

Essentially, my intention in this article is to interrogate the pertinent issues that the decolonisation movement has uncovered. I argue that they were concealed for too long, prolonging a destructive status quo. .

By Duduzile Zwane

The idea of decolonising tertiary institutions is not new. African scholars such as Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Ade Ajayi have touted the potential advantages of implementing this transformative initiative for several decades. They expressed this idea publicly, but to no avail. Rather, wa Thiong'o was arrested in 1977, during his tenure as head of the University of Nairobi's English department. No official reasons were provided for his detention, but he had been a notorious advocate for the inclusion of indigenous languages into the university curriculum. Exhausted from university managements' unwavering aversion to the mere mention of this concept, decolonisation's proponents lost their fervour. They eventually channelled their energies into more rewarding pursuits such as launching private protests. In wa Thiong'o's case, he vowed to substitute English with his native Gikuyu in all his books. This personal boycott was implemented in 1981 and it effectively drew the world's attention to the urgency of decolonising tertiary institutions. In South Africa, the 'Rhodes Must Fall' and 'Fees Must Fall' protests revived the dormant decolonisation cohort. The students' intensity, coupled with that of newly invigorated academics such as Nhlanhla Mkhize, Achille Mbembe, and Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni, persuaded university management to earnestly contemplate the idea.

I support this 'decolonisation movement' unreservedly – primarily because I have been a student and employee at South African universities with colonial histories. I witnessed some of the injustices to which Black scholars are subjected, on account of the academy's colonial past. Before the resurgence of the decolonisation movement, our tertiary institutions harboured a plethora of horrors. The movement has forcefully exposed them and now they can be confronted. Furthermore, my own academic research output utilises a psycho-social theoretical lens in order to examine such issues. I consider it my responsibility as an emerging scholar to apply the theoretical tools I have acquired to meaningful matters such as the decolonisation debate.

Essentially, my intention in this article is to interrogate the pertinent issues that the decolonisation movement has uncovered. I argue that they were concealed for too long, prolonging a destructive status quo. Consequently, for Black

> **❝ Importantly, the decolonisation movement has plunged universities into a transitional phase that is beset by obstacles. I am of the view that as this movement progresses, it will eradicate the residual colonial debris in these institutions. However, we cannot change what we do not identify and sincerely acknowledge. This article is an attempt at doing so. ❞**

scholars, the university experience was akin to being hurled head-first into an abyss. It should be noted that while I am a Black scholar who makes copious references to racial inequality, my critique is not intended to *vilify a specific race group*. My arguments merely *illuminate the continued existence* of the racial injustices that our universities inherited from their colonial architects. My central aim is to create an empathetic understanding of how this affects the victims, who are predominantly Black. Importantly, the decolonisation movement has plunged universities into a transitional phase that is beset by obstacles. I am of the view that as this movement progresses, it will eradicate the residual colonial debris in these institutions. However, we cannot change what we do not identify and sincerely acknowledge. This article is an attempt at doing so. Only then can the dream of a genuinely transformed South African academy, where merit supersedes skin colour, become a reality.

The Invisible Black Mass

Up until I registered for my bachelor's degree at a certain coastal university, I had never been acutely aware of my Blackness. Until that point, I had defined myself according to my personal traits: effervescent personality, empathetic listener, voracious reader, diligent student and so forth. I soon realised that I had voluntarily committed myself to a structure that reduced me to a racial category. All the aforementioned attributes were erased and I was condensed to a 'Black'. I was not even dignified with being classified as a 'Black *person*' – I was merely a 'Black' *presence*. Despite having earned my entry into the tertiary education system, I soon realised that I was a 'second-class citizen' in it (Emecheta, 1974:1). As Black students, my classmates and I far outnumbered our White peers. Nonetheless, our Black existence simply

did not register in the same way. For example, I considered the lecturers as my superiors. In contrast, my White counterparts related to them as their equals. White students had no qualms about reminding a professor that he had exceeded his lecturing time by five minutes. Said professor would then apologise profusely and promptly dismiss all 500 of us. Conversely, if I summoned up the courage to enquire about overdue examination results, I would be cautioned not to be truculent. The continuous equation of my Blackness with aggression was demoralising. Consequently, I learned to cajole my White classmates into making enquiries on my behalf, as the response would be prompt and devoid of racial overtones.

Such racially motivated power imbalances are among the most significant issues to be exposed

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by the decolonisation movement. Its advocates are forcing the South African academe to take ownership of its wilful refusal to acknowledge the *humanity* of Black students. I am of the view that this indifference was a strategy to maintain a status quo that was created by colonisers, perpetuated by the Apartheid regime and upheld by a callous minority. It should also be noted that the mission statements of all South African universities allude to their pledge to nurture diversity and promote equality. However, it is only in the last four years that concerted attempts to see Black people as intellectually capable *individuals* have been made. Prior to that, they were regarded as being inferior, tolerated to maintain the ruse of racial equality. The disingenuousness of such actions would not be evident without the decolonisation petitions.

The Racial Contract

The decolonisation entreaties were also instrumental in exposing the unspoken 'racial contract' (Mills, 1997) that was upheld by many South African tertiary institutions. A contract typically refers to an agreement between two or more individuals about a matter of importance to them. Ideally, all parties are cognisant of what they are consenting to and do so to protect their interests. A racial contract is the inverse of this. To my mind, it is a tacit pact between Black and White people to marginalise the former group. Black people are to be *observed* without being *seen*. Any semblance of acknowledgement must be perfunctory. Such a contract maintains the façade of adherence to the equality stipulations on university policy documents. Black people honour their part in this contract by complying with all these expectations.

Corroborating this assessment, in his book *The Racial Contract*, Charles Mills states that,

> [I]n effect on matters related to race, the racial contract prescribes for its signatories an inverted epistemology, an epistemology of ignorance, a particular pattern of localized and global cognitive dysfunctions (which are psychologically and socially /functional), producing the ironic outcome that whites will in general be unable to understand the world they themselves have made. (1997: 18)

Essentially, it is an arrangement that is founded on the assumption of Black intellectual, psychological and social ineptitude. It is also intended to intensify these perceived shortcomings. As the inferior parties, Black people's consent to this unspoken agreement is automatic instead of negotiated. The inevitable outcome of this prejudicial treaty is chaos and White authors never assume responsibility for their part in its creation.

The existence of the racial contract is well-known. However, rarely was its absurdity questioned because the subject of race was tremendously delicate in South Africa. It was assumed that the conversion from Apartheid to democracy erased all memory of racial oppression. Therefore, any tentative foray into this subject (particularly if made by a Black person) was met with irritation at their perceived victimhood. The overall attitude was that racial subjugation was a global occurrence and 'other peoples have transcended their periods of slavery and oppression. Why can't Africans forget about theirs, turn their faces forward and get on with their lives?' (Ade Ajayi, 2002: 4).

The decolonisation movement finally made it possible for Black scholars to highlight the irrationality of disregarding their continued oppression. In so doing, they violated the racial contract, which required them to remain docile and acquiescent. An example of this would be the conflict that occurred between Dr Lwazi Lushaba and Professor Anthony Butler in 2016. Both academics are based at the University of Cape Town. Lushaba is a Black lecturer in the Politics department. Butler is the White head of that department. Briefly, Lushaba gave a lecture about colonialism and decolonisation. 'In order to breathe life to these themes, viz. culture of political protest and decolonisation', Lushaba invited 'Rhodes Must Fall' activists to participate in the lecture (Lushaba, 2016: 1). Butler was perturbed by these actions and conveyed his misgivings to Lushaba in writing. The latter claims that his superior perceived the incident as a failure to perform his professional duties, as the lecture was more 'political mobilisation rather than lecturing' (Lushaba 2016: 1). The matter escalated and eventually garnered the South African public's attention. My interpretation is that Butler's concerns stemmed from unease at Lushaba's violation of the racial contract. Lushaba and the activists had dared to deviate from its conditions. Lushaba had the audacity to demonstrate professional autonomy by addressing colonial issues candidly. Such a display of intellectual self-determination did not align with the notion of Black ignorance. Most notably, the fact that Lushaba was not dismissed or publicly lynched for his 'transgressions' indicates the efficacy of the decolonisation movement.

Erasure of the Black Dependency Complex

Before the revival of the decolonisation movement, rarely would a Black South African scholar assert his right to act independently for fear of adverse consequences. Cases such as Dr Lushaba's indicate that those reservations were valid. The decolonisation crusade has emboldened all Black scholars to speak up for themselves. In addition, it has drawn attention to the unravelling of the Black dependency complex that once constrained them. Broadly speaking, this condition refers to a psychological dependence on White people for validation. It implies that Black people are incapable of surviving without

soliciting 'White' intellect, innovation and expertise (Fanon, 1986). Colonisation's structural engineers cunningly indoctrinated this victim mentality into Black people. Once their consciousness was subdued through violence and terror, all social structures were fashioned to serve the interests of the colonisers (Comaroff, 1998). Essentially, the black dependency complex is not intrinsic to Black people. Rather, it is a learned helplessness that became a survival mechanism adopted after colonisation. When one is violently programmed to be passive, one gradually relinquishes every vivacious and indomitable part of oneself. One then becomes dependent on the powers that suppress these vital qualities in order to feel validated.

The existence of the dependency complex manifests itself in various unsettling ways within the South African academe. For example, the average White scholar's academic competence is presumed. Conversely, a Black scholar's academic aptitude must be vetted rigorously. He or she must meet the standards that are dictated by a system that is partial to White intellectuals. It never occurs to anyone to question the efficacy of a system that trains people for years only to undermine them due to the pigment of their skin. Instead, the burden of the blame is placed entirely on the pigmented individual. A case in point would be Dr Nosiphiwe Ngqwala, who is a pharmaceutical biochemistry lecturer at Rhodes University (Macanda, 2015). Ngqwala began lecturing at the university in 2015. She experienced malicious harassment because her English accent had a strong Xhosa cadence. Although English was not Ngqwala's native tongue, she spoke it fluently. Essentially, the Xhosa undercurrents to her speech were a reminder of the inferiority that the tertiary education system associated with Black scholars. Dr Ngqwala endured months of racial slurs, which escalated into physical threats (Macanda, 2015). Despite repeated written pleas to her direct superiors and the institution's deputy vice chancellor, no support was offered to her. The onslaught of criticism, combined with management's apathy to her predicament, demonstrates that Black scholars were dependent on the approval of their White counterparts. Evidently, Dr Ngqwala and thousands of scholars whose skin tone and accent resemble hers do not meet their standards.
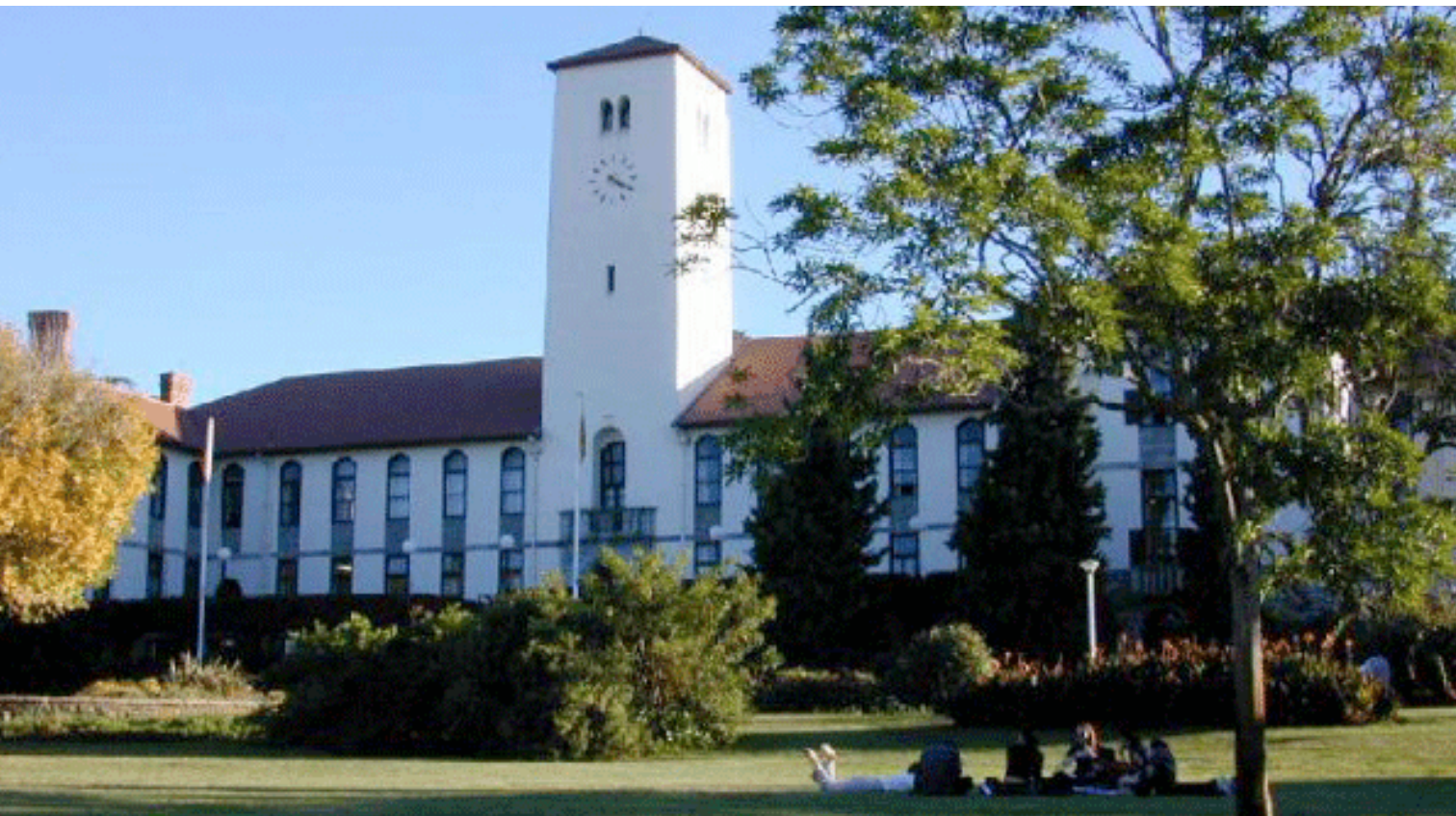
Rhodes University in Grahamstown
Picture © https://www.ru.ac.za/facultyofcommerce/

The actions subsequent to the decolonisation protests demonstrate that even the most powerful cognitive conditioning can be reversed. Black scholars are increasingly reclaiming the attributes that centuries of mistreatment quelled in them. This psychological emancipation is manifesting itself publicly and in unprecedented ways. For example, Songezi Booi refused to sing a portion of the national anthem that he found offensive during a graduation ceremony. Booi is currently a Black student representative at the University of the Western Cape. He purposely sat down while other academics rose to sing the entire national anthem.

Booi later stated that he opposed the Afrikaans and English verses of the anthem because they were reminiscent of the Apartheid system. Booi clarified his controversial actions thus:

We cannot merge 2 antagonistic anthems just because we want to be seen as diverse. #Die Stem and that English part must be rejected. And also, we are not only rejecting the nation anthem, but the establishment of 1994 in its entirety because it is a compromised settlement (Booi, 2019).

Die Stem was the official national anthem during the Apartheid era. When South Africa abolished this system, it was replaced with Nkosi Sikelela i Afrika, which was symbolic of the conversion to democracy. However, specific verses of the old anthem were inserted into the new one. Evidently, Booi found the anthem disturbing because he felt that retaining verses from an oppressive period nullifies claims to democracy. It is somewhat hypocritical to claim to fully support an equitable new system while holding onto the remnants of a divisive one. Overall, Booi demonstrated a type of agency that was not often seen before the decolonisation movement gained momentum. Rarely would a Black scholar publicly voice his displeasure at perceived duplicity. Booi's actions confirm that the psychological repression of the Black academic is gradually ending. Black intellectuals now realise

that his or her voice matters and are unafraid to use it.

The Charade of Diplomacy

South Africa has a history of nonchalantly dismissing major injustice instead of addressing it directly. We usually circle around it clumsily and pretend it never happened. Apartheid is a prime example of this. It was a malevolent phenomenon that caused ineffable pain, particularly to people of colour. We are yet to recover from its traumatic onslaught partly because 'very few apartheid-era atrocities have been prosecuted... [due to] White denialism' (Mbembe, 2015: 4). 'Stonewalling' is one term for this continuous avoidance of uncomfortable conversations. It is essentially the coward's way out of accepting responsibility for mistakes. This constant refusal to engage causes rage and shame because the victim's pain is not being acknowledged. In fact, the victim is forced to bear the double burden of the culprit's silent haughtiness and the struggle of creating his or her own closure. Further, there is always resentment at the thought of a perpetrator walking away with impunity, pretending to be the civil party in the situation. This has been the South African pattern and our tertiary education institutions conformed to it until the resumption of decolonisation demands.

In my view, the decolonisation activists must be applauded for exposing the time-worn charade of academic diplomacy. The reality of the matter is that all South African universities presumably embraced democracy, equality and diversity in 1994. However, they contradicted themselves through actions such as brazenly displaying colonial relics, such as the Cecil John Rhodes statue. Until 2015, when the statue was defaced, it had never occurred to university executives to question the tactlessness of harbouring painful reminders of our brutal past. To my mind, that is about as considerate as exhibiting a statue of Adolf Hitler at a Jewish university or Osama Bin Laden on an American campus. Furthermore, until that point, no tangible structural adjustments had been made to atone for past inequities. No concrete efforts had been initiated to redress issues such as disparate access to higher learning. This is despite the annual countrywide student protests for free education. It must also be borne in mind that revolt

of any kind is rarely instantaneous. It is a gradually escalating occurrence. It begins with the expression of seemingly minute frustrations, which crescendo into louder complaints that ultimately erupt into violence. Essentially, university managements had the option of showing empathy to their previously disadvantaged scholars. They chose obstinate silence.

Moreover, while the university executives from the colonial era were groomed to divide and conquer and thus could not conceive of a world where equality prevailed, modern executives have no such excuse. They experienced the best of two divergent worlds. In other words, they were raised in a world that was segregated along racial lines, and thus witnessed the atrocities therein first-hand. Post 1994, however, they experienced the harmony that is an inevitable by-product of equality. However, they chose not to implement policies that would ensure that this goodwill prevailed on campuses. With very little effort on their part, significant changes could have been made. After all,

> [I]t does not take nine months to change the names of buildings, to change the iconography, the economy of symbols whose force is to create or induce particular states of humiliation; pictures or images that mentally harass Black students on an everyday basis because these students know whom these images represent. (Mbembe, 2016: 29)

These seemingly minor actions could have significantly eased the repressed hurt that most Black students carry. The decolonisation campaigners penetrated this institutional impassiveness. They forced management to take ownership for normalising abnormal actions, such as mocking Black pain by treasuring racist artefacts.

Mandatory Ubuntu

Another compelling outcome of the decolonisation movement is that it forced the country's universities to practice *Ubuntu* – or at least to simulate it convincingly. This term is familiar to all South Africans. Essentially, *Ubuntu* can be understood as a philosophy on how human beings are intertwined...we come into a world obligated to others and those others are obligated to us. We are mutually obligated to support each

Students protesting during a march in July 2016 during the 'Fees must Fall' campaign
© Zain Dindar

other in our respective paths to becoming unique and singular persons. (Cornell and van Marle, 2015: 2)

In simpler terms, it means 'I am, because you are'. Before the resurrection of decolonisation activism, our universities had declared their commitment to demonstrating *Ubuntu*. In reality, they rarely did.

For example, during my days as a student from an underprivileged background, university fees were the bane of my existence. This was the case for thousands of my peers. University management were aware of our predicament, yet assistance was never forthcoming. Instead, my destitute peers and I were treated as clients. The policies in place were geared towards rendering a service and our options were to pay for it or vacate the institution. There was never any contemplation of the historical circumstances that had rendered

us beggars who were pleading for an education. My financial challenges were mine alone. When the yearly financial aid protests ensued, the entire campus separated across racial and economic lines. The impoverished students (who were predominantly Black) would march through the campus, singing anti-Apartheid songs. The affluent students would observe the free entertainment and revel in the reprieve from tedious lectures. The aura of disconnectedness was always tangible on these occasions. Not once did I feel empathy from the aloof spectators or the management who only intervened when the protests became violent.

It was always astounding to me that the funds were released *only after* violent threats had been made. In those instances, I always questioned the university's motives and their commitment to practicing *Ubuntu*. If *Ubuntu* is about feeling each other's pain, why let me suffer until I resorted to my baser human instincts? If you have the resources to help, why not offer them to me before I demeaned myself in this way? In fact, I would argue that the disillusionment with our universities' duplicitous application of *Ubuntu* precipitated the decolonisation riots. If *Ubuntu* was being practiced sincerely, the 'Fees Must Fall' strikes would not have been necessary. The fees would have fallen on their own, not under duress. The 'Rhodes Must Fall' incident would not have occurred. Universities would have been considerate enough to confiscate all reminders of colonial brutality. Further, they would have *enforced* their equality policies more stringently. Professing to do so (through policies that the bulk of the student body never reads) is one thing. Ensuring that this is actually practiced is another matter entirely.

The decolonisation advocates ensured that universities would practice *Ubuntu* earnestly. Their relentless protests guaranteed that problems that once plagued disadvantaged students became everyone's concern. For example, financial complaints were once the exclusive territory of students from poor backgrounds. However, the almost yearlong turbulence of 'Fees Must Fall' saw students from all walks of life banding together. This yielded the unprecedented outcome of free education for undergraduate students. Further, significant strides towards equality were made. For example, permitting post-graduate

students to write their theses in their indigenous languages was unheard of. Not only is it allowed now, it is strongly endorsed as was the case with Dr Hleze Kunju, who wrote his doctorate in Xhosa (Mahlakoana, 2017). Overall, for the first time in history, all scholarly voices matter. Tentative but significant steps towards greatness for all academics, and not just an elite few, are steadily being made.

Conclusion

In sum, decolonisation is the current 'buzzword' at South African universities. Although it is a highly polarising subject, I reiterate my wholehearted support of this cause. As an emerging scholar, I am relieved that it has initiated overdue dialogue about issues that drastically affect our tertiary institutions. These challenges have always existed but were indefinitely deferred. They include, but are not limited to, the past and current invisibility of Black scholars, racial divisions and inequalities, psychological repression of scholars, feigned diplomacy by university management current and superficial Ubuntu declarations. I have explored the painful consequences of disregarding these concerns. Importantly, I believe I have illustrated how vital the decolonisation enterprise is to the resolution of the aforementioned challenges. It is encouraging to know that I am part of a fiery generation of academics that was instrumental in creating an equitable higher education system for all. ∎

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What Happens To A
Pan-African Dream
Deferred?

