A NODE OF AFRICAN THOUGHT

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The Inaugural Conference on African Thought at the University of Zululand

Edited by

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Africa Century Editions (ACE) Press
Cape Town, South Africa
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First published 2023

ISBN: 978-1-990999-56-7

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Special thanks go to the Minister of Higher Education and Training, Science & Innovation Dr Blade Nzimande, for availing himself and the international guests for joining us virtually and in person. UNIZULU is eternally grateful for your efforts and commitment to be part of this journey.

Professor Xoliswa Mtose
Vice Chancellor & Principal
University of Zululand

FOREWORD

The inaugural Conference on African Thought is a curtain-raising event whose purpose is to launch the vision of developing the University of Zululand (UNIZULU) into a node for African thought. The Minister of Higher Education and Training, Science and Technology took time out of his busy schedule to grace the occasion by giving the opening address. For that we are eternally grateful.

This gathering is arguably the first of its kind, not only at this university but among universities and higher education institutions in South Africa and possibly throughout the entire continent. It is unique and innovative in its conception, form, and mission. With this launch UNIZULU has taken a bold step to move beyond the usual rhetoric of stating its intention to become an authentic African university. It is not only committing itself to creating a discursive space designed to ignite new imaginations about the future trajectory of the University, but also to develop alternative ontological and epistemological orientations anchored on African thought.

UNIZULU has consciously embraced epistemologies of the Global South as part and parcel of its geo-politics of knowledge vis-à-vis the problematic epistemologies of the Global North. It embraces African epistemologies in affirmation of its identity as an African university rather than a westernised university in Africa. Located in a semi-rural setting in KwaZulu-Natal in post-apartheid South Africa, UNIZULU commits itself to take advantage of the indigenous epistemologies and socio-economic realities of its immediate communities.

UNIZULU is ideally located to tap into the knowledges 'otherwise' that are not at the immediate disposal of other universities which are largely located in urban centres where western modernity is concentrated. It is thus well-positioned to harness long-standing indigenous knowledge practices without compromising its international outlook or denying the influence of

what Ali Mazrui famously described as Africa's triple heritage from within itself, the West and Islam