Langston Hughes, an American activist, poet and one of the leaders of the Harlem Renaissance, asks a pertinent question: 'What happens to a dream deferred? Does it dry up like a raisin in the sun? Or fester like a sore and then run? Does it stink like rotten meat? Or crust and sugar over like a syrupy sweet?'

By Kgabo Morifi and Malaika Wa Azania
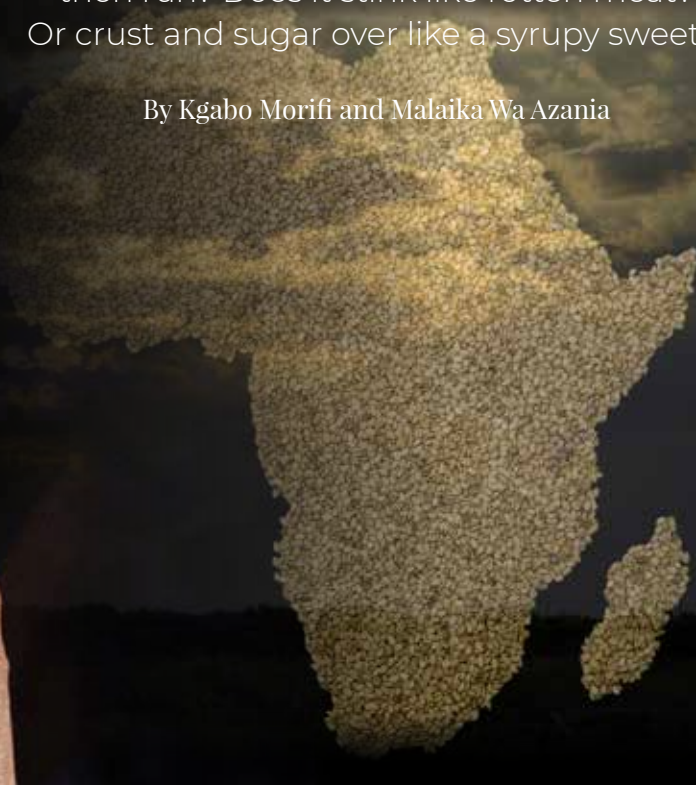
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On the 8th of May 1996, on the occasion of the passing of the new constitution of South Africa, the then deputy president, Thabo Mbeki, delivered a speech that would alter the collective imagination of African people forever. 'I am an African', undoubtedly one of the most powerful speeches of the twentieth century, remains to this day a reference point for ideological clarity – the true north from whence we find direction towards an Africa we want to see. Having both been born in the early 1990s, we did not have the privilege of hearing the speech delivered on the day. We were too young to understand it. It would be years later that as teenagers attempting to make sense of the Africa of our imagination, the profundity of president Mbeki's sentiments would

shape our consciousness. Today, as young adults in our mid-20s, we want to revisit 'I am an African', to draw from it renewed hope for our country at a time when the conversation on what it truly means to be an African must take place.

Perhaps as a starting point, we must give context to why there is a need to revisit president Mbeki's greatest speech, twenty-three years after it was delivered. We make our reflections at an appropriate moment in the political life of our country, in this month of June where young people are thinking deeply about their place in the Rainbow Nation that never was. Last month was Africa Month, a month during which we celebrated the milestone of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) and its successor, the African Union (AU), and its quest to develop the continent and its people. In another time and space, it would have been a glorious moment, but in a South Africa that is suffocating in a miasma of ideological incoherence about African unity, Africa Month was a difficult time of cogitation.

On the 25th of May 1963, delegates from thirty-two African countries convened in the Ethiopian capital of Addis Ababa with the sole objective of establishing an organisation that would form the continental base for pan-Africanism. This would be expressed in the unity and solidarity of African states, the eradication of all forms of colonialism from Africa and the intensification of the cooperation and efforts of African countries in the quest for the achievement of a better life for all. The OAU was born as a vehicle through which these objectives would be achieved, and although there were differing ideological commitments and diverging opinions regarding its structuring and the strategies it would employ, there was consensus among African leaders that it was a necessary institution to establish. As such, compromise was reached, particularly on issues that some leaders felt were overreaching and presented the risk of dissolving sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The birth of the OAU at a time when a significant number of African countries were still locked in wars for independence was crucial. Through its aiding of liberation movements that sought to overthrow colonial regimes, the organisation played an important role in the eradication of colonialism and, in the case of South Africa, apartheid. In 1981, at the height of apartheid brutality in our

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country, the OAU and the United Nations hosted the International Conference on Sanctions against South Africa in Paris, France. The OAU, posing the same argument that was being made by the African National Congress (ANC), contended that the continued trade relations with the repressive apartheid regime by the international community was aiding the apartheid machinery and that sanctions would starve the draconian system of the oxygen it needed to stay alive. Thus, the OAU demanded the imposition of comprehensive and mandatory sanctions against the minority government that was hell-bent on denying the native majority and all people of colour their right to be human.

The OAU as an institution and various countries on the continent and globally played an important role in South Africa's fight against apartheid. It was not an accident of history that upon his release from prison, former president Nelson Mandela visited the countries that had helped in the fight against the brutal regime – to extend our collective gratitude and to strengthen ties that would see us into a democratic era. While many African countries aided our struggle, it was the Frontline States in particular that shouldered the burden of maintaining sanctuary, support and funding for our liberation movements and for the people of South Africa in general. Perhaps it is important to touch briefly on some of the direct interventions that were made by African countries in aid of our struggle against apartheid.

The Tanzanian government provided the ANC's military wing, uMkhonto weSizwe (MK) with training camps. The country also offered transit routes to eastern Europe for comrades going for training and schooling. The Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College, initially called Mazimbu, was opened for South African children whose parents

were training in the camp. Zambia provided similar assistance and in 1969, when the ANC was banned, became the organisation's headquarters. Radio Freedom, the ANC'S underground radio station that played a pivotal role in the recruitment of members to the organisation and the general political conscientisation of ordinary people, was broadcast from Zambia. Mozambique, despite being ravaged by its own socio-economic challenges arising from the devastation that had been wrought by the Portuguese colonisers who practically collapsed the economy, provided the ANC with safe houses and operational MK bases in Maputo. Lesotho and Swaziland were instrumental in assisting the ANC with facilitating meetings amongst its comrades. ANC leaders would cross the borders under the cover of night to attend meetings and return to the country the following day to return to other operations. Following the youth and student uprisings of 1976, many student activists fled into Lesotho where the government made provision for them to receive an education. In fact, a quarter of state scholarships in Lesotho were reserved for South African exiles. Zimbabwe aided MK recruits to cross the border to reach the camps in Tanzania and Zambia. So significant were relations between the ANC and the liberation movement in Zimbabwe that a joint High Command was established. It would wage campaigns of armed confrontation against the Rhodesian and apartheid forces, including the Wankie and Sipolilo offensives. Nigeria, one of South Africa's biggest allies in the struggle against apartheid, also played a huge role in provision of material support towards South Africa's struggle. Nigeria supported both the ANC and the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania with an annual subvention amounting to millions of dollars. Under the leadership of president General Olusegun Obasanjo, Nigeria established a programme to

> 66 The selfless support that was offered to South Africa during the darkest hours of our struggle is demonstrative of the commitment that the OAU had to the eradication of colonialism and apartheid on the continent. It is a testament to the depths of the resolve that African countries have shown in fashioning a higher civilisation – one anchored on meaningful and genuine pan-African unity. 99

cater specifically for the educational needs and welfare of South Africans. The Southern Africa Relief Fund received a significant portion of its donations from the Nigerian government itself, with president Obasanjo and his cabinet making personal donations and civil servants donating about two percent of their own income to the fund.

The important thing to note about these countries is that they were facing their own structural challenges at the time when they extended a helping hand to South Africa. Countries such as Zimbabwe were in the throes of their own struggle for liberation while Nigeria was reeling from the devastation wrought by the Biafran War. More than this, these countries all paid heavily for their support of the liberation struggle in South Africa. Many of these countries had to make the difficult choice of supporting South Africa's struggle at the expense of strengthening their own fragile economies. Zambia and Mozambique suffered severe damage to infrastructure and loss of human life when the South African Defence Force and its allies constantly raided and bombed communities suspected of providing sanctuary to MK soldiers. The cost that these countries paid for supporting us in our struggle is incalculable.

The selfless support that was offered to South Africa during the darkest hours of our struggle is demonstrative of the commitment that the OAU had to the eradication of colonialism and apartheid on the continent. It is a testament to the depths of the resolve that African countries have shown in fashioning a higher civilisation – one anchored on meaningful and genuine pan-African unity. This vision had always been a guiding principle as to how South Africa positioned itself in relation to the continent. Under the leadership of presidents Nelson Mandela and Thabo Mbeki, the vision of an Africa rooted in continental unity and cooperation was imagined. There was never any doubt that the policy direction of our country was one geared towards an African developmental agenda. This agenda was seen in more than just our economic and political direction – it was also in our commitment to the preservation of African history and cultures, and to an insistence on being a people who understood that they were born of warrior men and women.

In 2002, president Mbeki personally initiated the South Africa-Mali project as a flagship

cultural project of the New Partnership for Africa's Development. This particular project - the preservation of the priceless collection of thousands of documents once held in the ancient libraries and universities of Timbuktu - was more than simply a preservation of history. It was, in the true sense of the word, a reclaiming of an African identity that gave concrete expression to the sentiment of an African Renaissance – the rebirth of the kind of Africa that the founders of the OAU had in mind when they met in Addis Ababa all those many years ago to chart the path for pan-African unity.

But over the past decade, the image of this Africa has been fading from the collective memory of the South African people – and, perhaps more tragically, the South African government itself. We have witnessed a calamitous retreat from the belief we once held that, however improbable it may sound to sceptics, Africa would rise with its people committed to the ideal of unity. Lest we are accused of historical revisionism, we must point out that even under the administrations of presidents Mandela and Mbeki there were sentiments held by some South African people that were divergent from this pan-African ideal of unity. The brutal murder of Mozambican national Ernesto Nhamuave, who was burnt alive at the Ramaphosa informal settlement on the East Rand in 2008, will live in our collective memory for as long as we are alive.

We also cannot forget the Afrophobic violence of that same year when the spate of attacks on fellow African brothers and sisters from other parts of the continent claimed the lives of sixty-two people and left thousands seeking refuge. And while this was the most gruesome expression of violence we had seen, with seven of the nine provinces bloodied by such atrocities, the reality is that those from other parts of the continent have always been subjected to discrimination and dehumanisation in South Africa. There have always been low-key Afrophobic attacks on non-South Africans, particularly in townships across the country. But what had always been different was that the government had been firmly against these acts. It had always promoted itself as a defender of the human rights of the millions of people who are in South Africa seeking refuge – documented or not. The language of solidarity and empathy had always defined the

government's posture. Even when response to the attacks was questionable, such as the deployment of the South African National Defence Force, it always seemingly came from a framework of wanting to protect fellow Africans against the violence of those who sought to render them less human. This kind of response was reflective of the government's orientation to the ideological and policy direction of our country.

The last ten years have shown us how the South African government has evolved into something unrecognisable in so far as the pursuit of pan-African unity is concerned. It is this Damascene conversion that has inspired us to reflect deeply on the words of president Mbeki, to internalise how to be both at home and a foreigner is a state to which no person should be condemned. The road to the recent national general elections in particular was littered with the worst expressions of contempt for pan-African unity that the ANC-led government has demonstrated. The ANC, both as a political and governing party, entered the immigrant issue with the kind of right-wing approach we expect only from the most reactionary elements of our society. In fact, it was the first time since the dawn of the democratic dispensation that the immigrant question had entered the electoral terrain. But as far back as 2017, the then Deputy Minister of Police Bongani Mkhongi had come out guns blazing in his attack on migrants, claiming that they were responsible for eighty percent of crime in South Africa. In his own words:

You will not find South Africans in other countries dominating a city into 80% because if we do not debate that, that necessarily means the whole South Africa could be 80% dominated by foreign nationals and the future president of South Africa could be a foreign national [...] We are surrendering our land and it is not xenophobia to talk [the] truth. We fought for this land from a white minority. We cannot surrender it to the foreign nationals. That is a matter of principle. We fought for this country, not only for us, for the generations of South Africans. (in Lekabe, 2017)

These sentiments, expressed at a press conference, were never condemned by the government. In fact, the opposite is true. Since Mkhongi's problematic utterances, several government officials and leaders of the ANC have made similar statements. Former MEC

of Community Safety in Gauteng Sizakele Nkosi-Malobane has repeatedly quoted these unsubstantiated statistics. The Minister of Home Affairs, Dr Aaron Motsoaledi, repeatedly used migrants as a scape goat for his failures in the health ministry, going as far as to suggest that the collapse of public healthcare can be attributed to the spreading of the thin resources available between South Africans and migrants (Mbhele, 2018). Gauteng premier David Makhura also raised the immigrant issue, arguing for stricter border controls (Sibanyoni, 2019). On the surface, this sounds like a reasonable argument about calling for law and order in a country battling with its own socio-economic challenges. But when you scratch beneath the surface, you begin to see this anti-immigrant sentiment is a systematic construct that goes beyond rhetoric to the very heart of our ideological stance on how we engage with the African continent. It is not an accident that the leaders who are invested in making these inflammatory statements were appointed during the administration of the former president, Jacob Zuma. This is, after all, the man who, in 2011, rationalised our country's vote on UN Resolution 1973. This was at a time when a panel of African nations had been put together by the AU to resolve the Libyan crisis. In voting in favour of a no-fly zone, our country effectively scuppered the efforts of the AU and, perhaps worse than this, it set parameters for the devastation that now defines the Libyan reality. A year later in 2012, the South African government expelled over a hundred Nigerian citizens said not to have valid Yellow Fever certificates – a move that resulted in the expulsion of nearly sixty South African businesspeople by the Nigerian government. This sort of malicious engagement with other African countries has been a feature of South African pan-African interaction over the past ten years. The dream for pan-African unity as eloquently expressed in Mbeki's famous 'I am an African' speech has been turned into a nightmare.

As we enter what is called a 'new dawn', we hope for a different imagination. We hope that those who lead us will go back to that deeply meaningful speech by Thabo Mbeki, to draw from it as a source of ideological inspiration in terms of what South Africa and the entire African continent could become - a place without oppression and without

> **❝**As we sought to demonstrate in this article, the South Africa that today wants to tear asunder the ideal of a united continent was once at the receiving end of its generosity and community. It was once a South Africa of leaders who believed, and demonstrated in their deeds, that they are pan–Africans. **❞**

the dehumanisation of any African people. As a young generation of South Africans, born at the dawn of democracy, we are inspired to be part of the architecting of a better civilisation. Fashioning this dream into a reality will demand that we delve into the collective memory of our people, and extract from there reminders of African history that show us how great this continent can be when it articulates itself in one voice. The liberation struggles of Africa were never won by countries who fought on their own – they were won through the collective efforts of countries that understood that unity is a necessary condition for Africa's liberation.

As we sought to demonstrate in this article, the South Africa that today wants to tear asunder the ideal of a united continent was once at the receiving end of its generosity and community. It was once a South Africa of leaders who believed, and demonstrated in their deeds, that they are pan-Africans. It is this South Africa that we must rescue from the throes of a dangerous, right-wing populism as expressed in the anti-immigrant discourse on the road to the 2019 South African elections. It is a South Africa of men and women who refuse to be cynical and lose faith in the capacity of African people that we must rescue from this nightmare. If we cannot do this, the answer to what happens to a pan-African dream deferred is, as Hughes said, explosive. ∎

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Political Economy of the Copyright and Performers Protection Bills
Implications for Universities

Sometimes, new legislation starts off well-intentioned, but then loses its way and is subjected to partisan constituency manipulation. One such example was the Protection of State Information Bill (2015) that was intended to consolidate existing legislation into a single omnibus compilation.

By Keyan G. Tomaselli

The protection of Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs) is often alleged to be opposed to the idea of the 'creative commons', or what is now called open access (OA). This claim is made as IPRs as a modus for wealth creation are being transferred onto other previously unthought of sectors external to the familiar orbit of 'the market': indigenous cultural forms, music, fabric designs, folklore, knowledge of natural resources, dance steps, advertising catchphrases and so on. As such, IPR law is now a focal concern, not only for the lawyers and business, but also for policies on development, innovation and political economy. IPR is the key factor in this creative and information-led economy now characterised as the so-called Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR).

However, IPR is argued by its critics to favour only the North, though the latitude granted the

global South is quite wide (Markus, 2000). This essay argues that copyright is necessary also for 'Southern' economies that have yet to fully embrace 4IR.

The South African Conundrum

Sometimes, new legislation starts off well-intentioned, but then loses its way and is subjected to partisan constituency manipulation. One such example was the Protection of State Information Bill (2015) that was intended to consolidate existing legislation into a single omnibus compilation. But it ended up being labelled the 'Secrecy Bill' and was appropriated for anti-democratic purposes rather than those originally intended.1

The Copyright Amendment Bill (CAB) is another that has gone off the rails. It applies a very wide-ranging definition of 'fair use' on all materials to be used for 'education'. The Bill creates exceptions to rights where the right still exists but is limited in some way.

The issue for the book publishing industry is the Bill's extended version of fair use, which favours users and is prejudicial to creators, especially authors of scholarly works and school or university textbooks. The revised Bill (2017) introduces a plethora of new ways in which works may be copied, reproduced, distributed, adapted and accessed by users without author or publisher permission. As copyright lawyer Scollo Carlo Lavizzari concludes, 'This kind of originality nihilism negates the role of the author altogether' (email to author, 2 May 2019). Weak copyright protection does not stimulate indigenous innovation, but rather disincentivises the creation of new and original content and cultural expressions and artefacts.

Those who celebrate fair use typically argue that copyright protection and the public interest are diametrically unopposed. By means of this rhetorical device they counter-intuitively argue that fair use is critical for innovation and creation. And, while claiming to argue for 'creators rights', they campaign for the introduction of more ways in which users can make unlicensed usages of creators' works.

One such group is OA fundamentalists ReCreate (ZA), a group of academics, librarians and documentary filmmakers who are funded in part by Google, the world's largest user of copyright-protected materials, to promote the

Bill and to advocate for the advantages of fair use and increased user rights. While they claim to champion the rights and interests of creators, they promote and advocate the introduction of arguably the broadest set of copyright exceptions in the developed world into South African copyright law. Such law would make it virtually impossible for creatives, authors and indigenous communities to enforce their rights and to protect their works against unlicensed usages.

Why universities should be concerned

To start, the Bill's extended and wrongly calibrated fair use value chain unfolds as follows: you commenced as an author, but if your work is 'recreated', you ended up as a mere content provider for someone else's creative work for which s/he can take credit (Anfasa, 2019a). That is, when your work is copied because it falls into fair use, you do not have to be identified as the author if this is not 'practicable'. Your name might be lost en route or used to add credibility where none is due. Consequently, your work might not be cited, grievously affecting your university's performance management assessment. The promotion or grant you were applying for might now be denied by the new managerialist assessment criteria that need specific author outputs and citations to measure – and this may open the door to plagiarism.

In contravention of the Berne Convention,2 by limiting the rights of educational authors and publishers and making published work 'free' to be reproduced for educational purposes, the Bill could thus alienate authors from the fruits of their labour, as well as the right also to be cited. University presses fear that they will be directly affected, that some might close, merge and/or downsize due to weakened copyright provisions. International publishers might refuse to partner with local presses as they will not control the rights in, and use of, their own product in which they have invested (Wightman and Joseph, 2019). Full-time educational authors (especially of school and university textbooks) could be deprived of royalties,

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1   See Duncan (2018).

2   The principle Berne article that is contravened by the CAB is Article 9: Authors of literary and artistic works protected by this Convention shall have the exclusive right of authorising the reproduction of these works, in any manner or form. It shall be a matter for legislation in the countries of the Union to permit the reproduction of such works in certain special cases, provided that such reproduction does not conflict with a normal exploitation of the work and does not unreasonably prejudice the legitimate interests of the author. S 9(1) says the author has the exclusive right, but CAB s 9(2) limits that right. The CAB exceeds the three-step test (certain special cases, no conflict with normal exploitation, prejudice legitimate interests).

> ❝The question is, who pays for OA? OA will see a shift from 'reader-pays' (via libraries and campus bookshops) to 'author-pays' – and the likely 'death' of textbook authors as far as acknowledgement is concerned.❞

as might authors writing in African languages when their books are adopted as class readers – a key market for indigenous language publications. Textbook production might largely cease.

The pro-Bill position argues exactly the opposite: All will be well, because information freedom and information justice will be obtained. The alleged avaricious behaviour of international commercial publishers that derive excess profits from donated knowledge facilitated by academic institutions will be checked (Merrett, 2006). In turn, this will stimulate national intellectual innovation and economic growth. This position draws on arguments that now propose OA as the prime form of information dissemination. But this OA argument confuses access with content. The actually stated intention is to phish the work of creators and transfer their content to big tech firms (Flynn and Palmedo, 2017; see also Ford's 2017 dismissal of Flynn and Palmedo's study), seemingly because such content will then be made 'free' to browsers and users (e.g., students, lecturers and researchers). What these sharing sites do, however, is harvest browser attention and personal data on mass scales to sell these on to advertisers. In so doing, they commoditise the dissemination of academic works by means of the OA financial model. The communication channels and associated transactions are thus presented as 'free' to readers.

The CAB expects publishers and authors to subsidise shortfalls in state university funding. ReCreate's chairman – a film producer – leveraging the critiques of international publishers because they are alleged to be overcharging students for their products, told a meeting called by Sisters Working in Film and TV (SWIFT) in March 2019 that: 'The downfall of the publishing industry is the start of the digital age. Students are poor. Must make a difference by making information free.'

But he wants to get paid for his own film work while denying authors and publishers their due. Moreover, this statement fails to acknowledge that publishers are now as digital as are the film and music industries. In effect, the savings for students will be minimal, about R129 per year per student for a blanket license (Anfasa, 2019a), which will not be passed onto students if the Canadian experience is anything to go by (Degen, cited in Anfasa, 2019b: 11–14).

Who Pays for OA?

The question is, who pays for OA? OA will see a shift from 'reader-pays' (via libraries and campus bookshops) to 'author-pays' – and the likely 'death' of textbook authors as far as acknowledgement is concerned. The question of who pays is of concern to the Academy of Science for South Africa (ASSAf, 2019) since the 'author-pays' model can be prohibitively expensive, especially for young scholars publishing early in their careers.

The pro-Bill lobby has managed to discursively frame the fair use exceptions such that this provision seems harmless to the educational publishing sector. Evidence to the contrary is ignored (PwC, 2017; Anfasa, 2019b; Myburgh, 2019). For many senior university administrators, then, the CAB is understood as 'a matter for the Library' or is thought only to affect textbook production. Since the South African academy, astonishingly, does not value textbooks as a bona fide academic (i.e. research and/or scholarly) output, universities are able to turn a blind eye in this regard. However, as Jeremy Wightman (HSRC Press) and Andrew Joseph (Wits University Press) have argued, the loss of homegrown textbooks will have implications for the decolonisation of curricula, one of the key performance indicators added to many universities' performance assessment categories since the #feesmustfall student movement of 2017. ReCreate relies on misdirection (almost as expertly as does Trump!) and has hosted workshops on 'user rights' with the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), and thereby managed to discursively conflate the issues. 'User rights' are not defined in the Bill or in the Act, so they do not exist in law, having been concocted by the anti-copyright lobby. Consequently, universities are unsure of whether or not to support the Bill, or to how assess it in its broader politico-economic context.

ReCreate, comprising just 34 individuals belonging to various organisations claiming to represent half-a-million, has been promoting the Bill on the grounds that it will propel South Africa into the digital twenty-first century.3 This will occur as the evidence points to the financial interest of big tech in the outcome of this debate. Google and the academics it sponsors like Flynn and Palmedo (2017) are actively guiding, and even financing, some supporters of the Bill. The South African pro-Bill lobby promotes disinformation such as that the CAB will replace 'apartheid-era legislation that favours historical and international monopolies which have control of money and power'. They argue that the Bill offers a 'transformative vision for a more equal and just society'.4 Neither of these claims bears a vestige of truth.

Does Google, allegedly seed-funded by the CIA and NSA (Nesbitt 2017), now have official South African approval? Are the real benefits of OA to be sacrificed in murky relationships between Google and the DTI? Such companies will be legally able to appropriate our intellectual property, monetize it and sell the fruits of academic labour to advertisers.5 A global readership indeed awaits us. But we will not own or control our own IPR or how it is used. South African researchers and textbook writers will be enriching Google shareholders and the OA publishing predators that ASSAf and the National Research Foundation have warned about, as they will not need permission to appropriate, nor buy, our work from our publishers or universities.

The Performers Protection Amendment Bill

Linked to the CAB is the Performers Protection Amendment Bill (PAB). Where authors and publishers will see their IPR significantly weakened, thus affecting their income streams, the PAB unambiguously guarantees performers' rights to more favourable contracts and royalty payments. This contradiction that impoverishes the educational publishing sector supposedly to provide written education materials free of charge to students was approved by Parliament and sent to the President for signing in March 2019. The PAB is aimed at the creative industries that operate under entirely different value chains to educational authors and their publishers. How will the PAB affect the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) incentives for creative work?

Basically, the ReCreate argument is that publishers are exploitative and are deliberately impoverishing students. So, astonishingly, the solution is to enlist academic authors and their publishers to cover state funding shortfalls. In contrast, performers (and possibly even production technicians) will be paid royalties on each and every copy made of their work and every time that it is streamed, televised and copied (except, I assume, when that work is used for educational purposes). The alleged exploiters in the media industries will be required to pay performers but the exploiters in the publishing industry will be denied the royalty and permissions income streams they need to recompense their own authors and grow their own industry.

At root, the actors are angry with the SABC and MultiChoice that have treated them badly. Academic and educational authors have been caught in the PAB slipstream. And, when connecting with the OA myth that information can be made free – no matter the cost of producing and managing it – those who take the fall are us, the educators.

Like the CAB, the PAB is also unworkable (as much as it may be desirable for film technicians and performers). Producers will be faced with nightmare accounting scenarios and continuous payment streams that will massively increase the costs of post-release administration. If performers, regardless of whether they are featured or non-featured performers like extras, are to be granted exclusive commercialisation rights and retrospective and future royalty rights with respect to each film produced in South Africa, whether or not successful, substantial disinvestment from South Africa would be the more likely outcome. International co-productions would be likely

> **The implications of the CAB especially for universities will be considerable. Research funding regimes will be directly impacted, as hefty article processing charges (APCs) will be instituted as publishers will no longer absorb the costs of publishing, leaving less funding for actual research expenses.**

3   See Nicholson (2018) on the merits of the Bill.
4   See Rens (2019) and Flynn (2019); see Myburgh (2019) for a critique of Flynn (2019).
5   See Tomaselli (2019).

relocated elsewhere. The very performers who are presently campaigning for the controversial Bills to be enacted as they are presently worded seem unaware of the dangers posed to the viability of our film industry and the loss of employment opportunities that would result.

Implications for Universities

The implications of the CAB especially for universities will be considerable. Research funding regimes will be directly impacted, as hefty article processing charges (APCs) will be instituted as publishers will no longer absorb the costs of publishing, leaving less funding for actual research expenses. Performance management indicators will need to change. Less work might be published less often as fewer authors will be able to access large sums via a limited number of donors to pay for article and book processing. Creativity will be muted, for when society turns its back on authors, they have little incentive to create, even though South African academics will continue to milk the DHET publication incentive.[6] The reader becomes also a victim in this chain of events.

Copyrighted goods are priced differently to

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[6] A DHET publication incentive paid to universities on publications appearing in selected lists of journals. See Tomaselli (2018).

other economic goods. The first copy of a copyright good is very expensive, while subsequent copies are relatively cheap. As UJ Executive Director: Library and Information Centre, Maria Frahm-Arp, observes of OA, 'Where before [publishers] would earn royalties through thousands of people buying a book, textbook or journal article they will now only get a production cost payment'. The result: 'the cost of open access publishing will go through the roof as publishers need to charge authors huge amounts in order to make back the money they are losing through the decline of the subscription model and cessation of royalties on books sold' (email to author, 2 May 2019). The subscription-driven reader-pays model will decline, which means that economies of scale stretched across tens of thousands of subscribing libraries and millions of readers will be replaced with author-pays for readers to read. The rank and file who do not have access to donor funding will have to pay from their own pockets and research grants. Under this scenario, additional DHET funding for APCs will be needed to substitute for the cost currently borne by publishers.

As Lavizzari concludes with regard to the exponentially expanding predatory publishing

> ❝ UA's IP policy is contradictory. While laudable, if its IPRs are to be implemented, then this university would need to oppose the CAB as it is presently worded. This is because its IP would be vulnerable on many counts if UA is willing to cede the right of its authors and publishers. ❞

sector, 'If the reader pays, the reader will determine what's worth publishing. If the author/funder pays, then the author/funder will determine what is worth publishing (but not necessarily reading)' (email to author, 2 May 2019). The risk and cost of publication will no longer be absorbed by publishers whose own peer review mechanisms may now respond less strictly to market (i.e. APC) forces. If an OA book is to be published at the author's expense, then there is less incentive on the part of publishers to promote and market it, to distribute it and to follow through in other ways unless these functions are also directly paid for, and monitored, by the author. If a copyright producer cannot recover the cost of investment in the copyrighted good, an undersupply will occur relative to the socially optimal level. The CAB's legitimation of piracy will undermine local cultural industries, as Nwauche (2003) has concluded of the Nigerian experience. Protecting rights is not just the preserve of multinationals, who nevertheless engage in information prospecting and appropriation: all organisations and individuals, irrespective of their economic status, should be protected.

In the North, author-pays OA costs are partly mitigated by institutional funds (Springer, n.d.). For South Africans, few currently available funds pay for OA, especially for emergent and under-funded academics. But savings will occur as libraries will be relieved of the headache of licencing with the closure of copyright offices that currently approve and regulate reproduction of copyright materials for classroom use.

The good news for the anti-decolonialists will be that the South African educational publishing industry will decline, because the market will have been killed off, thus impeding homegrown publishers publishing homegrown localised books. We will again become reliant on expensive international imports written for the general reader anywhere.

Contradictions for Universities

If authors' rights are to be restricted, then how does one square IPR with copyright policy? University A(nonymised) (UA), in a circular to staff dated May 2019, for example, recognises the institution as a repository of knowledge, generated through research and disseminated through applied research and consulting, teaching, community service and archiving. This knowledge, UA observes, is reflected in IP created at this institution in forms such as copyrights, patents, trademarks, designs, trade secrets and know-how. UA sensibly insists that IP must be identified and properly managed for the mutual benefit of the university's community, the creator thereof and society in general. Furthermore, where appropriate, commercialisation of IP is a university objective, rather than leaving it lying idle and unamortised. In identifying and managing such IP, UA will uphold the rights of its IP creators. These will be recognised as such to ensure their right to share in any proceeds generated by the commercialisation of such IP and to further ensure that such IP is supportive of the primary function of the university – scholarship and good research.

All well and good, but will UA also uphold the rights of authors and publishers with regard to their written IP?

UA's IP policy is contradictory. While laudable, if its IPRs are to be implemented, then this university would need to oppose the CAB as it is presently worded. This is because its IP would be vulnerable on many counts if UA is willing to cede the right of its authors and publishers (e.g. the UA press, the journals hosted by the institutional website, publications authored by its lecturers and students, software programmes and their other creations) to protect their works from blatant plagiarism and unauthorised and unlicensed reproductions and re-distribution, whether by Google or predatory publishers.

If the CAB is to be supported by universities, then the following contradictions will arise due to the above-mentioned vulnerability:

Universities should place their patents, software and inventions into the public domain also and

allow tech companies to harvest them for their own profits.

Software applications used for educational purposes should be supplied free of charge and updated by the firms that designed them.

Technology companies should donate to educational institutions equipment used for educational purposes – computers, data projectors, white boards and all kinds of electronics – and maintained at no cost.

Anyone involved in teaching, or teaching support or administration, and top management, should waive their salaries or allocate a percentage to bursaries; it is the right thing to do in the pursuance of free education, free information and free access where the state is unwilling to cover subsidy shortfalls.

These donations will occur just once under coercive conditions and then close the university and wait for better days. Copyright organisations like DALRO working for authors and publishers (and readers) will be no longer able to protect authors from rampant exploitation by what remains of the educational sector, whether public or private.

If the global commons are to be protected, then universities and ordinary people need to retain ownership rights to their own intellectual property while also securing for the public their rights to information at a fair price (Rønning, Thomas, Tomaselli and Teer-Tomaselli, 2006: 17–18). For example:

Copyright organisations can facilitate IPR protection. Reproduction rights organisations can issue licenses, collect fees and distribute royalties.

Such organisations can work with local creators in ensuring fair use by informing them of the rules.

The prohibitive cost of imported information by the developing world can be balanced by developing their own knowledge-production resources.

Universities can best leverage information and creations as a generator of income in their own right by encouraging writing and publishing instead of stifling it.

Valorising public information to enhance the public sphere rather than corporations only can be done by taxing corporations for certain uses.

Authors' due royalties can be protected while ensuring that they remain an integral part of the global information commons.

Authors write in order to be read so they tend to support the free flow of information (but not the flow of free information). Reproduction under license is the solution. ∎
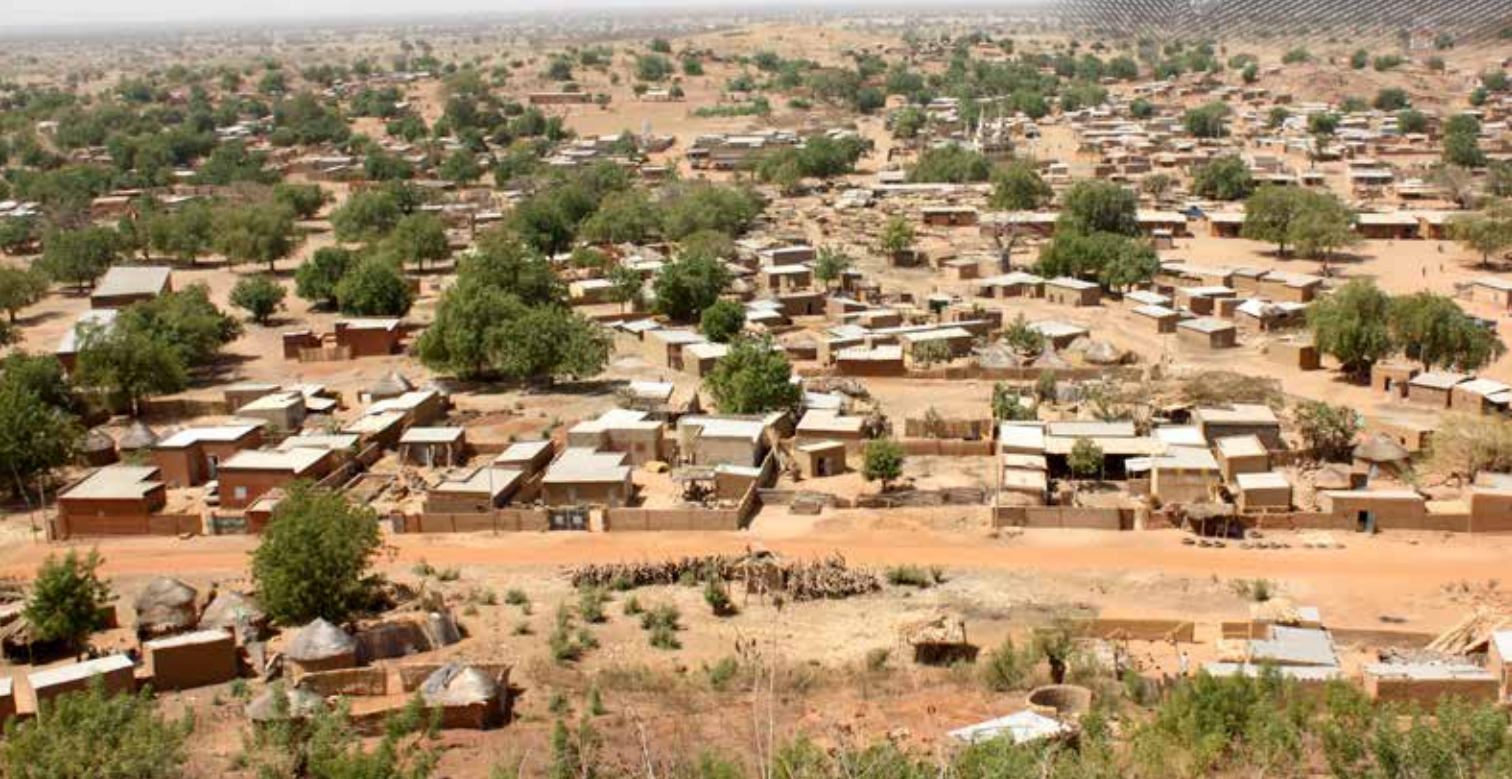
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Leveraging **African Culture** For Development

Aspects of African culture have been – and can further be – leveraged to foster more inclusive development on the African continent. A number of research surveys have shown that culture, defined as 'prior beliefs, and values or preferences' (Guiso, Sapienza and Zingales, 2006), can change development outcomes.

By William Gumede

Aspects of African culture have been – and can further be – leveraged to foster more inclusive development on the African continent. A number of research surveys have shown that culture, defined as 'prior beliefs, and values or preferences' (Guiso, Sapienza and Zingales, 2006), can change development outcomes. Economically, culture is seen as 'those customary beliefs and values that ethnic, religious, and social groups transmit fairly unchanged from generation to generation' (Guiso et al., 2006), while anthropologists often define culture as collective 'habits that are shared by members of a society' (Murdock, 1965). In all of these definitions, it is apparent that culture is learned. Culture is also dynamic and changes quickly with time. Africa's brush with colonialism, industrialization and, more recently technology, have and will further change African culture.

But African culture is not inimical to development. The South Korean development economist Ha-Joon Chang (2007) rightly argues that developing a country's cultures to be leveraged successfully for development, depends on how people interpret their culture. 'Which aspects they choose to highlight, and which interpretation wins in political and ideological battles' will ultimately determine whether an African country develops successfully.

Post-colonial 'developmental' uses of aspects of African cultures often undermined development

In the past, many attempts at leveraging cultural aspects for development in Africa have failed. For instance, in 1967 in Tanzania, Julius Nyerere issued his Arusha Declaration, which called for 'villagisation' of the rural areas as the anchor development strategy of the newly independent government. The concept was both based on African socialism, a variant proposed and conceptualised by Nyerere which combined African communalism with socialism, dubbed *ujamaa*, and the African traditional concept of extended family, with villagisation being seen as an extended family practiced over a large scale (Coldham, 1995). The idea was to get rural Tanzanians to live communally in villages. Production would be collectivised and cultivation communal. Those who opposed villagisation were jailed.

> 66 In the past, many attempts at leveraging cultural aspects for development in Africa have failed. For instance, in 1967 in Tanzania, Julius Nyerere issued his Arusha Declaration, which called for 'villagisation' of the rural areas as the anchor development strategy of the newly independent government. 99

In many cases, villigisation meant resettling people from vast areas into central villages. The idea was to promote collective farming and establish a modern agricultural industry, as well as to make it easier for the newly independent government to deliver public services to communities that were traditionally scattered across the countryside. Nyerere also believed that it would reduce poverty, and social and economic inequalities, between traditional leaders who controlled communal lands through customary law, and ordinary citizens, private landowners and farmworkers. In 1971, TANU issued guidelines called Mwongozo, which called for the establishment of a 'people's militia', which would enforce implementation of TANU policy in the villages.

The plan failed. Experts argued it lacked technical capacity and that the communities were not adequately consulted, and as a result were not often enthusiastic about the plan. With agricultural activities already having been disrupted by the villagisation programme, Tanzania also experienced low rainfalls in 1973 and 1975. Food production plummeted and food had to be imported. This coincided with the oil price crisis of the early 1970s and rising fuel prices.

In 1976, the government issued a directive, in which it admitted mistakes in the implementation of the villagisation programme. The country plunged into an economic crisis in the 1980s and was forced to seek support from the World Bank, IMF and international donors. In return for this support, the organisations demanded that Tanzania implement structural adjustment policies, which meant reducing the role of the state, cutting state subsidise to the poor and liberalising markets to allow foreign competitors.

Another example of failure to successfully leverage culture in Africa was Kenneth Kaunda's introduction of 'humanism' in Zambia, immediately

after the end of colonialism. Kaunda argued that 'the traditional African village is the model of social organization that modern Zambia should adopt in its socioeconomic development' (in Idoye, 1988). The United National Independence Party (UNIP) adopted the strategy at its April 1967 national council. A core part of the strategy was to cluster villages for agricultural production.

African cultural values were blended with socialism and Christian practices. The political system was envisioned to be a 'one-party participatory democracy'. Kaunda encouraged communities to organise themselves into cooperatives, engage in mutual aid and practice communalism. Villages across the country were regrouped into new communities. Zambia was to return to an ideal African communal economy, with trade and relations based on pre-colonial days. Private industries were nationalised and capitalism was rejected as exploitation of humans. Humanism

> 66 Continuing patriarchy in Africa, practised under the rubric of 'culture', curtails the full participation of women, youth and those deemed of lower social status in the life of society, which in turn undermines development. 99

was thus seen as a philosophy that would be the binding agent, weaving different ethnic groups into one common national identity. The state was to be modelled along ancient African communal structures.

However, there was widespread confusion over what a pre-colonial village communal cooperative should now look like post-independence. Moreover, over time, the government would fund only the cooperatives in its strongholds. Most Zambians thus remained as subsistence farmers, just as they were at independence. By the 1970s, humanism had failed, with the economy in tailspin. The Kaunda government could not turn the communal style economy into practical development policies.

The final example we will look at here is that of Swaziland. The country, unlike Tanzania and Zambia, has an absolute monarchy, with the

king as the head of state. The political system called 'Thinkundla', is a non-party state, with an advisory council of handpicked individuals who, together with traditional leaders, serve as 'advisors' (Kingdom of eSwati, 2005). All parties have been banned since 1973.

In 2018, the absolute monarch, Mswati III, unilaterally changed the name of the country to eSwatini, meaning 'place of the Swazi' (News24, 2018). From 1978 until 1993, non-party elections took place for a House of Assembly. There was no registration of voters and the ballots were not secret. The people voted by passing through a gate assigned for the candidate of their choice. The king handpicked an Electoral Committee to oversee the elections.

In 2005, the country adopted a constitution that gave legislative power to Mswati III. The king could veto or overturn all legislation adopted by 'parliament' (Motsamai, 2012). In this constitution, the registering of voters was re-introduced and a secret ballot was established. The new voting procedure entails the following: elections take place in two parts (Kingdom of eSwatini, 2005).The first part occurs within the chiefdoms or *inkhundla*, into which the country is divided, which serve as electoral constituencies. From here, candidates for election are selected. Campaigning is banned. Once the *inkundla* candidates are elected, voters then vote for one candidate who will go to the House of Assembly. Nominee candidates are permitted to campaign at this point. In the everyday running of the kingdom, traditional leaders 'govern' their chiefdoms and are directly accountable to the king (Kingdom of eSwatini, 2005).

Human rights, however, remain an issue. Insult laws prohibits criticism of the monarchy and freedom of expression and association is restricted. It has also been cited as among the most corrupt countries in the world (Transparency International, 2018). Married women have the status of 'legal minors', subject to 'marital power' of their husbands and cannot in their own right enter into legal contracts (Kingdom of eSwatini, 1964). Marital rape is legal. Moreover, forced marriage and child marriage are common. There no laws to make domestic violence a crime (Amnesty International, 2010). Over 63% of the population live under the World Bank's US$2 dollar a day poverty line (World Bank, 2016). The International Monetary Fund

(2012) states that were it not for Sudan, Swaziland would have the worse economic performance in the world.

Some African cultural practices undermine individual human rights, dignity and freedom

Continuing patriarchy in Africa, practised under the rubric of 'culture', curtails the full participation of women, youth and those deemed of lower social status in the life of society, which in turn undermines development. The United Nations estimated that gender inequality costs African countries at least US$95b a year in lost economic potential (Clark, 2016). In contrast, research shows that economic growth is higher, poverty lessened and countries more peaceful when there are high levels of gender equality (African Development Bank, 2015). The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development 's (OECD) research shows that ending child marriage in Niger would save that country more than USD 25bn by 2030 (Ferrant and Hamel, 2018). If gender equality in the labour market is only moderately improved, GDP would increase 1% in Ghana and Liberia and 31% in Nigeria (Ferrant and Hamel, 2018).

Yet, even if formal constitutions and laws provide for gender equality, customary law and cultural practices often do the opposite. In many African countries, cultural practices governing gender relations, marriage and property ownership are exempted from non-discrimination clauses in constitutions and formal laws. As such, 'many African women still live under traditional belief systems and outdated legislation that treats them as less than full citizens and prevents their voice from being fully heard in the governance of African societies' (African Development Bank, 2015).

For instance, in many African countries, women also cannot own or inherit land. Where traditional institutions are in place, women often cannot become kings, traditional leaders or chiefs, or take over traditional office from their husbands or male relations if they die or become incapacitated. In Zimbabwe, because of archaic patriarchal beliefs, widows often lose their marital homes and lands when their husbands pass away (Human Rights Watch, 2018). African women are also often prevented from getting or completing education (Ferrant and Hamel, 2018). In some African countries, a married woman cannot apply for a passport without her husband's approval. It

is also often compulsory for women to obey their husbands in these contexts (Action for Southern Africa, 2016).

In Libya, many cultural practices has been consistently criticised for undermining fundamental human rights and the freedoms of dignity accorded to individuals. One cultural practice, female genital mutilation (FGM), has been particularly highlighted by local and international civil society and human rights organisations for undermining women's rights. A report by the Human Rights and Protection Section (HRPS) of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) found that 'culture' in Liberia 'too often becomes
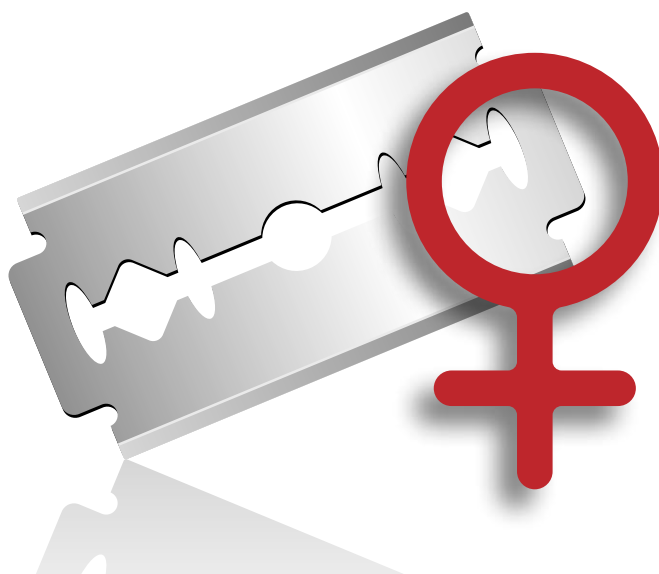
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a space in which serious crimes are committed, and that criminal offenses perpetrated through harmful traditional practices often go unpunished due to their perceived cultural dimensions' (HRPS, 2015). The mission also observed that 'in many cases, traditional or customary actors assume the powers and functions of the formal justice system'.

Liberia has cultural societies that oversee the practice of culture. They are divided into *Poro* (for men) and the *Sande* (for women). Liberia's National Council of Chiefs and Elders are representative organisations for traditional and cultural authorities.

These cultural societies are presided over

nationally by a *Poro zoe* (Chief) and *Sande zoe* (Chief). The National Council of Chiefs and Elders are headed by the *Poro zoe*. The government consults the council on traditional and cultural issues, as well as conflict resolution. Chiefs are paid by the government. These societies have a wide influence, especially in the northern, central and western regions of Liberia. The *Sande* society specifically requires female adherents to under FGM. The UN has warned Liberia that cultural practices such as FGM are incompatible with the international human rights treaties the country had signed (HRPS, 2015). Yet many African political, cultural and traditional leaders, including some in Liberia, 'have a vested interest in promoting continuing beliefs that provide them with rents' (Lopez-Claros and Perotti, 2014).

African colonial and post-colonial governments manipulate culture to subject peoples

During colonialism and apartheid, colonial powers often chose to highlight aspects or distorted elements of African culture and traditions that would reinforce the oppression of the colonised African people. Such aspects were often autocratic, subservient or anti-developmental. Governments thus used these elements to govern African populations through a different set of laws, called 'customary law', which were ostensibly African 'traditional' and 'cultural' laws, conventions and institutions. The African scholar Mahmood Mamdani (1996) called this phenomenon the 'indirect rule' of colonial governments. Colonial governments worked with 'traditional leaders', chiefs and kings or installed their own, and set new, 'traditional' rules, laws and institutions to make people subservient to both the colonial government and the colonial government-endorsed 'traditional' leaders, chiefs, kings and institutions.

In the post-independence period, most African governments and leaders retained the colonially appointed traditional chiefs, kings and structures – and their powers over their 'subjects' – on condition that these former colonial appendages ensured their 'subjects'' loyally support or vote for the African governments and leaders. In the post-independence period, many African leaders and governments have highlighted or emphasized only the more autocratic, subservient and anti-

developmental aspects of African culture and tradition. They have done so in many cases to reinforce their own control over their populations.

Moreover, some African countries and leaders have either, for self-interested reasons, emphasised the undemocratic elements of African culture or, for ideological reasons, rejected democracy building as 'foreign' (Gumede, 2012). For instance, some have opportunistically argued that democracy is unAfrican, 'Western' or against African culture because it shields them from democratic scrutiny in order to continue to enrich themselves at the expense of overwhelmingly poor Africans (Gumede, 2012). For example, South African President Jacob Zuma claimed that corruption is a 'Western paradigm' (in du Plessis and du Plessis, 2014). He went on to claim that he needed to be judged by African 'culture' while building an R246m private home with taxpayers' money while his supporters lived and died in grinding poverty (Gumede, 2012). It is ostensibly fine in Zuma's African 'culture' for the leader to live an enriched life on the sweat of his 'subjects', while his 'subjects' live in dire poverty, homelessness and unemployment (Gumede, 2012).

Some African governments and leaders have thus invented new African 'traditions' and 'cultures', claiming these to be authentic (Gumede, 2012). Such new African 'traditions' and 'cultures' have been invented by self-serving leaders and governments to either shore up their own power, shield themselves from criticisms or to build their political support base – and so their ability to secure patronage – among the poor, uneducated and uninformed communities (Gumede, 2012).

A case in point in South Africa is the recent re-invention of virginity testing as ostensibly an isiZulu cultural 'tradition' (Gumede, 2012). Virginity testing, called *ukuhlolwa kwezintombi*, at some stage was periodically practiced as a rite of passage to womanhood by some isiZulu communities before it fell entirely into disuse. However, it was reintroduced by King Goodwill Zwelithini in 1984 to increase his popularity during a period that saw a number of youth rebellions against apartheid and violent divisions between United Democratic Front/ANC activists and Inkatha Freedom Party supporters in KwaZulu Natal.

The practice of virginity testing has been rightly opposed by civil society organisations such as

the People Opposing Women Abuse (BBC, 2016). It has also been rejected by the Commission for Gender Equality as 'fundamentally discriminatory' (Gender and Equality Commission, 2016), as 'It goes against the ethos of the constitutional provisions in relation to dignity, equality and discrimination' (Gender and Equality Commission, 2016).

How aspects of African culture boost development

Botswana, since its independence, has emphasised aspects of African traditional culture that has aided development. For instance, the country has promoted the practice of *lekgotla*, which involves popular participation in decision-making, consensus-seeking, governing in the interest of the majority of the population and leadership accountability. A *lekgotla* is a community or village meeting to determine local policy where decisions are made by consensus. Everyone is equal and has the right to speak and no one is interrupted. This tradition has been adopted at various government levels to reach

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policy decisions. Leaders are compelled to consult widely and report back on implementation of decisions. They can be censored for inaction.

Immediately after independence, the country also established the Economic Committee, which reported the Cabinet. The Committee brought together elected leaders and public servants to collaboratively review and amend economic policy. The country also established a National Economic Advisory Council, which included civil society organisations in long-term economic planning.

This collaborative approach to planning and development in Botswana has been described as 'a more open process than is the case in many other African countries, with the ruling party,

interest groups, the private sector and parliament sufficiently involved in plan preparation' (Maipose, 2008). As such, Botswana has comparatively outshone all of those that labelled democracy as unAfrican or introduced aspects of democracy that only favoured them (Carroll and Carroll, 1998). Botswana has been Africa's longest sustained democracy (Maipose, 2008).

At independence in 1966, Botswana was one of the globe's poorest countries. Since then, it has become an economic success, with the last decade averaging growth rates of 5% and more (World Bank, 2019). Over the period 1965/1966 to 2005/2006, its real GDP growth averaged a record 9%. The country now ranks in the upper middle-income group. Poverty has been reduced to 16% (World Bank, 2019). At 9% of its GDP, it has among the highest expenditure on education in the world and provides universal free primary education (World Bank, 2019).

Moreover, although it is mineral-rich, it has escaped the 'resource curse' (Frankel, 2010), whereby developing countries rich in mineral resources, especially in Africa, have tended to have low development, low growth and low democracy coupled with more corruption, authoritarianism and violence. Botswana has been consistently ranked one of the least corrupt countries in Africa (Maipose, 2008).

Rwanda has also attempted to use aspects of culture to aid development. In 2005, eleven years after the 1994 ethnic genocides, the Rwandan government re-established the traditional community court system called *Gacaca* (Kirkby, 2016). In the *Gacaca* system, communities at the local level elected judges to hear the trials of genocide suspects accused of all crimes, except for the planning of genocide. The smallest administrative blocks are cells. Together, these cells form a general assembly, which met weekly and planned community activities. The general assembly also elected *Gacaca* judges *(iriyangamugayo)* from the community (Organisation for African Unity, 2003). The government oversaw the *Gacaca* community courts system through a central National Service for Gacaca Jurisdictions, which formally accepted admittances of guilt or issue warrants of arrest (Organisation for African Unity, 2003).

The courts issued lower sentences if the person was repentant and sought reconciliation with the

> **❝The increase in women's leadership is a critical reason for the country's dramatic development and transformation over the past few years (French Development Agency, 2019). Rwanda's average income per capita has quadrupled since 1994, the GDP has multiplied 6 times and the growth rate has been averaging 7% since 1994.❞**

community (Organisation for African Unity, 2003). Since 2005, more than 12,000 community-based courts tried 1.2 million cases throughout the country. The *Gacaca* trials provided victims with the truth. They gave perpetrators the opportunity to confess their crimes, show remorse and ask for forgiveness in front of their community (Organisation for African Unity, 2003). The idea was that perpetrators had to pay reparations to victims for property violations. Perpetrators did community service, including building roads, homes for survivors and cleaning the environment (Kirkby, 2016). However, this was unevenly implemented, beyond returning victims' assets (Kirkby, 2016). The *Gacaca* courts were closed on 4 May 2012.

Rwanda has also introduced constitutional requirements binding their legislatures to minimum quotas for women. Women now make up 64% of Rwanda's national parliament. This has led to better quality policies, prioritization of gender discriminating laws and greater cultural acceptance of women leaders (Ferrant and

Rwanda's Parliament sitting on 12/08/2018
Courtesy of © http://parliament.gov.rw

Hamel, 2018). The country introduced laws to allow women to own land in their own right and changeg inheritance laws to allow girls to inherit land, property and assets (Hutt, 2016).

The increase in women's leadership is a critical reason for the country's dramatic development and transformation over the past few years (French Development Agency, 2019). Rwanda's average income per capita has quadrupled since 1994, the GDP has multiplied 6 times and the growth rate has been averaging 7% since 1994. Corruption has dropped considerably. Universal primary education is now close to the United Nations Millennium Goals target (French Development Agency, 2019).

Customary law has also been used in Somalia. The country, which has been conflict-ridden since independence from colonialism in 1960, use to operate under a combination of religious law (Sharia), customary law (*Xeer*) and formal constitutional law (Abdile, 2012). However, after President Mohammed Siad Barre was overthrown in 1991, *Xeer* law increasingly became the governance framework in the failed state, under which disputes were settled, crime dealt with and a modicum of social order maintained in areas not controlled by warlords or Al-Shabaab.

The *Xeer* law is divided into 'criminal' (*Xeer Guud*) and 'civil' (*Xeer Gaar*) law (le Sage, 2005). *Xeer* is an oral-based law that dates from before colonialism and the modern spread of Islam. Although it has clan and regional specific nuances, large parts of it are broadly accepted (Leite, 2017). In a dispute, a clan assembly (*shir beeleed*) will be called by the elders (*guurti*) of the disputing parties. Elders will give their judgements on the dispute based on past experiences, precedents or based on what specific *Xeer* 'rules' say (Leite, 2017). However, like many African traditional systems, the law discriminates against women, youth and those of different ethnic groups (Leite, 2017).

In South Africa, the concept of *Ubuntu* (which means behaving in benevolent ways towards others, to care for others and build one's community (Gade, 2012)), was espoused by Archbishop Desmond Tutu (2000). Tutu notes that '[his] humanity is caught up, is inextricably bound up, in what is yours'. Former South African President Nelson Mandela exercised 'Ubuntu-style management', where it places 'emphasis not on differences, but on accommodating these' (Tutu, 2000).

Conclusion

African culture and traditions have both democratic and autocratic aspects, and both developmental and anti-developmental aspects. Moreover, culture is not fixed, and African cultures have been substantially changed by the processes of colonialism, borrowing from other cultures, industrialisation and technology.

It is crucial for Africans to determinedly push the aspects of African culture and traditions that will enhance democracy and development. African cultural practices that undermine individual human dignity, value and rights must be either be abolished immediately or reformed.

Cultural practices that promote discrimination and undermine dignity and freedom must be brought into alignment with democratic constitutions and laws. For instance, 'Discriminatory social norms weaken the implementation and efficiency of gender-sensitive policies, exposing women and girls to ongoing discrimination' (Ferrant and Hamel, 2018). Thus efforts to eradicate FGM in Burkina Faso have so far been unsuccessful because the practice is accepted culturally by a majority of the population, especially men, who argue that is better to marry a circumcised woman (Ferrant and Hamel, 2018).

There has to be greater social acceptance of cultural change. The media, civil society and educational institutions must drive cultural change. The great challenge of this generation in Africa and South Africa is how to emphasise democratic elements in African cultures and traditions, while cutting out autocratic elements to promote development.

If the current generation in African and South Africa fail to rise to this challenge, there will be another generation of failed African states and poverty-stricken, broken and unstable societies. ■

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The Dry Valley:

An Analysis of Social Challenges in the African Mining Sector.

As positivists would agree with me, even in the worst moments, there is always the possibility of national renewal. However, for change to happen, there must be a value system to guide the transformation. In this article, I have adopted an artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM) case study in order to illustrate how models embedded in the African values and norms, such as the social and solidarity economy (SSE) model, is a viable mechanism for fixing the leadership and governance challenges facing the continent at large, and specifically the mining sector.

By Francis Onditi

Why things are the way they are

I wrote this article after meeting a friend at a café in Hillcrest Boulvard, Brooklyn area, Pretoria, South Africa. Brooklyn is an affluent surburb, surrounded by high-end residential neighbourhoods and some prestigious learning institutions – the shopping complex is not far from the University of Pretoria. It was ideal place to take a break from office work and meditate. Close to where I sat waiting for my guest was a notice that read, 'These Tables are Strictly for the Patrons of Café Grenadine.' The word 'Patrons' in the phrase troubled me. The Oxford Dictionary defines 'patron' as 'financier'. Political economists use the term carefully, because it means 'owners of wealth'. The term thus implies that individuals can be distinguished as either 'haves' or 'have nots'. Yet what troubled me most is not whether the space in question was meant for those who own the wealth. Rather, it was the connotation of the word, which points to societal disorders, such as feudalism, inequality, exclusion and all sorts of segregation.

My experience in the café emphasized that the world around us is constructed. Moreover, our thinking habits, actions, behavior and interactions within society are all shaped by religious, cultural, technological and political values and norms. Leadership and governance represent a small portion of this value system. Indeed, these values and norms are the sum of socially informed behaviours, human-environmental interactions and various forms of transformation, including

> **❝** In this process of transformation, it is important that we continue searching for desirable values and norms. Natural wisdom suggests that one way of achieving that which is desirable is to develop new directions in thinking, thus stimulating individual and collective forms of societal change for a better future. **❞**

new models and policies. In this process of transformation, it is important that we continue searching for desirable values and norms. Natural wisdom suggests that one way of achieving that which is desirable is to develop new directions in thinking, thus stimulating individual and collective forms of societal change for a better future. This type

of multilateral social change is then the product of 'thought leadership'. In this article, I would like to help readers undertand why it is important to constantly rethink existing models and policies. To do so, I will investigate two paradoxes that I have experienced.

The first paradox

During my early days of schooling in the late 1980s and 1990s in western Kenya, it was not unusual to find me or my other siblings in the nearest market trying to make ends meet by selling simple farm produce. Our mother, Sarah Mbone, who also was an ardent small-scale business woman, constantly reminded us that, 'Vana vange ikivara ni kidinyu, kuduka uturi orogeri kunanga onyore ichuria ...', which is loosely translated as, 'I urge you my

> ❝It was not difficult to visualise how the African continent could attain industrial capacity by investing in power generation. But the paradox is that the planned construction of the dams and the associated infrastructure have been stuck in limbo since the 1960s. ❞

children, life is hard, you must sweat to get food in this world...'. This narrative formed part of our family lore. My mother's world view shaped my value system. I was taught to be thoughtful, diligent, courageous, compassionate and honest. Moreover, life for us was a matter of balancing business and school. In order to achieve such a balance, we had to constantly search for new market opportunities in different locations.

Mbale, which is a small town located along the Kisumu-Kakamega highway, was one such location. It also happened that there were small-scale mining sites scattered across the municipality. One of the mining sites was located along Muhedwe valley, popularly known as Mukichutu. The small-scale mining in the valley formed a hub of activity, with a booming economy, high cash flow and rapid growth of new business ventures. The surrounding community members were actively engaged along the value chain. However, there was no strategic direction and the

miners and other stakeholders along the chain were only engaged in short-term acitvities. The miners' mind-set was framed by a narrow world view. The mining came to an abrupt end and the valley turned into a ghost village.

The second paradox: twenty-six years later

Twenty-six years later, in 2017, I was a professional working with a United Nations (UN) agency on a mission in the Democractic Republic of Congo (DRC), at the Inga Dam in Matadi, about 264 km from the capital city, Kinshasa, on the border with Cambinda, Angola. The aim of the mission was to provide expertise and advice to the UN office in Kinshasa on how to develop conflict transformation strategies to be used by the government in order to harness the potential of the dam for the benefit of the community surrounding the Congo River. Harnessing this potential meant lighting up and powering Africa. The dam was estimated to cost US $80 billion and would generate 44,000 megawatts, with capacity to distribute electricity to the entire sub-Saharan Africa regional electricity power pool (Green, Benjamin, Sovacool and Hancock, 2015). The initial plan identified South Africa, the World Bank, and the African Development Bank as the main funders.

It was not difficult to visualise how the African continent could attain industrial capacity by investing in power generation. But the paradox is that the planned construction of the dams and the associated infrastructure have been stuck in limbo since the 1960s. In what experts have termed as a 'potent fantacy', the failure lies with lack of governance (Deshmukh, Mileva and Wu, 2018). The recommissioned package remains socially, economically and environmentally unviable. Moreover, the rewards have been and are likely to continue benfiting the corporate power companies rather than meeting the needs of the local population. As we went around the communities surrounding this dam, we were shocked: no household seemed to have access to the power lines. The villages were the agrarian type, separated from each by the dense forest and the river. In the local market, the largely barter trade dealings and the groups of women carrying gigantic bunches of bananas on their heads indicated a huge disconnect between the grand strategy and the demands of the local population.

From the government records, we established that the power generated from the dam largely supplied other countries across the southern African region.

The dry valley

As positivists would agree with me, even in the worst moments, there is always the possibility of national renewal. However, for change to happen, there must be a value system to guide the transformation. In this article, I have adopted an artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM) case study in order to illustrate how models embedded in the African values and norms, such as the social and solidarity economy (SSE) model, is a viable mechanism for fixing the leadership and governance challenges facing the continent at large, and specifically the mining sector. I will analyse this by assessing the overall contribution of the sector to Africa's growth and the need for SSE. The conclusion revisits the metarphoric 'dry valley' and its relevance to thought leadership and good governance.

The ASM sub-sector is (not) entirely dry

The ASM sub-setcor provides various forms of opportunities for employment and the reduction of poverty. In the South African Development Community, Zambia's extractive industry sector is a major economic driver, contributing up to 11% of the gross domestic product. The effects can be seen in job creation, increased revenue and opportunities for growth and development (UNDP, 2014). Yet despite its ample mineral resources, Zambia remains one of the poorest countries in the world, ranking 141 out of 169 on the 2014 Human Development Index. The Gender Gap Index (Samans, Jennifer, Gemma and Margareta, 2015) of the World Economic Forum ranks Zambia 119 out of 136.

The DRC also has a large ASM sector, regardless of its systemic and structural challenges. It is estimated that up to two million people work as artisanal miners across the DRC, representing a significant economic opportunity for Congolese citizens (Havard Humanitarian Initiative, 2015). Unlike the global trend, in the DRC 90% of minerals exported are produced by ASM and only 10% by large-scale mining (Hayes and Perks, 2012). In this country, as in other African countries, women perform support service work to the ASM sector and seldom engage in the physical act of mining. In Ghana, 50% of the *galamsey* population (illegal small-scale gold miners) are women, as are 75% of the small-scale salt mining workforce and 80% of stone quarry workers (Addei and Amankwah, 2011). ASM is seen in both these countries as being lucrative, with the potential to stimulate local/ national entrepreneurship, improve livelihoods and advance integrated rural social and economic development.

Despite all these opportunities offered by ASM, the sub-sector is confronted with systemic and structural challenges, inequalities, health risks and poor economic prospects, particulalry for women. Women are at a disadvantage owing to their exclusion from the value chain, largely because of policy inconsistencies and disproportionate power relations between the genders in society. Moreover, while an economy that applies 'sustainability' principles tends to thrive at the community level, the act of balancing economic exploitation with adherence to the social values in ASM at a larger scale remains delicate. Yet integrating social and environmental values in the sub-sector could be a 'thoughful' way of strengthening leadership and governance in ASM in Africa.

The overly 'growth'-based models have made it difficult to fix the 'real' challenge facing the ASM: i.e. gender inequality. There exist a plethora of studies addressing the question of governance in the mining sub-sector (Campbell, 2006). However, none of these draws in the 'thoughtful' prinicples that are embedded in the African philosophies and value system. This article delves into the question of whether the SSE model is a viable praxis for achieving inclusivity in ASM. It is argued that, while ASM has played an important role in creating avenues for economic empowerment in countries such as Zambia, the DRC and Ghana, social exclusion remains, resulting in the metaphorical dry valley. The question is, then: how do you bring back life to the valley?

How to breathe life into the dry valley

The SSE approach is based on the following underlying assumptions: social enterprises a) are collective initiatives; b) are democratically owned and/or operated; c) undertake activities with social usefulness; and d) involve the wider community

> 66 Women miners in Zambia, the DRC and Ghana have formed into cooperative societies not only as a means of benefiting from economies of scale but also as a way to increase their bargaining power in the ASM sector. This approach reflects the principles of SSE. 99

in their operations (Saguier and Brent, 2014). The SSE model can also be used to create a conducive atmosphere for inculcating democratic principles necessary for inclusive development processes (Laville, 2003). Women miners in Zambia, the DRC and Ghana have formed into cooperative societies not only as a means of benefiting from economies of scale but also as a way to increase their bargaining power in the ASM sector. This approach reflects the principles of SSE, especially that of 'one person one vote,' and portents increasing capacity among women to participate in decision-making processes at various levels, from organizational to national.

With regard to sustainability, SSE has the potential to support economies in an efficient and effective manner, promoting learning and knowledge building. For this to happen, however, greater coherence is needed – not only within organisations, but among activities, communities and regions. SSE fits well with women's indirect participation in ASM, particularly in supportive roles such as bookkeepers, security guards, cooks and nannies who take care of children brought to site by women miners. These 'ancillary roles' are often not factored into official estimates of mining, meaning that women's involvement in the ASM sector may be significantly under-estimated and unreported (Hinton and Beinhoff, 2003; Hinton, Veiga and Veiga, 2003).

SSE, when viewed from an ideological perspective, is a movement away from an economics that is self-interested towards a culture of of cooperation, inclusion, self-help groups and associations (Cangian, 2016). Indeed, Dash argues that the problem facing the world of development spreads beyond economics; there are ideological, institutional and epistemological systemic issues. It is therefore logical to embrace SSE in promoting networks and organising women within ASM as a means of revitalising the dry valley. Dash (2014) notes that, the alternative epistemology built around a superior social ontology of inter-relationality, as well as philosophical principles different from logical positivism (monism) and individualism (atomism), [are necessary] for us to gain the confidence and the capacity to think SSE more boldly, shape economic practices and policies more coherently, and develop well-governed and efficient institutions in SSE more creatively (9).

The other benefit of conceiving ASM within the rubric of SSE is that building trust among players in SSE-led mining is likely to address negative externalities arising from the tyranny of capitalism. Some scholars have espoused that SSE is a response

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to the dominant capitalist system (Marques, 2014). It is a model that aims to liberate communities from neoliberal globalisation and pave the way for a more equal and sustainable society, particularly with regard to empowering and informing women of the most effective choices to make in the ASM sector. Transformation in such communities would mean evolving into SSE. Thus, developing an ASM based on principles of SSE means transforming poor women, who often dominate the ASM in the form of organised groups such as the Association of Women Miners.

Also, employing SSE as a model of driving ASM means increasing women's access to organisational assets. The concept of SSE is increasingly used to refer to organisations and enterprises engaged in the production and exchange of goods and services, which are autonomous from the state and guided by objectives and norms that prioritise social well-being, cooperation and solidarity. They include, for example, cooperatives and other social enterprises, mutual associations, women's self-help groups, unions of informal economy workers, fair trade networks and solidarity finance schemes.

Finally, important tenets of SSE that resonate with the urge to address several of today's major development challenges will help ASM embrace ideals of inclusiveness, find a holistic approach to development and address the broader post-2015 challenges of (i) better integration of economic, social and environmental objectives; (ii) poverty reduction, decent work, gender equality and equitable development; (iii) addressing the structural causes of global crises linked to finance, food and energy; and (iv) building up resilience for coping with crises and external shocks.

No conclusion – rather a question

In this article, I have attempted to liken the social challenges facing the mining sector to the proverbial 'dry valley'. I noted that the Mbale mining community lacked strategic thinking and therefore failed to secure the future of the mining enterprise, while the grand Inga Dam project is a total failure, despite the existence of a 'grand strategy'. I have thus suggested rethinking existing models through the lens of SSE and debated whether such an approach could be a game changer in transforming the 'dry valley'

into one of hope. I have argued before that this transformation process cannot be achieved unless a 'strategy' is developed that is based on the principles of 'thought leadership' (Onditi, 2018). I am not the first to advise leaders on the continent on the way forward – eminent African scholars such as Gumede (2015) and Mazrui (2005) writing on the subject of pan-Africanism have provided thoughts on how 'Africa' can achieve its potential through local solutions. These authors emphasize that the African transformation initiative must be anchored on three aspects: 'thought leadership', 'thought liberation' and 'critical consciousness'. The question remains, however: are the political elites and bureaucrats aware of these critical foundations that could enrich policy praxes? ■

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Is Zimbabwe
on the Cusp
of Mass Protests Over the Country's
Worsening Economic Malaise?

The biggest nemesis of the Mnangagwa regime has been the economy. The country's continued economic woes have fueled speculations of looming mass protests or the possibly another military operation to remove Mnangagwa from power, barely a few months into his presidency.

By Tapiwa Chagonda

In recent weeks, Zimbabwe has been on tenterhooks as the leading opposition party, the Movement for Democratic Change-Alliance (MDC-A), and other civic organisational bodies such as the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions have threatened to unleash crippling mass protests that will force the Mnangagwa-led government to revive Zimbabwe's economy, or even remove the current government from power. In anticipation of such demonstrations, Mnangagwa's government has placed the military on high alert and also reportedly purchased over 3 300 AK-47 assault rifles and 600 sniper rifles (*Zimbabwe Independent*, 2019). In addition, over 1 000 police officers have recently undergone rigorous para-military training (*Zimbabwe Independent*, 2009). The arrest of seven civic activists at the end of May on charges of 'subversion of a constitutional government', which is a treasonous offense under Section 22 of Zimbabwe's Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act, was clear testimony that the Mnangagwa regime is taking seriously the 'threat' of unseating his government through popular mass protests (Mavhunga, 2019). The threat of looming mass protests, and the recent heavy-handedness with which the current Zimbabwean government handled the last two attempted demonstrations against it, is quite

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chilling. In August 2018, six people were shot dead by the military after trying to protest against the highly contested July 2018 presidential polls; in January 2019, seventeen people were killed by the security forces while protesting against a sharp fuel hike (*Zimbabwe Independent*, 2019). Why is the Mnangagwa regime caught up in this security storm?

The Dire straits of Zimbabwe's economy

The biggest nemesis of the Mnangagwa regime has been the economy. The country's continued economic woes have fueled speculations of looming mass protests or the possibly another military operation to remove Mnangagwa from power, barely a few months into his presidency. The regime has so far failed to stem the downward spiral of the Zimbabwean economy since Mnangagwa came into power with the assistance of the military in November 2017. Zimbabwe is in the throes of what has now become a perennial economic quagmire, which is currently marked by sky-rocketing food and fuel prices, incessant power cuts and depleted levels of foreign currency. The current economic crunch has been triggered by the volatility of the new Zimbabwean real time gross settlement (RTGS) dollar, which was introduced in February 2019. When the RTGS dollar was introduced, it was trading at 2.50 RTGS dollars against 1 United States dollar (USD). Three months down the line, 1 USD is now equivalent to 8 RTGS dollars (Kuyedzwa, 2019). The removal of the fuel subsidy by the state in mid-May resulted in massive fuel shortages, with a domino effect on other goods and services. Inflation shot sharply to 75.86% in April from 66.8% in March (Trading Economics, 2019). Political instability, in the form of legitimacy challenges to Mnangagwa's presidency by the MDC-A, has exacerbated Zimbabwe's socio-economic and socio-political problems. As if that

is not enough, Zimbabwe has been hit by its worst drought in 40 years during the 2018/2019 rain season, which affected most of the country barring the Mashonaland provinces (*New Zimbabwe*, 2019). In March 2019, cyclone Idai struck and wreaked havoc on people, crops and animals in the eastern parts of Zimbabwe. The drought, coupled with Idai, left over 5.3 million Zimbabweans in need of food aid in 2019 and this includes an unprecedented 37% of the urban population (Thompson, 2019). Thus, the socio-economic and socio-political situation is Zimbabwe is quite perilous at the moment.

Brief background to Zimbabwe's socio-political and socio-economic problems

Zimbabwe's economic crisis is not new – it has been dragging on for slightly over two decades now. Raftopoulos (2003) contends that the Zimbabwean economic malaise was triggered by the compensation and gratuities given to war veterans in 1997. Almost 50 000 of these veterans were given a lump sum of Z$50 000 each and were to be paid a monthly pension of Z$2 000. Initially, the government refused to disburse these funds, but the veterans under the leadership of Chenjerai 'Hitler' Hunzvi were able to force the Zimbabwean government to accede to their demands. Raftopoulos (2003) argues that by capitulating to the demands of the war veterans, the Zimbabwean government was forced into printing greater amounts of money and this then caused the Zimbabwean dollar to collapse against the world's major currencies.

On Friday 14 November 1997, the Zimbabwean dollar crashed, a day that has now come to be known as 'Black Friday'. In 1998, the government joined the war in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and billions of unbudgeted Zimbabwean dollars were spent there, resulting in further economic decline. The economic crisis was further exacerbated by the farm invasions of 2000, which caused the agricultural sector, which is the backbone of the Zimbabwean economy, to be plunged into chaos. In 2000, the country also held general elections that were widely regarded as unfree and unfair. These elections, together with the farm invasions, led the international community to impose economic sanctions. As a result, foreign direct investment dwindled to a negligible amount.

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The afore-mentioned are the major factors that have caused the Zimbabwean economy to decline into a perilous state. From 2000 to 2008, the national economy contracted by as much as 54% (UNDP, 2008), and it was estimated that the GDP per capita was down to the same level as it had been in 1953. Hyper-inflation was officially reported to have peaked at 231 million percent in July 2008. The Cato Institute, however, argues that hyper-inflation in Zimbabwe peaked at 89.7 sextillion percent in November 2008, which made it the second highest rate of hyper-inflation ever recorded (Hanke, 2009). During the 2000s, there were persistent shortages of foreign exchange, local currency, fuel and food. The International Monetary Fund calculated that the proportion of the population below the poverty datum line was at 80 percent in January 2007.

The political, economic and social crisis that Zimbabwe underwent between 1997 and 2008 has been represented by opposing sides of a deeply polarised political divide as either a 'land crisis' (this mostly by ZANU-PF and old-style nationalists) or a 'governance crisis' (by the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) and a broad spectrum of civil society groupings). However, as Hammar, Raftopoulos and Jensen (2003) argue, the crisis is not about a single issue, neither is it rooted in a once-off event or single historical trajectory. Rather it emerged from and is sustained by, a dynamic pattern of 'simultaneous, incomplete and competing projects of transformation, legitimation and resistance' that involve a range of differently positioned actors in shifting combinations of alliance and animosity (Hammar et al., 2003). Among the most salient of these projects since independence are those connected to three interweaving analytical and empirical arenas, namely, 'the politics of land and resource distribution; reconstructions of nation and

citizenship; and the remaking of state and modes of rule' (Hammar, 2005).

Hammar (2005) further contends that these need to be considered within the context of, among other events, Zimbabwe's long settler-colonial history of embedded inequalities in land and civic rights, which were deeply racialized, gendered and class-based; the nationalist guerrilla struggle during the 1970s; an inherited bureaucracy at independence with strong technocratic, centralising and authoritarian tendencies; the positive expansion of public services and infrastructure during the 1980s and initial economic growth, which was followed by economic decline and the adoption of standard structural adjustment policies in 1991; declining state legitimacy in the 1990s, culminating in both a broad-based constitutional challenge driven by civil society and the formation of the MDC as a formal opposition party in 1999; further challenges to the state and ruling party by war veterans in 1997 and added economic strains caused by Zimbabwe's entrance into the war in the DRC in 1998; and the failure of the land reform initiatives from 2000 onwards. It is therefore evident that the Zimbabwean crisis has festered for a long time and this situation is creating serious challenges for Mnangagwa's regime.

Counter narratives on Zimbabwe's economic crisis

As argued above, the explanations about Zimbabwe's perennial economic crisis are varied and highly contested. The narrative that has been proffered by the ZANU-PF government is that sanctions, which have been imposed on the country by Western nations, are the reason why the Zimbabwean economy is in such dire straits and it will find it difficult to recover unless these are lifted (Chagonda, 2016). The Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act, which was promulgated by the United States government in 2001, is one such piece of legislation that is cited by the Zimbabwean government to explain the dearth of foreign direct investment in the country by countries in the global North. The leading opposition party, the MDC-A, is fingered by the ZANU-PF regime as having played a hand in the imposition of these sanctions.

The long-drawn out economic crisis in Zimbabwe can also be blamed on the speculative tendencies of many business individuals, which can be traced to the hyperinflation of 2008. During this period, many emerging forex barons speculated on the highly volatile and weak Zimbabwean dollar before it was eventually shelved (Chagonda, 2016). This culture of speculation has spread to other critical products and goods that are in short supply, such as fuel, wheat and maize. The Mnangagwa regime has even blamed cartels that are 'determined to sabotage the economy' for hoarding goods that are in short supply, thus causing artificial shortages in the market and then re-selling these same goods at exorbitant prices on the 'black market' (New Zimbabwe, 2019). The Mnangagwa government has promised to rein in the activities of these cartels and 'saboteurs' but, as yet, no decisive action has been taken on these 'phantom figures', leaving one to ponder who these nameless and faceless figures are. What is clear, though, is that the Mnagagwa regime has to fix the Zimbabwean economy, which has proven to be ZANU-PF's Achilles heel for more than two decades now, regardless of the source of the crisis. Otherwise, the current regime will suffer an ignominious exit from power, hence the current panic within Zimbabwe's security sector. ∎

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PRESERVING MEMORY:

The Past
As A Means Of Understanding
The Present

A fundamental objective of a site of memory is to preserve the past – its events, meanings and importance – in order for people to better understand and comprehend the present.

By Nicholas Wolpe

The first step in liquidating a people is to erase its memory. Destroy its books, its culture, its history [...] Before long the nation will begin to forget what it is and what it was
– Milan Kundera

There is one certainty in life: we will repeat the past. This has become apparent in South Africa today as we have fallen victim to the idea that our past, our history, bears no relationship to our understanding and comprehension of the present. Yet, as George Santayana said, 'Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it'. This quote refers to the language of 'not knowing' and 'not remembering.' The underlying contention is that the past provides a framework upon which we structure and fashion solutions to address the challenges of our prevailing conditions and circumstances. In particular, sites of memory have a significant and meaningful role to play. A fundamental objective of a site of memory is to preserve the past – its events, meanings and importance – in order for people to better understand and comprehend the present.

Yet, if the past shapes our present and provides the basis for our comprehension and understanding of it, then what are the implications and consequences if there is a break in this dialectical linkage, in the historical dialectic, narrative and chain? As Karl Marx argued in the *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (2005 [1852]),

> [M]en (sic) make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but under circumstances existing already, given and transmitted from the past.

South Africa today is experiencing the consequences of such a breakage in the historical dialectic. Though our social conditions are a consequence of our past, the past in many instances has been relegated to the periphery and, as such, we find ourselves in a state of flux and contestation between prevailing ideologies, values and aspirations, which in many instances are at odds with the values, aspirations, goals, meaning, spirit and aims of our liberation struggle. Moses Kotane, a stalwart of the liberation struggle, remarked that,

> we must learn history to know and understand the story of man's (sic) development through the ages – the various forms of social organisation and the causes of the rise and fall of those forms of human relationships. (in Motlanthe, 2014)

Yet the current social discourse has underscored South Africa's deviation from the aspirations, intent and goals of our liberation struggle objectives, as defined by our Freedom Charter. As such, we need to reflect on and remember the significant and seminal historical events that help explain where we as a country have come from and where would like to head.

Currently, the growing traction in the line of thought and thinking that the past no longer matters to our understanding and comprehension of the present is alarming and has, in the process, allowed a revisionist argument to seep into our discourse. Such an argument has been crafted in a vacuum with little or no appreciation or understanding of our past. We have witnessed an alarming trend in our political discourse that the inclusive political negotiations at CODESA and Mandela were a sellout to 'white monopoly capital'. The narrative here is that the ANC accepted a settlement that enabled the white minority to maintain and perpetuate white minority control and rule in some form. For instance, in a paper titled 'The Freedom Charter: the contested South African land issue', Mazibuko argues that rather than promoting and enshrining majority rights and claims, the Freedom Charter reduced them to the periphery while cementing white control. He argues that the drafting of the Freedom Charter was a master stroke by white intellectuals to subjugate the wishes and desires of the black majority.

As our link to the past grows ever more tenuous,

> ❝South Africa today is experiencing the consequences of such a breakage in the historical dialectic. Though our social conditions are a consequence of our past, the past in many instances has been relegated to the periphery.❞

we are faced with the prospect and reality that the events of the past will start to hold less meaning, to the point where the past will fail to resonate with future generations. We run the risk of future generations being shaped within a historical vacuum, as is currently happening. Indeed, today we are facing the stark reality that our youth and the twenty-to-thirty-somethings – the born frees – have a very limited or no personal recollection of, or limited memory of and little emotional attachment to, the struggle. Their outlook, focus and narrative has and is being forged and shaped by a new set of material conditions, desires and expectations, which in most cases have little or no connection to the past.

The passage of time can blur and distort our recollection of the past, of places, events and names. It is easy to forget where we have come from and what we as a people have been through. With each generation, the gap gets wider and the importance of our past has the potential to fade further from our historical, consciousness landscape and narrative. That is why testimonies, sites of memory, museums and other places that aim to convey, preserve and protect the past are essential to the address the challenges we face today. Sites of memory – historical sites – stand as testimonies to and reminders of the passage of time. They ensure that events and actions that shaped our world today are not forgotten. They are our tie to the past, our connection to the present and our bridge to the future. A site of memory can thus be used to re-inculcate the very essence of collective memory, as it articulates both individual and collective historical memory. It provides a platform for open expression of the events, activities and purposes of the past.

Once such site of memory is Liliesleaf, which has become a focal point and articulation of the ideals, principles and values that defined our struggle.

> ❝Indeed, it is not only places but also names of places that have fallen victim to this loss of historical, identity meaning and translation. It is evident we believe that by simply naming buildings, places and streets after stalwarts of our liberation struggle, we are somehow perpetuating their memory and what their memory represents.❞

It is associated with a series of events that had significant historical consquences. Yet, while for a long time the name Rivonia was associated with those events, today, Rivonia is not longer associated with Liliesleaf, the raid on Liliesleaf and the Rivonia Trial. Today, amongst born frees and other segments of the population, it merely is associated with Rivonia Road and no longer forms part of a defining moment in our historical narrative. Once these associations, links and connections are broken, the historical meaning surrounding places, events and names will eventually be forgotten.

Indeed, it is not only places but also names of places that have fallen victim to this loss of historical, identity meaning and translation. It is evident we believe that by simply naming buildings, places and streets after stalwarts of our liberation struggle, we are somehow perpetuating their memory and what their memory represents. An example is OR Tambo airport, named after one of the greatest leaders of the liberation movement. However, when a group of aspiring student journalists were asked 'who was OR Tambo?' the response was 'the airport'. This demonstrates the extent to which a gulf has emerged between our past and present, due to the break in the historical dialectic.

The notion of the past speaking to and defining the present links to one of the most popular models of memory, which sees memory as a present act of consciousness that is reconstructive of the past. Unfortunately, today memory is treated as peripheral to our understanding of prevailing conditions, circumstances, events and actions. This stands in stark contrast to the writings of some of the great social thinkers of the 18th and 19th centuries, like Georg Hegel, Karl Marx and Emile Durkheim, who argued that the notion of self-consciousness was defined and constructed by the historical framework that defined the conditions in which the actors found themselves. In particular, at the core of Hegel's social and political thought were the concepts of freedom, reason, self-consciousness and recognition, which, according to him, had their root understanding and comprehension in their social and historical embodiment.

Given the current discourse on memory and the role memory plays, there is a need to define and articulate how we can address this apparent dialectical discord. How do we inculcate and instill

the importance of memory and ultimately history into the DNA of our social fabric? The importance of doing so has been recognised by former Minister of Arts and Culture, Shipokosa Mashatile, who asserted,

> at all times we must reaffirm our liberation heritage as an integral part of our country's collective memory and cultural history. Equally it is important that we continue to celebrate and draw lessons from the lives of those who shaped our country's history and contributed to the freedom and democracy that we enjoy today.

A platform of historical inclusivity, understanding and appreciation therefore needs to be harnessed and fostered, particularly for a nation like South Africa, with its history of strife, contestation and deep divisions. For South Africa to forge ahead, to progress, it is essential that we rebuild and reestablish unity, cohesion and togetherness. Unfortunately, we are struggling to define ourselves, to shape and establish a sense of identity, purpose and direction. We are a country without focus and direction, for we have allowed our past to be pushed to the periphery.

As David Crabtree (1993) remarks , 'our ignorance of the past is not the result of a lack of information, but of indifference. We do not believe that history matters'. He goes onto suggest that 'modern society…has turned its back on the past. We live in a time of rapid change…we prefer to define ourselves in terms of where we are going' and not where we have come from.

Pierre Nora, who has written extensively on the notion of memorialisation, states that, 'over the last quarter of century, every country, social, ethnic or family group, has undergone a profound change in the relationship it traditionally enjoyed with the past' (1989) and it is for these reasons that there has been an:

> upsurge in Memory, demands for signs of a past that had been confiscated or suppressed; growing interest in 'roots' and genealogical research; all kinds of commemorative events and new museums; renewed sensitivity to the holding and opening of archives for public consultation; and growing attachment to what…is called heritage.

Thus, according to him, our concern should be with trying to regain an understanding and sense

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of who we are and what binds us together as a nation . Memorialisation represents a cognitive understanding of how the past shapes, binds and ultimately informs the present. It is this that defines our collective shared experiences, which in turn forms the foundation for defining our collective consciousness and sense of unity.

Thus the importance of sites of memory like Liliesleaf is that they 'allow history a kind of reawakening. These sites bring history to life' (Nora, 1989). Liliesleaf preserves the memories of our past and, in so doing, preserves these memories in the minds and consciousness of all. Such historical sites have a role and responsibility to keep the meaning of the struggle alive, to ensure that society appreciates, understands and applauds the sacrifices made to bring about the new dawn.

In other words, it is essential to know to whom and to what we owe our present. It is for this very reason that historical sites like Liliesleaf are essential. *A key feature of a site of memory is to ensure that the events and acts undertaken are not lost but are used as a frame of reference, a foundation upon which to ensure the achievement of the historical mission of building a unified, cohesive society, bound together by a common objective and mission.* ∎

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Beyond Brexit:

The Politics of Irish Unity

In Ireland, the Irish unity debate had become part of the political mainstream. Brexit means that change in the political relations between Britain and Ireland is now unavoidable and, while partition never had any democratic legitimacy, its continued imposition is no longer sustainable. The partition of Ireland has run out of road. As such, British government policy towards Ireland must change.

By Declan Kearney

Britain's Brexit Crisis

After the Brexit referendum in June 2016, I suggested that Brexit would detonate a constitutional and political crisis at the very core of the British state. Events since then have served to fulfil this prediction. Such events include the British government's failed and bad faith negotiations with the European Union (EU); the formalising of the British Tory government's alliance with the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) in June 2017 and its destabilising effect upon the political crisis in the north of Ireland; the unparalleled political and parliamentary chaos at Westminster since last year; and the resignation of British Prime Minister Theresa May. The only certainty about Brexit is that it is a product of an ideological civil war within the British Tory Party, which has destabilised that party since the British state joined the European Economic Community in 1973.

Theresa May's approach to handling the Brexit negotiations since she became British Prime Minister has been to try manage these divisions in order to maintain her leadership and a Tory government in power. Thus, outwardly, the British government's conduct of negotiations with the EU has been chaotic. It is impossible to predict what may happen next, as developments continue to unfold and a new withdrawal deadline of 31st October is set. Yet such vacillation has been about playing for time. In the context of the original 29th March 2019 withdrawal date set by the triggering of Article 50, it seems the clock was simply being run down. Ultimately, May appeared to be attempting brinkmanship with the Tory Brexit extremists and the Tory government's hard-line pro-Brexit allies in the DUP by presenting a zero-sum scenario in which the only alternative

> 66 The only certainty about Brexit is that it is a product of an ideological civil war within the British Tory Party, which has destabilised that party since the British state joined the European Economic Community in 1973. 99

to supporting her Brexit option was potentially no agreement with the EU.

Then, the Tory party lost 1300 seats during British local council elections. In the more recent European Parliament election on 23rd May, support for the new Brexit party (led by Nigel Farage) exceeded the combined vote share of both the British Labour and Tory parties. These results presage even greater turbulence for the British political system, and more fracture and division within British society.

Brexit 'a catastrophe' for Ireland

Most economic forecasts suggest that Brexit will be bad for Britain. However, it will be catastrophic for Ireland's island economy and the regional economic system in the north of Ireland. The entire political thrust of Brexit runs counter to the foundations of the Good Friday Agreement (GFA), which represents the architecture of the Irish peace process. The GFA put in place a power-sharing system requiring cooperation between the biggest parties representing the north of Ireland's two main community traditions – currently Sinn Féin and the DUP. The Agreement also includes strong all-island provisions in addition to protections for those who have an Irish national identity and aspire to the reunification of Ireland.

However, the DUP's support for Brexit threatens to further weaken the already fragile political process in the northern state while guaranteeing a new border and further division in Ireland.

The imposition of Brexit by the British Tory government on the north of Ireland is inherently undemocratic in nature. It is contrary to the will of the people in the north of Ireland, which voted by a majority of 56% to remain in the EU during the 2016 Referendum. That democratic majority was reinforced when two pro 'Remain' MEPs were elected to the European Parliament from three

> ❝Most economic forecasts suggest that Brexit will be bad for Britain. However, it will be catastrophic for Ireland's island economy and the regional economic system in the north of Ireland. The entire political thrust of Brexit runs counter to the foundations of the Good Friday Agreement (GFA), which represents the architecture of the Irish peace process.❞

available seats in the north of Ireland. But it is also a direct by product of Ireland's undemocratic and continued partition, enforced almost one hundred years ago, by British colonial policy.

This now deepening political crisis is further accentuated by systemic structural weaknesses in the regional economy of the north. The required investment in local public services and protection of workers' rights are denied by a combination of Tory austerity and the imposition of Brexit. Pressures on public services are thus intensifying. The regional block grant, or public expenditure settlement allocated by the British government exchequer, has been reduced by 10.2% since 2010. In addition, real term cuts to public funding are now factored into future budget profiles alongside actual net cuts in take home pay for public and private sector workers, welfare cuts, and higher inflation and living costs. Moreover, 108,600 adults in working families are living in relative poverty. Average wages in the north remain lower than ten years ago and more than one in four employees are paid less than the real living wage. Workers' rights and protections are being systematically reversed, in that precarious working conditions, zero hours' contracts and the scam of bogus self-employment used by some employers are in common practice. Brexit is thus set to deepen an existing economic and social race to the bottom by further undermining the potential for economic growth and new investment. The Brexit agenda, together with Tory austerity, threatens jobs across all economic sectors, workers' terms and conditions, and any potential for sustainable public services in the north.

An all-island 'perfect storm'

The challenges of Brexit also extend into the south of Ireland, where the inequality divide continues to deepen, notwithstanding its supposed recovery since the financial crash that destroyed the southern economy. Huge pay disparities, precarious working conditions and labour unrest, together with a lack of investment and resultant endemic crises in health and housing, are apparent. Four thousand children are made to sleep in temporary accommodation each week due to the lack of affordable housing in the southern state. In addition, the all-island economic activity, which has greatly expanded as a result of the Irish peace

process and has become a key driver for trade, investment and employment creation within the south, is now directly jeopardised by Brexit. Ireland, north and south, faces a perfect storm of adversity.

The dawning political and economic reality is that Brexit has changed everything. It has exposed the negative role that the partition of Ireland continues to play in Irish affairs and the fundamentally anti-democratic nature of the union with Britain. At the same time, the British state has been pushed into its own unprecedented, existential political crisis. Brexit has thus created a defining moment for Ireland and Britain, as all the established constitutional, political and economic assumptions about the status quo in Ireland have been swept away. International attention has also been refocused upon the democratic case for Irish unity and new political discussions have begun about the future of Ireland, both north and south, and the relationship between Britain and Ireland. Significantly, a seismic shift has occurred in the ambition and expectations of republican, nationalist and other progressively minded citizens in the north of Ireland. A new generation is thus questioning partition, with many within Irish society, north and south, looking beyond Brexit towards the prospect of accelerated Irish reunification.

Political unionism and the denial of rights

Partition is the central fault line at the heart of Irish society and politics. The country was partitioned in 1921 following the revolutionary years begun by the 1916 Easter Rising, which prompted a generation of Irishmen and women to demand national sovereignty and independence from Britain. Arising from a general election in 1918, Sinn Féin secured a landslide mandate in support of Irish national independence. Yet the British government, and a unionist minority in the north-eastern counties, refused to accept this democratic outcome. Consequently, Ireland was partitioned into two separate states made up of six counties in the north and twenty-six counties in the south.

Yet since its imposition, partition has been an abject failure. It was never designed to make the northern state a political or economic success. From the beginning, that state carried within it the conditions of inherent instability. It was built upon institutionalised and structural sectarianism, which

ensured that a substantial minority – specifically the Irish nationalist population – was destined never to be treated as equals. The Civil Rights Movement fifty years ago exposed the inability of the unionist state to treat the minority as equals. That belligerent opposition from powerful sections within political unionism against reform of the northern state persists today.

Such unionism is a political position that seeks to maintain the north of Ireland's constitutional status within Britain and comprises different components, including a form of broad-based civic unionism. However, the DUP represents the dominant force within unionism – and it has opposed implementation of the GFA and its promise of equality and rights since 1998. Refusal by the DUP to embrace a rights-based society and equality culminated in the collapse of the GFA political institutions – the north's regional government – in January 2017, and the associated political crisis that has continued since then. The nature of this crisis was clearly spelt out by Sinn Féin leader Martin McGuinness – who had held the position of Joint First Minister in the regional government since 2007 – in his resignation letter, in which he stated that,

The equality, mutual respect and all-Ireland approaches enshrined in the Good Friday Agreement have never been fully embraced by the DUP.

Apart from the negative attitude to nationalism and to the Irish identity and culture, there has been a shameful disrespect towards many other sections of our community. Women, the LGBT community and ethnic minorities have felt this prejudice. And for those who wish to live their lives through the medium of Irish, elements in the DUP have exhibited the most crude and crass bigotry.

In addition, during the preceding months it emerged that an ill-conceived green energy Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) scheme was seriously mismanaged by departments within the regional government held by DUP ministers, including the DUP leader Arlene Foster. This revelation was the latest in a series of financial scandals implicating the DUP, following Red Sky and NAMA, and thus represented the last straw for many republicans and other progressively minded citizens. Indeed, as a consequence of RHI, £500 million may be lost to the north's budget and

vital public services. Serious allegations that the scheme was open to abuse and corruption are now the subject of a public inquiry established by the former Sinn Féin Minister for Finance. This scandal threatens to destabilise for decades the financial basis of regional public services due to serious mismanagement and the parallel allegations of insider trading, aggressive commercial exploitation and corruption.

Between March 2017 and February 2018, five phases of consecutive negotiations occurred to try and re-establish the political institutions. On 9 February 2018, Sinn Féin and the DUP arrived at an advanced draft agreement, which provided the basis for restoration of the regional government. Five days later, the DUP unilaterally stepped away from that agreement and since then have refused to restore the political institutions on the basis equality and rights. It is thus clear that those currently in charge of the DUP do not support proper power-sharing. The party brand has become indistinguishable from financial scandal and sharp practice in government. As a party, the DUP is permanently in conflict with all accepted democratic reforms, social modernity and standards in public office. Its project is negative and tactical and entirely focused upon slowing down and blocking progressive change while maintaining hegemony within the unionist constituency.

This party is in denial about how society in Ireland, and even Britain, views its sectarian, homophobic and toxic pact with the Tories. The overwhelming majority of republicans, nationalists and many others, including sections of civic unionism, have concluded that the DUP has had its chance and cannot now be trusted in government. They will not be giving the DUP permission to get back into power at the risk of allowing it to continue practicing discrimination, intimidation, bigotry, or sharp practice.

Irish reunification has moved centre stage

British Tory government economic and political policy, supported by the DUP, has turned the north of Ireland into an economic and political backwater during the last ten years. The existing rights crisis is a direct by-product of these circumstances, to the extent that the GFA is now directly threatened by both the imposition of Brexit and the existence of the British Tory government/DUP pact. Widespread discontent now exists within the broader nationalist constituency and other sections of progressive opinion.

As well as playing negatively into the ongoing political crisis caused by the denial of citizens' rights and financial scandals in the north, Brexit has also moved the focus upon Irish reunification centre stage. Ireland's Future is an emerging rights-based pressure group that has sought to highlight the scale of political crisis in the north and also press the Irish government to fulfil its obligations under the GFA. It held a huge convention in Belfast in January this year and then another very significant event in May in Newry, County Down. The mood of this latest event was one of deep impatience and a feeling that the denial of citizens' rights must end in the north. Notably, it also evidenced how the popular discourse has moved towards a discussion about the need to design a rights-based framework within a new constitutional Irish national democracy. This impatience for change among northern nationalists is unprecedented, who are increasingly viewing the dynamic for meaningful change and delivery on democratic rights as beyond the northern state.

Brexit has thus changed everything. Not only has it unleashed constitutional and political flux in Ireland, this momentum is impacting in other parts of the British state. Brexit has taken a wrecking ball to the traditional make-up of the British state as previously defined and the political centre of gravity in Britain has been unanchored. For instance, the rise of narrow English nationalism has not abated and is responsible for injecting a new destabilising impetus. Nicola Sturgeon, First Minister in the Scottish Executive and leader of the Scottish National Party, has renewed her calls for another Scottish independence referendum. Indeed, Scottish independence is now set to re-emerge as a new dynamic. Similarly, previously unseen political change may also now be happening in Wales. A rally for Welsh national independence took place recently in Cardiff and was attended by many thousands. It was described by the organisers as the first such march in Welsh history. All these changes initiated by Brexit were thus given concrete expression in the recent European Parliamentary elections in Scotland and Wales.

Britain's border in Ireland has become an issue for the EU

The fallout from Brexit has also significantly influenced political discourse within the EU itself.

Indeed, Britain's border in Ireland has now become an EU issue and the level of interest in, and support for, constitutional change in Ireland is at an all-time high across the EU. The European Parliament and EU institutions have become strategically important arenas within which to promote the democratic aim of a united Ireland and to encourage international support for an Irish unity referendum.

Sinn Féin will continue lobbying and influencing to make the objective of Irish reunification a priority for the progressive left and other strands of democratic opinion represented in the European Parliament. All this comes at a time when Europe itself is at a crossroad. The political direction, policy orientation and increasing need for reform of the EU, paralleled with, and often fuelling the rise of extreme right-wing forces, present a serious threat to the principles of the progressive left. Social democracy has all but collapsed both politically and electorally across Europe. There is thus an urgent need to build a progressive left alternative throughout Europe and to popularise a new political narrative, based upon the vision of a social Europe, which is grounded upon economic democracy, human rights, climate safety, respect and equality.

Towards a New Ireland

In Ireland, the Irish unity debate had become part of the political mainstream. During the European Parliament election in the south of Ireland, RTE (the South's main broadcasting company) carried out an extensive exit poll, which reported that 77% of respondents said they would favour a united Ireland in an Irish unity referendum. Irish reunification has thus become the defining issue in Irish politics. Moreover, Brexit means that change in the political relations between Britain and Ireland is now unavoidable and, while partition never had any democratic legitimacy, its continued imposition is no longer sustainable. The partition of Ireland has run out of road.

As such, British government policy towards Ireland must change. Negative mismanagement of the Irish peace process and the GFA by successive British governments, and the particular pro-unionist bias of the Tory government since 2010, must be replaced with a recognition that the transition towards Irish unity should begin. Initially, that should take the form of preparing for an Irish unity referendum and by engaging in a new political discussion with the Irish government and all political parties in Ireland in relation to reunification.

For many in the British establishment, this will be an anathema. For those in the Tory Party leadership who have tied their electoral survival to an alliance with the DUP, this prospect may be unthinkable. However, it is time for historic, decisive and brave leadership to be shown by the British state. In parallel, the Irish government needs to begin to prepare for the constitutional, political and economic transition towards Irish unity.

As such, Green Paper on Irish unity should be published detailing the constitutional, political, fiscal and economic measures for a successful transition to a united Ireland. A joint Oireachtas (the two houses of the Irish parliament), all-party committee on Irish unity should be established. The Irish government should also commence discussions with the EU Commission and institutions to explore their practical role and support in facilitating an efficient process of reunification.

It should facilitate an open and inclusive national conversation on Irish unity involving all citizens, political parties, social partners and civic society. This dialogue about our collective future in Ireland should address all the concerns, accommodations and compromises relevant to negotiating a new, all-Ireland, pluralist, constitutional democracy. Within this context, the wider international community also has an important role to play by forging a progressive, strategic axis that both endorses the need for an Irish unity referendum and commits to supporting the successful completion of Irish reunification and national self-determination for the Irish people. ■

Declan Kearney
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Crucified on a Cross of Gold:

The Rise of Populism

> Populism is a movement within a democracy and refers to a sense that an elite of some kind has stolen democracy from some wider grouping within society, usually called the 'people'.
>
> By Michael Prior

The political structures of both Europe and North America are in a state of turmoil, owing to what is usually referred to in the press as an upsurge of populism. This turmoil has been a recurring theme in past issues of *The Thinker* and was recently explored last year by Anver Saloojee (2008). It is often characterised by the rise of new political parties and previously unknown leaders.

Political shifts are occurring in many parts of the world. Trump and Macron – non-politicians – have become presidents of two of the world's largest economies. The populist Five Star Movement, which was fronted by comedian Beppe Grillo until it came to power, is in government in Italy. Andrej Babiš, a businessman and entrepreneur, became Prime Minister of the Czech Republic only three years after entering politics. Syriza is in government in Greece. The Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) and the Greens now take a significant share of the vote in Germany. Hungary and Poland are

ruled by populist and illiberal parties. The new Ukrainian President is Volodymyr Zelensky, whose previous political experience consisted of playing a Presidential candidate in a television sit-com. Among the emerging markets, Brazil has recently installed a far-right President, Jair Bolsonaro, and Mexico, a far-left President, Andres Lopez Obrador. Pakistan is now ruled by former cricket captain Imran Kahn.

These new parties combine policies that traditional parties would not, they are organised differently to traditional parties, and they are led by people who would not be in charge of traditional parties and who say things that traditional politicians would not. They pride themselves on being outsiders, setting themselves apart from incumbent elites. The parties portray themselves as democracies opposed to corporatism and the vested interests that have captured government and the old, incumbent parties. Indeed, even the names of the new parties indicate their purpose. In Germany, the extremist AfD translates as Alternative for Germany, President Macron's party, En Marche! (the exclamation mark is apparently required) simply means Forward, whilst Imran Khan's Tehreek-e-Insaf means Movement for Justice.

In South Africa, the rise and fall of ex-President Zuma can be seen to exhibit both the strengths and the weaknesses of populist movements, in that Zuma rose to power on the back of populist demands such as free university education and his attacks on an elite within the ANC - and fell because of his notorious corruption. The rise of Julius Malema and his Economic Freedom Fighters may be seen as current evidence of populism in South African politics. In his election campaign, Malema made a point of attacking 'racist white farmers, corrupt politicians, the rich and the powerful' (quoted in Conway-Smith, 2019), which reflects usual populist rhetoric about the capture of democracy by an elite group.

Although this political turmoil is world-wide, it is important to distinguish populism from popular uprisings such as the Arab Spring or recent events in Sudan. Populism is a movement within a democracy and refers to a sense that an elite of some kind has stolen democracy from some wider grouping within society, usually called the 'people'. The sense of the term originated at the end of the

> **❝** These new parties combine policies that traditional parties would not, they are organised differently to traditional parties, and they are led by people who would not be in charge of traditional parties and who say things that traditional politicians would not. They pride themselves on being outsiders, setting themselves apart from incumbent elites. **❞**

nineteenth century in the USA by the Peoples' or Populist Party, a largely agrarian movement led by William Jennings Bryan who, in a famous flight of rhetoric concerning the rather technical demand for currency bimetallism, attacked the financial and political elite, who in turn wanted to maintain a currency backed by gold. Bryan declared that,

Having behind us the producing masses of this nation and the world, supported by the commercial interests, the laboring interests, and the toilers everywhere, we will answer their demand for a gold standard by saying to them: You shall not press down upon the brow of labor this crown of thorns; you shall not crucify mankind upon a cross of gold.

One problem in characterising these new political formations is that they do not fall neatly into the left/right axis that is broadly used to define European political parties based upon their economic policies. Marianne Le Pen's Fronte National party (renamed National Rally) is usually described as 'far-right', even though many of its economic policies would conventionally be seen as further left of the neo-liberal market policies of President Macron's En Marche! party. Although their policies seem to be confused and sometimes internally contradictory, they usually involve budgetary expansion and tax-cuts and are hostile towards the globalisation of economic policies. Indeed, hostility to global financial interests is a common feature, even if attacks on bankers in general are often combined with racist attacks on 'Jew bankers'.

The apparent concern of new populist parties lies with the financial plight of the 'common man', which has led to the collapse of the traditional social-democratic left in many European countries rather than the populist 'right' making similar inroads in the conservative right-wing groups. In an ominous historical parallel, it needs to be

> **" In an ominous historical parallel, it needs to be remembered that Hitler named his party National Socialist and that Mussolini was originally a leading member of the Italian Socialist Party, whilst Oswald Mosley, the British Fascist leader, was elected as a Labour member of Parliament. "**

remembered that Hitler named his party National Socialist and that Mussolini was originally a leading member of the Italian Socialist Party, whilst Oswald Mosley, the British Fascist leader, was elected as a Labour member of Parliament.

It is also true that some of the new parties, such as the Five Star Movement in Italy, Syriza in Greece and Podemos in Spain, are sometimes called left-populist because they largely, though not entirely, eschew the anti-immigrant racism that characterises the 'right' populist parties.

The recent elections to the European Parliament illustrate the extent to which the new populist parties have grown and how the traditional centre-left and centre-right have been eroded. In these elections, the Social Democrat bloc lost 46 of their seats, reduced to 145, whilst the European People's bloc, the home of the German Christian Democrats, lost 41 seats, down to 180. The Conservative and Reformers bloc containing the British Conservatives lost 11 seats, reducing them to 59. This latter result was largely down to the obliteration of the Conservatives, who lost 16 of their 20 seats. The principal winners in the election were not, however, the far-right nationalists, but rather the Green parties, which gained a total of 19 seats from a base of 50, and a mélange of centrist liberal parties, including the ALDE bloc, which gained 109 seats, a rise of 42. Of course, the two main centre-right and centre-left blocs remain the largest groups, but they no longer have any majority in the Parliament and will have to seek various kinds of alliance when it comes to the crucial elections of various officials within the European Commission.

A closer look at particular countries does, however, confirm the collapse of traditional parties, particularly on the left. For instance, in Germany, the once dominant Social Democrats (SDP) were reduced to third place, losing 11 seats and almost being overtaken by the neo-fascist AfD, which won 11 seats compared to the SPD's 16. In France

and Greece, the traditional left has effectively disappeared. In Italy, the Social Democrats were comfortably beaten into second place by the Liga, once a regional party, and were almost overtaken by the Five Star Movement. It was not all bad news for the traditional left; in the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and Portugal, these parties held on to a dominant position but, overall, it was a bad night for them.

Perhaps the strangest result of all was in the United Kingdom, where, enmeshed as the country is in a protracted withdrawal from the EU, a party formed barely four months before and led by Nigel Farage, a man who is widely characterised as a cartoon buffoon, swept the board taking 29 of its 73 seats. The Labour Party limped in at third place, behind the centrist Liberal Democrats, whilst the ruling Conservatives crashed to fifth behind the Green Party.

It remains very unclear as to just where the disintegration of the traditional left/right political structure in Europe will lead. The same concerns apply to the USA, in the binary pairing of Republican, broadly conservative, and Democrat,

Leader of the Brexit Party Nigel Farage addresses a large crowd on Parliament Square, Westminster, London on 29 March 2019.
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broadly progressive. The huge proliferation of potential Democratic contenders for the next Presidential elections suggests a major fracturing of usual alliances.

This collapse of political structures is not a recent phenomenon but has instead been gaining momentum for some time. In 2007, Peter Mair (2013), a British political scientist, wrote about the wider context of political parties:

> A tendency to dissipation and fragmentation also marks the broader organizational environment within which the classic mass parties used to nest. As workers' parties, or as religious parties, the mass organizations in Europe rarely stood on their own, but constituted just the core element within a wider and more complex organizational network of trade unions, churches and so on. Beyond the socialist and religious parties, additional networks of farming groups, business associations and even social clubs combined with political organizations to create a generalized pattern of social and political segmentation that helped to root the parties in the society and to stabilize and distinguish their electorates. Over at least the past thirty years, however, these broader networks have been breaking up. In part, this is because of a weakening of the sister organizations themselves, with churches, trade unions and other traditional forms of association losing both members and strength of engagement. With the increasingly individualization of society, traditional collective identities and organizational affiliations count for less, including those that once formed part of party-centred networks.

He concluded that:

> Voters in contemporary Europe may still

> 66 It remains very unclear as to just where the disintegration of the traditional left/right political structure in Europe will lead. The same concerns apply to the USA, in the binary pairing of Republican, broadly conservative, and Democrat, broadly progressive. The huge proliferation of potential Democratic contenders for the next Presidential elections suggests a major fracturing of usual alliances. 99

be willing to locate themselves in left-right terms, and may even be willing to locate the parties in the same dimension, but the meanings associated with these distinctions are becoming increasingly diverse and confused. In part, this is due to the policy convergence between parties; in part also, to the often contradictory signals emerging from post-communist Europe, whereby the traditional left position is often seen as the most conservative. In another respect, it has to do with the new challenge of liberalism, and the increasingly heterogeneous coalition that has begun to define leftness in anti-imperial or anti-American terms, bringing together former communists, religious fundamentalists and critical social movements within what may appear to be a unified ideological camp. In this context, meanings are no longer shared and the implications of political stances on the left or on the right become almost unreadable.

Yet the question remains: What does the future hold? The only possible answer is no-one knows. Perhaps the unexpected upsurge in Green votes suggests that the people of Europe recognise that the biggest problem they face is that of climate change and of coping with the surge in displaced peoples, many of whom will see Europe as a place of refuge. As the countries of Europe have been, historically, a major contributor towards climate change, it has to bear its share of responsibility for the outcome. Perhaps.

As long-suffering readers of *The Thinker* will know, the writer has the habit of placing his hopes and fears into the songs his choir is singing. This month we are still singing Hamish Henderson's wonderful anthem of hope, Freedom Come All Ye. His words are the best conclusion:

> So come a ye at hame wi' Freedom,
> Never heed whit the hoodies croak for doom.
> In your hoose a' the bairns o' Adam
> Can find breid, barley-bree and painted room.

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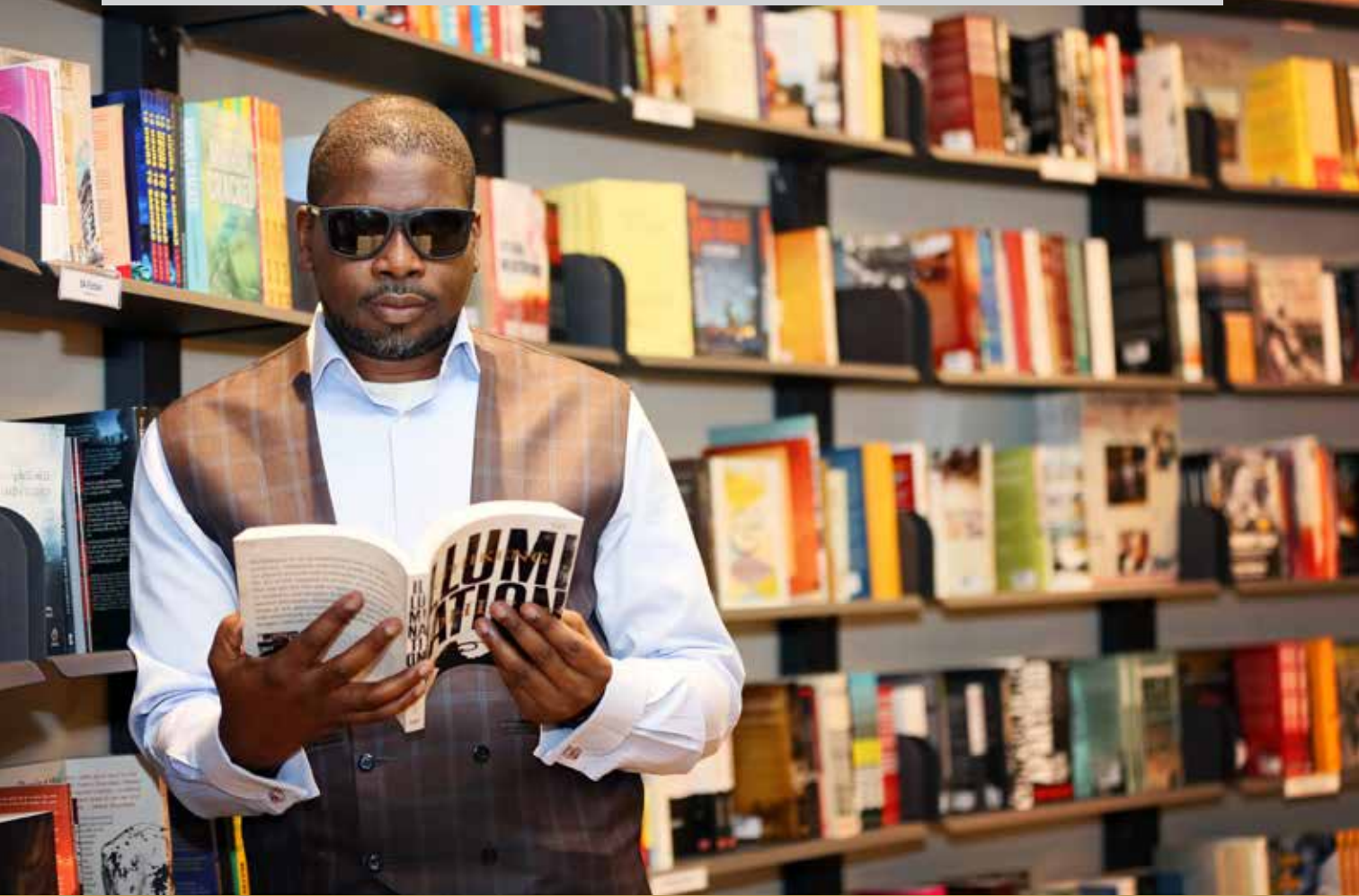
Nthikeng Mohlele

Ronit Frenkel (RF): *You have emerged as one of the most talented young South African writers over the last number of years, with your novels winning prizes and gaining a following of readers who eagerly await your next offering. Can you talk a bit about what this journey of 'becoming,' to use Michele Obama's phrase, has been like for you?*

Nthikeng Mohlele (NM): The journey has been unpredictable, fraught with artistic and personal thrills as well as disappointments. Learning, too. One enters and participates in artistic disciplines as a novice, carves what is hopefully a niche, and commits to self-education and expression in a vast and often competitive realm of literature and writing. As to the nature and range of that becoming: a writer does not happen in isolation and therefore reflects dominant social and artistic tropes, past and present. The growth is multi-faceted – artistic, intellectual, spiritual –

and includes the development of certain moral sensitivities across time. Because literature demands rigor and exactitude, as do other art forms, the path to creative becoming was and is characterised by bouts of isolation, of a deliberate effort to develop and nurture deep and analytical thinking and ponderous reflection.
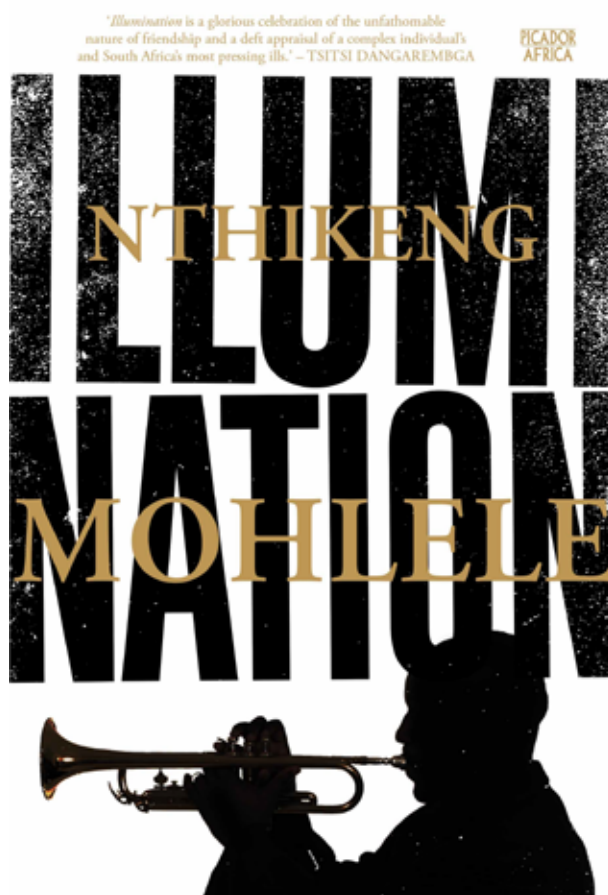
RF: *Turning to your books, I thought I would start by asking you about your writing process. How do you start off? With a theme, an idea or a character? Where do your ideas come from and how do they take shape?*

NM: I work on an emotive, colour palette and musical planes – and words become but an avenue to illuminate these aforesaid creative triggers. I never want to know in any measure of exhaustive or planned detail what my novels are or will become, for the conscious reason that predetermination of theme, character and plot lines stifle creative spontaneity. It would be pointless for me create within known restrictions and self-imposed boundaries — which is a recipe for dry and lethargic writing. This is a personal instinct/sentiment, of course, and varies from one artist to the next.

RF: *Can you walk me through some of the connections and differences between your six novels? Your first novel, The Scent of Bliss (2008) is fairly different to what you have written after. What was your intent here?*

NM: There are subtle connections and divergent distinctions among my books. The backbone and basic DNA that runs across all of them is of course thematic, but also a disposition to the philosophical. There is the obvious evolution of writing development in terms of maturation of craft, distillation of a narrative voice, and the human growth owing to an array of wisdoms that

> ❝My biased view is that it is a timeless and universal novel and can be read in multiple cultures and contexts. The book is important to me because it in many ways also answers the false argument that the demise of apartheid meant leaner thematic pickings for writers in the new South Africa.❞

'*Illumination* is a glorious celebration of the unfathomable nature of friendship and a deft appraisal of a complex individual's and South Africa's most pressing ills.' – TSITSI DANGAREMBGA

PICADOR AFRICA

NTHIKENG

ILLUMINATION

MOHLELE

come with advancing age. The overarching intent is to produce competent literature, meaning the choices and omissions become secondary to that grand personal and artistic purpose. There are, of course, preoccupations with thematic focus areas, such as love and romance, human mortality, the sensual and erotic, power and the political, existentialism and history across all my novels, which are all written in the first-person except for The Scent of Bliss.

RF: *Small Things came next in 2013 and introduced music as a theme into your novels. It is also a 'city novel' in some ways. It is also beautifully tragic. What shifted your narrative voice here?*

NM: The shift in narrative voice resulted from the novel being overtly political in sense, but also being concerned with the specificity of place, of Johannesburg as a metropolis, a historic city, a melting pot of African and world cultures. Two tensions define this novel: that of past history and an embryonic South African future. There was a necessary complexity to the voice, in that the

narrative arc marks the end of an era, the collapse of the apartheid state and the aftermath and cold shadow of its policies.

RF: *Rusty Bell was published only one year later and also seems to mark an acceleration in the pace of your writing – and you are certainly prolific. Your protagonist was once again a fairly tragic character. What is the connection between these two novels?*

NM: The common thread is the often diametrical oppositions and tensions between societies and individuals. The question of personal agency versus societal norms and expectations illuminate levels of psychosis evident in the respective lead characters in the novels, which is not itself new in literature; it varies from one author to the next. Tragedy marks many aspects of human existence, as so ably demonstrated by the popularity and timelessness of Shakespeare, for instance. The same applies to Wole Soyinka's use of the Fourth Wall in relation to Yoruba mythology and tragedy and Sophocles in the realm of Greek tragedies.

RF: *Pleasure (2016) is widely regarded not only as your masterpiece, but as a literary masterpiece in general (I must confess that it is one of my favourite books). It won The University of Johannesburg's Prize for writing in English and The K. Sello Duiker Memorial literary award. It was also long listed for The International Dublin literary award. What are your thoughts on this book and the attention it has garnered?*

NM: I am most humbled by the attention the novel received. Pleasure is by far a major departure from my other fiction in that it is a conceptual novel. In other words, it frames, investigates and analyses various realms and manifestations of pleasure within a pocket of past and present time.

> ❝ The novel is intertextual by nature and design, an important systematic and intellectual marriage and counter dialogue between texts. This is because literature does not exist in a vacuum and texts of the future are in many ways texts of the past, precisely because there is nothing completely new in the universe. Art is similarly cyclical and repetitive, prone to multiple readings and audiences. ❞

The writing and development process demanded painstaking research and sober reflection, to anatomise World War 2 history and that of the Third Reich. My biased view is that it is a timeless and universal novel and can be read in multiple cultures and contexts. The book is important to me because it in many ways also answers the false argument that the demise of apartheid meant leaner thematic pickings for writers in the new South Africa.

RF: *Michael K (2018) was written as a dialogue with J.M. Coetzee's The Life and Times of Michael K. How does this novel reflect some of the ideas from your other books and what was your intention in forming this dialogue with Coetzee?*

NM: There are specific creative registers between Michael K and my other novels, namely the poetry and music motifs, exploration of history, and a strong interplay between narrative fiction and philosophy (as a system of thought and as an analytical tool to create multiple consciousness). The novel is intertextual by nature and design, an important systematic and intellectual marriage and counter dialogue between texts. This is because literature does not exist in a vacuum and texts of the future are in many ways texts of the past, precisely because there is nothing completely new in the universe. Art is similarly cyclical and repetitive, prone to multiple readings and audiences.

RF: *Your 2019 book, Illuminations, has an interesting relationship to Small Things in terms of music. Was this an intentional circling around to write another layer onto the narrative or do you see it as departure from Small Things?*

NM: It is another layer to Small Things. I wanted to write a proper jazz novel, an in-depth exploration of music as a theme and artistic discipline. This theme was only marginally touched on in Small Things.

RF: *You are clearly a writer who is not afraid to take risks with your iconoclastic writing. What can we expect next from you?*

NM: I have no idea. I am enjoying motion pictures and documentaries at the moment. I am catching up on reading and might pick up something worth exploring in the near or distant future. ∎

An extract from *Illumination* —

I am, when all the applause has died down, when the drum kit is disassembled and the guitars are encased when silence falls and blankets the auditoriums of performance halls, engulfed by bouts of loneliness. It takes my bands months, even years, to understand that I am not a talker, that I never have been. My life is in my head – its estimations, the violent waves that wash onto its beaches, its fine sands, its salty waters throwing seashells into view. The Listening Room is an extension of my musical instincts. It is also very much a space for reflection and meditation, a theatre upon whose stage my emotional spillages are let loose, resulting in the yanking of curtains off the rails and toothpick assaults on thighs. I come here to witness myself, like you peer at your facial reflection in still river waters. The room has also become a cathedral of transformations, wherein I come doubting this or that discovery and leave with convictions of stone. I allow my mind to burrow so deep into itself that some thoughts become dangerously fragmented, or crystallize into lighting strikes that set fire to life and art in equal measure.

There are days or late nights when I listen to silence, when not a single recording crosses my mind, when all I hear is a thudding heartbeat or, in extreme moments of focus, perspiration escaping pores and climbing skin hair on hot and musty evenings, when the determination to entrap and own silence is greater than the discomfort and irritation of summer heat. I, in that near-complete silence, listen to the pulse of the nation: marvel at its triumphs, frown at its cruelties, embrace its imperfections. Intent listening has its benefits: I hear, for instance, the minutest click of the metal hooks when a breeze brushes the curtains, boiling water seep into a teabag and the smallest tea leaves release their aroma and flavour into a tea cup with immediacy and colour, or my rather costly wristwatch tick in modest and underrated ways to chase, record and report on the time. I can hear, on days that I recover from a bout of influenza, pressure build and dissipate in both eardrums, or my nostrils (after insistent blowing) sound their nasal sirens as announcement of a return to good health.

It has been more than ten years' worth of thoughts in The Listening Room: thoughts related to music and art in general; reflections on history and nature; musings about the intercourse between migrating birds (how are their feelings and lusts worked out, the mathematical algorithms of desire while in motion to warmer climes?); ponderings about the nature and sanctity of great ideas (they do not belong in shopping malls or cemeteries, for instance; not in crowded city parks or in the heads of fighter pilots); about the perfect symmetry and timeless beauty of piano keys; and, wait, on the more existential side of things, I have thought about the many faces you wear in a lifetime. For, even if it's a known face, with improvements and deformities it might encounter in its life journey, it is not the same face, not the same expressions mark such a face, for faces have mastered countless masks and counter masks, pointed revelations in front of prosecutors, clergymen, rivals, would-be assassins, former lovers, sexual superiors, law-enforcers, photographers, admired grandparents or the babbling babies of strangers. There is a face for bowing to an appreciative audience after a magnetic trumpet solo, a face for pleading with an unyielding banker, a face and shyness (or is that shame?) to strangers we find appealing to a point of impure thoughts.

There are also millions of other faces, of course: ones to denote sympathy to people we hate, those upon whom we wish cancers or death by strangulation, or faces reserved for a fatherin-law or those with a potential to betray our deepest secrets. There are faces to communicate terrible but not illegal things: foul breath, erections triggered by inappropriate conversations and persons in public spaces, certain low-key scandals of the marital and narcotic kind. Essentially, life is a series, a myriad of intoxicating and unfathomable transformations, from the moment you are eased down the birth canal through the many detours and afflictions that seem to emerge out of thin air. I am keenly aware of those faces I value above all the others: meditative, seductive, reclusive faces.
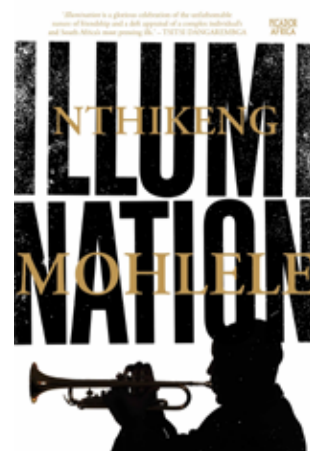
Who is the Real 'Gap'?:

Reviewing Fiona Snyckers' Lacuna.

By Danyela Demir
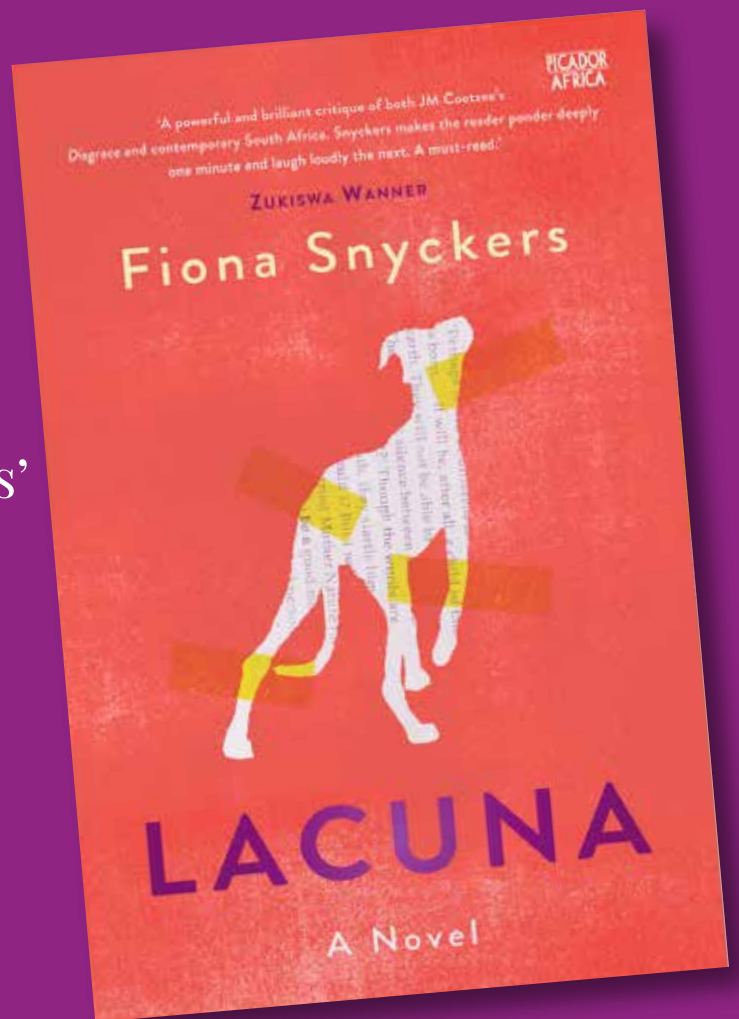
I n her illuminating book *White Women Writing White: Identity and Representation in (Post)-Apartheid South African Literatures* (2009), Mary West convincingly argues that,

> [...] despite official efforts to realign racial politics, whiteness in South Africa continues to exude a powerful sense of normativity. This normativity has recently been overlaid with defensiveness, an ambivalent combination that resists rather than assists the process of reconciliation, and in many ways deepens the racial divisions. (pp. 12-13)

West analyses (post)-apartheid texts that were largely written during the first decade of post-democratic South Africa, ranging from novels by Pamela Jooste and Susan Man to short stories by Nadine Gordimer and Marlene van Niekerk and poetry by Karen Press. West's main thesis is that white women writers find themselves in a 'double bind' (p. 29), oscillating between fighting the injustices of apartheid and simultaneously reproducing the very racist structures they write against. She argues that some writers fair better than others in this endeavor (p. 17). Although

Fiona Snyckers' novel *Lacuna* (2019), a response to J. M. Coetzee's *Disgrace* (1999), seems to have the intention of dismantling racist structures by attempting to be critically white, I was reminded of West's remarks on what has been labelled as the 'post-apartheid weepy'. Using examples of works by writers such as Pamela Jooste and Susan Man, West states that these texts are often characterised by 'the discourse of privilege (reliant on cliche and emerging as normative)' (p. 6).

Snyckers' novel, in contrast to Coetzee's *Disgrace*, which tells the story from David Lourie's point of view, has Lucy, David's daughter, who is gang raped by five Black men whilst visiting her father's farm, as the protagonist. Lucy's ordeal, which is sidelined in *Disgrace*, thus becomes central in Snyckers' text. One might argue that *Lacuna* is a feminist response to *Disgrace*, in which Lucy, due to the fact that the novel is focalised through David's perspective, has little narrative space. However, Snyckers' text is highly flawed and can ultimately be read as a patronising text that has very little to do with the reality of the majority of this country and people of colour in general.

The main reason for why the novel fails becomes clear both in the title and in the beginning of the book. Lucy tells the readers that she has been gang raped on her father's farm and that a colleague of hers at the English department of the imaginary University of Constantia, named John Coetzee, has used her story as foil for his novel *Disgrace*. Lucy further explains, and elaborates throughout the novel, that she is the lacuna in the novel. She contends that Lucy in *Disgrace* has no agency and is only used as a vessel to birth the brown child, conceived through rape, who will save South Africa's future (28-29). Whether one agrees with this interpretation of *Disgrace* is less of importance to me than whether Lucy can be called a lacuna at all. I argue that Lucy is not, in fact, the actual lacuna in *Disgrace*. On the contrary, she makes her own decisions. They might not be comprehensible or logical to the readers, but she refuses to bow down to her father's insistence that she must talk about the rape, that she should report the rape, that she must leave the farm, or that she should consider aborting the baby. No, in *Disgrace* the lacuna is not the white woman as Snyckers would have us believe. Coetzee's lacuna is the voice of the Black woman and the woman of colour: Soraya,

Melanie, and a nameless Black sex worker, who David picks up from the side of the road towards the end of the novel, are the voiceless, the women without agency. The most prominent example here is perhaps Melanie, the student whom David rapes. Melanie hardly speaks and her actions are determined by David or her overly protective boyfriend or her religious father. The readers know nothing about Melanie other than what David Lourie chooses to tell us about her.

As much as Melanie is the lacuna in *Disgrace*, she is a mere speck of dust in Snyckers' text. Melanie's rape is referred to as 'the misunderstanding with the female student' (p. 111) when Lucy explains that her father took early retirement from university. What must I, as a female reader of colour, make of this but a cruel reminder by a white woman that white women's bodies are more valuable than ours? Lucy's ordeal is 247 pages long while Melanie's rape is referred to as a 'misunderstanding'. Some critics might argue that this is irony, that this is an attempt at holding up a mirror, but as I will outline below, the author is highly didactic and tells us when Lucy attempts to be critical, is an unreliable narrator, or when she is crying tears. In the only two moments during which Melanie is mentioned in the novel, there is nothing of that reflexive tone, no irony or ambivalence. If anything, this is an example of what Mary West aptly calls a 'double bind'. To add insult to injury, it is, as the readers find out at the end of the novel, at a Black women's expense that Lucy writes her story at all. Thus the Black women and the women of colour can only be two things in Snyckers' text: the neglected casualty of a white man's rape or the educator. The black women here is the means to empower the spoiled, teary-eyed and unreflective white woman, which is not very different from how women of colour are described in Coetzee's novel.

The novel is also highly problematic on an aesthetic level. Lucy is, as she tells the readers from the onset, an unreliable narrator:

> I am untrustworthy. But I'm the only access you have to this story. My lens is the only one through which you are permitted to peek. Does that make you feel unsafe? I bet you'd prefer a calm, authoritative, third-person narrator to set the facts out for you. Neutrality is a man's job, after all. (p. 14)

I suggest that this quote is a direct challenge to

Coetzee's text, which is focalised through a man's gaze, written in the third person. Although the text is perhaps further intending to show that survivors of rape are seldom believed by using the device of unreliable narration, it comes across as self-evident. This is due to the fact that little room for imagination is left to the readers, for Lucy does not fail to tell us when she lied about something after we have been subjected to a few pages of a scenario imagined by her, whether it is an imagined trial of her rapists or what her psychologist supposedly tells her, for example.

It is not that Lucy is not self-critical, but even those moments are more likely to be found in a 101 textbook on critical whiteness than in real life and thus the didactic tone of the novel is reinforced. The examples are endless, reaching from Lucy's virtual conversations with her white, vegan lover, to her encounter with the Black sociologist at the end of the novel, but a case in point is Lucy's conversation with a Black man at a robot:

> My door isn't locked. As a hawker approaches, I slide my hand sideways and lock the door with a clicking sound that reverberates up and down the street. The man motions for me to roll down my window, which I do.
>
> 'You locked your door as I approached,' he says. 'Would you have done that for a white man?'
>
> 'Of course. One is always vulnerable at intersections. It had nothing to do with the fact that you are black.'
>
> He stares at me in silence. The interrogation in his gaze unmans me. Unwomans me.
>
> 'You're right,' I say. 'It had everything to do with the fact that you are black. I profile black people all the time, especially black men. I associate them with criminality.'
>
> 'And how do you suppose that makes me feel?'
>
> 'Hurt. Abused. Angry. Overwhelmed by frustration and a sense of injustice.'
>
> 'Precisely.' (pp. 165-66).

The conversation continues for several lines. While reading this passage, I was asking myself which middleclass white woman has ever had such a conversation with a Black hawker at the traffic lights. The textbook phrases are overwhelming and seem to mock Black people's daily experiences of racism and white fear, and the affect of repulsion on black bodies rather than being a self-reflection on Lucy's part. Again, this reminds me of Mary West's thesis that white women's writing is marked by a slippage between the attempt at writing against structures of racism and simultaneously maintaining these very structures in their own text. Black men in Snyckers' novel feature as either rapists or poor salespeople who scrape a meager living on Cape Town's streets, which is just as violent a form of reproducing stereotypes as can be seen in her representation of Black women and women of colour.

Apart from these rather problematic aspects concerning race, the novel is, to my mind, also flawed on the level of plot. From the beginning of the story right through to the end, Lucy is obsessed with J. M. Coetzee's representation of her story in *Disgrace*. John Coetzee, the character who is supposed to resemble the writer J. M. Coetzee in *Lacuna*, is a professor while Lucy is a PhD student and contract lecturer. Both work at the English department of the University of Constantia. Lucy attempts to find John Coetzee and imagines multiple ways of confronting him about having twisted her story and about how unjustly she feels that she has been represented. She is also resentful of his global success as a writer at her expense. This obsession with John Coetzee overshadows the problematic relationship between Lucy and David, which, in an unexpected and somewhat contrived twist of plot, turns out to be nightmarish and almost monstrous. The readers are left to wonder as to how David's violent betrayal of his daughter seems to have a lesser psychological impact than John Coetzee's fictionalisation of her rape.

The novel was perhaps an attempt at writing back to Coetzee's text, to construct a feminist version of Lucy, but Snyckers' feminist version of Coetzee's novel is a glaring example of privileged white feminism at the expense of racial and class justice. Thus it ultimately fails, for as Flavia Dzodan aptly reminds us, 'My feminism will be intersectional or it will be bullshit' (Tiger Beatdown, 2011). ∎

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REVIEW:
Ardent to be Understood.

A Collection of Speeches, Articles and Remarks by His Excellency Lin Songtian, China's Ambassador

(Embassy of the People's Republic of China in South Africa: Pretoria, 2019)

By Emmanuel Matambo

In 2019, the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in South Africa compiled a collection of 28 speeches made by Lin Songtian, China's ambassador to South Africa. According to the Embassy, this collection was gathered 'in order to promote mutual understanding on China, South Africa and their relations and policies' and to help readers 'gain a better understanding of China, China-South Africa and China-Africa relations' (p. i). Ambassador Lin Songtian is a seasoned Chinese envoy to Africa who over the past 20 years has worked in Zambia, Liberia, Malawi and now South Africa. An animated orator, Lin is committed to deepening Sino-African relations. One of the aims of his mission in South Africa is to ensure that Chinese entrepreneurs, academics and others in a position of financial strength commit themselves to providing scholarships for deserving South African students to study in China. Read within this context, the speeches compiled in the catalogue under review appear to come from a man who not only strives to fortify Sino-African relations, but who is also acutely aware of the onerous task of convincing Africans that China has benign intentions towards Africa. Upon arrival in South Africa to commence his current responsibility, Ambassador Lin told his audience about how, during his previous responsibilities in China and Africa, he 'spared no efforts to promote the upgrading of China-Africa friendly and mutually beneficial cooperation' (p.25).

This review will first present a summary of the speeches and then offer an appraisal. The 28 speeches are divided into four chapters. The first chapter, comprising 13 speeches, includes those that address China-South Africa and China-Africa relations. Though formalised just a little over 20 years ago, China-South Africa relations have grown tremendously, both in terms of economic ties and political leanings. The two countries seek to deepen 'political mutual trust, mutually beneficial cooperation, people-to-people friendship, and international coordination' (p. 54). China is currently South Africa's largest source of foreign investment. As Lin notes, 'In 2017 bilateral trade grew by 11.7% to 39.17 billion US dollars, a more than 20-fold increase from the figure at the beginning of diplomatic relations' (p. 12). President Xi Jinping has visited South Africa perhaps more than any other country and Lin states that in January 2018, President

Xi Jinping and South Africa's former President Jacob Zuma 'held nine bilateral meetings' (p. 3). Ambassador Lin describes China as 'a reliable, productive, beneficial partner to South Africa' (p. 11). Sino-South African relations are evidenced in the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), the economic bloc comprising Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) and the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). No other country on the African continent is connected with China to this extent.

Yet, the growth of China-South Africa relations is proportionate to the deepening relationship between Africa and China. In 2000, at the formation of FOCAC, Sino-African trade was only $10 billion. In 2017, it stood at $170 billion. Chinese investment in the same timeframe increased from $1 billion to over $100 billion. However, China-South Africa relations are not spared the criticism that is usually levelled against China-Africa relations. Thus, observers and interested parties have been split into Sino-optimists and Sino-pessimists. State actors from both China and Africa have had to dispel rumours that the China-Africa nexus portends disaster for Africa and is characterised by duplicity on the part of China. One such rumour, which the ambassador tackles, was an article that was published in Le Monde, a French newspaper, that claimed that China was wiretapping information from the Chinese-built African Union (AU) Headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. To rebut such rumours, Lin, like many politicians from Africa and China, explained China's history of solidarity with Africa – one that extends from the Cold War. For instance, the Tanzania-Zambia Railway (TAZARA), which was built with Chinese funds and labour from Zambia's Kapiri Mposhi district to the port of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania, stands today as an iconic manifestation of China's commitment to Africa's struggle against colonial and settler dependency, even though 65 Chinese nationals perished during its construction.

Apart from wistful references to past commitments as a way of refuting negative reportage on current China-Africa relations, African and Chinese media can play a significant role. Shortly after taking up his position in South Africa, Lin gave a speech at the China-Africa Media Forum. He identified three roles that the

media can play in shaping perceptions of the China-Africa nexus. The first is promoting Sino-African friendship and safeguarding intersecting China-Africa interests. The second is to narrate stories that correlate with the real China-Africa amity, which can only be done when Chinese and African media organs have gained enough influence to rival dominant media houses that have global influence. The third role that the media can play, which is partly related to the first, is 'to identify opportunities of China-Africa cooperation, and promote our mutually beneficial cooperation' (p. 33).

An impressive litany of Chinese-sponsored infrastructure in Africa, including the Addis Ababa-Djibouti Railway, the Mombasa-Nairobi Railway, the Abuja-Kaduna Rail (in Nigeria) and a host of power plants, schools, sports stadiums and parliamentary buildings, enhances China's reputation as a dependable partner in building and improving infrastructure in Africa. President Xi Jinping told his envoys that, 'in conducting China's relations with Africa, we must adhere to the principles of sincerity, practical results, affinity and good faith and uphold the values of friendship, justice and shared interests' (pp. 7-8). Despite these assurances, Lin is still mindful of the fact that there will always be those who argue that China's intentions in Africa are not amicable. Yet the third FOCAC Summit of September 2018, held in Beijing, demonstrated that Sino-African relations are continuing in earnest. Indeed, the Summit was titled 'China and Africa: Toward an Even Stronger Community with a Shared Future through Win-Win Cooperation'. China has also pledged $60 billion to Africa in terms of investment, loans and assistance.

The second chapter includes four speeches that address the BRI and BRICS. The year 2018 was particularly significant for China-South Africa relations as the two countries celebrated 20 years of formal recognition. Moreover, the tenth BRICS summit was held in July 2018 in South Africa, with President Xi Jinping in attendance. It is an open secret that China played a seminal role in South Africa's inclusion in BRIC, which happened in 2010. Lin states that, 'BRICS cooperation has transcended the old mentality of drawing lines according to ideology and has walked a path of mutual respect and common progress' (p. 73). BRICS represents

countries that have been described as 'emerging powers' with considerable influence in their respective regions, i.e. Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America. The five members also account for slightly over 40% of the global population.

Lin # also made note of how BRICS has contributed to issues beyond the scope of the five countries involved by working closely with, and within, bodies such as the United Nations and the G20 and by adhering to global targets, ranging from the Millennium Development Goals and the Sustainable Development Goals to combatting ecological hazards. In economic terms, BRICS posts some impressive figures: by 2018, the total GDP of BRICS had grown by a 179%, 'trade expanded by 94%, and urban population increased by 28%' (p. 79). To describe the symbiotic relationship that the BRICS countries have, Lin (p. 80) drew an analogy between the five BRICS members and the fingers of one hand: 'each one is different, but they all complement each other'.

The second part of the second chapter deals with the BRI, which was initially known as the One Belt One Road. The initiative was proposed in September and October of 2013 during Xi Jinping's visits to central and southeast Asia. The plan comprises two branches: the Silk Road Economic Belt (SREB), based on land, and the ocean-based Maritime Silk Road. President Xi explains that the BRI is modelled on the ancient Silk Road, which China's 'ancestors, driven by a desire for friendship, opened … and thus started a great era of exchanges among civilizations' (Xi, 2017: 93). One of the fabled expeditions in China's long history of reaching out to other parts of the world was headed by Zheng He, a legendary voyager whose expeditions reached the eastern coast of Africa. Chinese voyagers brought with them porcelain, brands of tea and silk products, and took back with them African products and reportedly, a giraffe. Like many other people who have drawn comparisons between Chinese and Western incursions into Africa, Lin (p. 85) states that 'Unlike the Western colonialists, the Chinese never used force to conquer or bully anyone, occupy a single inch of land of any other country'. This fact should disabuse concerns that China could use the BRI initiative as a colonial belt, created by binding those signing onto the project.

Moreover, during the Sixth Ministerial Conference of the China Arab States Cooperation

Forum in June 2014, Xi (2018:3 48) asserted that the BRI is a channel:

towards mutual benefit which will bring about closer economic integration among countries involved, promote development of their infrastructure and institutional innovation, [and] create new economic and employment growth areas.

Even more laudable was Xi's conviction that through the interconnectedness that the BRI will facilitate and hopefully nurture, 'exchange will replace estrangement, mutual learning will replace clashes and coexistence will replace a sense of superiority' (2017: 86). It must be encouraging to China that by late 2018, 37 African countries had entered into a number of BRI agreements with China. Whether the whole African continent will fully embrace the BRI is unclear, as there are no geographical or ideological preclusions as to who can take part. What is certain is that the initiative will proceed, with the Asian Infrastructure and Investment Bank and the Silk Road Fund on hand to provide the needed revenue.

The penultimate chapter presents Xi Jinping's thoughts on Chinese development and human rights and comprises seven speeches. In October 2017 the Communist Party of China (CPC) held its 19th National Congress in Beijing, where it analysed how far China has come since the economic reforms of 1978. The CPC acknowledged that economic reforms and successes have encouraged an evolution in the development and demands of citizens. Whereas previously Chinese citizens were more interested in securing material and cultural needs, they now have 'ever-growing needs for a better life' (p. 97), which manifest in the demand for balanced growth. The congress set for itself ambitious targets such as completely obliterating poverty by the year 2020 and reaching $10,000 in per capita GDP. It is noteworthy that by end of 2018 per capita GDP had already reached $9,700 and is thus poised to meet the 2020 target.

One of the growing preoccupations of the Chinese government is a people-centred approach to growth, development and international relations. This concern has been evidenced through, for instance, taking an unwavering anti-corruption stance, promoting environmental protection and securing food safety. It Lin's assessment that these efforts have won the CPC support among Chinese citizens. Beyond China's borders, the Chinese government has committed itself to promoting a new type of international relation and a community based on a shared future for humankind. This ideal future can only be fashioned through a brand of international relations that genuinely demonstrates 'mutual respect, fairness, justice and win-win cooperation' (p. 100). By mutual respect, China means recognition that national and territorial sovereignty are sacrosanct and that the diverse interests and civilisations found in the international system deserve the respect of all players involved. China's notion of fairness and justice in the international system is premised on bolstering the representation and influence of developing countries in forums such as the United Nations and other multilateral structures that have hitherto only allowed limited input from the developing world. Win-win cooperation essentially means tying China's development to that of its partners, which is done through initiatives such as the BRI. Another ideal of this type of cooperation is to diminish the economic gulf between the Global North and the Global South. China has vowed to increase its development assistance to the developing world, particularly the least developed countries.

This school of thought tries to adapt socialism with Chinese characteristics in the 21st century. One of the core features of Xi Jinping's mission is to strengthen the leadership of the CPC and ensure 'that the Party exercises effective self-supervision and practices strict governance in every respect' (p. 105). The second aspect, already mentioned above, is adopting a people-centred approach. In undertaking its responsibilities, the Party is thus enjoined to have the people as its priority. It is for this reason that China seeks to eliminate poverty by 2020. Later in the chapter, Lin articulates human rights in basic practical terms, referring to people's access to food, shelter, work and medical attention (p. 130). The third major defining feature of Xi Jinping's goal is to build a beautiful world, replete with harmony and profound interconnectedness.

For the remainder of the third chapter, Ambassador Lin's speeches reiterate the impressive growth that China has undergone since 1978, when the country was mostly reliant on subsistence farming. Currently, China is a moderately affluent society, whose people have

an average life expectancy of about 76 years. Opening up to the world after centuries of isolation and 'false pride' (p. 112) have undoubtedly contributed to China's remarkable growth. For example, since joining the World Trade Organisation (WTO), China's tariffs were reduced from 15.3% to 9.8%. It is thus not surprising that the country seeks even deeper integration with other countries. The China International Import Expo, held in November 2018 in China, was aimed at demonstrating China's 'firm resolve and sincere wishes to further opening up, to share development results with the world and to realize common development' (p. 118).

The final four speeches are provided in the chapter titled 'Wildlife Protection'. One of the resolutions to emerge from the CPC's 19th Congress was a commitment to foster accord between human life and nature. Unity of the universe is one of the basic tenets of Chinese culture. As President Xi Jinping asserted, a 'sound ecological environment is the most equal public good and offers the most universal public welfare' (p. 141). In 2014, the purchase and consumption of wildlife was criminalised. Ivory trade has been one of the blights on China's image in Africa. Because ivory artisanship 'has lasted for tens of centuries' (p. 138) in China, it was a difficult decision for the Chinese government to rule that by 31 December 2017, it would cease the sale and processing of ivory. In South Africa, Chinese nationals are always reminded on their arrival that they should not indulge in the 'illegal purchase or transportation of ivory and other wild animals and plants and their products' (p. 138).

In the quest to demonstrate its resolve to curb the illegal trade of wild animals and products, in 2014 and 2015 the Chinese government publicly destroyed tons of ivory. A regrettable reality is that despite these measures, there are still Chinese nationals who are involved in smuggling and trading wildlife products – a fact of which Lin is aware. Working in concert with South Africa, the United States and the International Criminal Police Organisation (Interpol), China 'carried out three anti-smuggling endangered species activities code-named "operation COBRA", effectively curbing criminal activities such as smuggling ivory' (p. 139). The 2015 FOCAC Johannesburg Plan of Action unequivocally states that China will help Africa with the protection of wildlife. The Plan of Action came a year after Chinese Premier Li Keqiang announced that China was putting $10 million at the disposal of African countries to strengthen the protection of wildlife.

The collection of speeches portrays a character typical of a person who is aware of his/her divisive identity but is earnestly seeking understanding and acceptance from his/her partners. China's stupendous growth from 1978 will go down in political lore as a miracle by those who doubted China's capacity, but to the Chinese, probably as an achievement befitting an industrious and vastly populated 'middle kingdom'. From a per capita GDP of $156 in 1978 to $9,000 in 2017, with an average annual growth of 9.5%, the country managed to lift an approximately 700 million Chinese out of poverty. Over the past 70 years, China has developed from being a rural-based, third-world economy to be the second-largest economy in the world, the 'largest manufacturer, largest trading power of goods, the holder of the biggest reserve' and a popular investment and tourist destination (p. 59).

In contrast, a popular criticism levelled against the AU is that it is a talk shop, where much rhetoric is produced that does not translate into tangible results. To remedy this challenge, perhaps the AU and its members could learn from China's orientation towards practical results, a theme Lin mentioned numerous times in his speeches. For example, the Chinese government established the 'Secretariat of the Chinese Follow-up Committee on FOCAC' to 'facilitate coordination and implementation' (p. 22). Such initiatives compel China to be focused rather than setting targets in a desultory manner.

Although a close relationship between China and Africa offers many potential benefits, the temptation of both partners is to ignore the challenges and differences between the parties involved or to be lured into self-delusion. While it is heartening to hear Lin state that, 'China and all 54 African members participate in the FOCAC as equals' (p. 21), such an argument is not always realistic. The majority of African states are simply too small to interact with China from a position of invariable equality. Moreover, FOCAC is primarily China's initiative to which Africa has been invited. The ambassador, however, is

candid enough to accept that although the BRI belongs to the world, 'it begins with China' (p. 92). It is also important that, after colonialism, Africa has veto powers on whom it relates with and on what basis.

Indeed, during his visit to Djibouti, Kenya, Chad, Nigeria and Ethiopia, Former US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson warned Africa that it 'risked forfeiting' its sovereignty by entering into deals with China. In response, Lin expressed satisfaction that, despite Tillerson's warning, 'Africans are mature enough to engage in partnerships of their own volition, and that Africans are wise enough to who is their true friend and reliable development partner' (p. 38). More importantly, though, Mr Lin asserts that 'African people know all too well that if they are not independent economically, they will never be independent politically' (p. 39). This statement could perhaps be taken to heart as Africa interacts with outside actors, even including China. Furthermore, China is a relatively new player in Africa and hence it is still yet to be assessed as to whether or not it contributes to building sustainable economic growth in Africa.

Another potential issue is that African countries risk not meeting their objectives to service debt. Under such circumstances, Africa will have to cede some ground to its debtors. Recently, anti-Chinese sentiment in Zambia, for example, has been stoked by rumours that the Zambian government is on the brink of losing state-owned enterprises to China because the country has failed to repay its debt to China. The Zambian government has been at pains to refute such rumours, without much success. It would thus serve China well that, in its dealings with Africa, it helps the continent to build capacity for financial independence. It is indeed possible that some of the airports that Mr Tillerson landed at during his ill-fated tour of Africa, which ended in Tillerson's sacking by President Trump, 'are loaned and built by China … by the hands of the Chinese and the African people'. All this will fade into insignificance if African countries will not pay back the loans. Those who know about China's takeover of Hambantota Port in Sri Lanka will use that as a possible example of what could happen if African countries fail to meet their debt obligations to China.

Moreover, while China's growth remains an example not only to Africa, but to other players in the international system that have a condescending and hypocritical views of Africa, African nations have to respond to the international system from an African perspective, rather than pandering to prescripts of outside players. China's emphasis on hard work, the rejection of protectionism and its accurate response to market economics have fostered the stupendous growth by which it is characterised. Yet Lin's emphasis on economic gains and material interpretations of human rights are, to some extent, at variance to what most of Africa committed itself after the Cold War. Neoliberalism places a high premium on individual rights and multiparty democracy. Thus, in this area, China does not offer an example to Africa. China's emphasis on sovereignty and non-interference will probably have to be revised. In its classic form, non-interference is an amoral principle that, in the face of blatant oppression, could give oppressors free reign to molest ordinary citizens. If Xi Jinping is to religiously adhere to a people-centred approach in international relations, then China will have to condemn systems that are undeniably a menace to people. However, China's call for a 'stronger representation and bigger voice of developing counties in the UN' (p. 100) is consonant with the Ezulwini Consensus, a document by the AU calling for the reconfiguration of the United Nations Security Council to include at least-two permanent members from the African continent, appears to confirm China's pursuit of a just world order.

In sum, Lin's speeches are a sermon to the converted, as most of Africa has responded favourably to China's overtures. In order to forge an honest relationship, however, Africa and China should not mask the possible threats that Sino-Africa relations have. Debt dependency, for instance, is a real danger and the growing number of Chinese nationals in Africa whose interests and comportment might not accord with those of the Chinese government, might be a threat to China's reputation in Africa. Going forward, Lin should perhaps pay attention to this growing dimension of China-Africa relations, rather concentrating on elite-based relations in the main. ∎

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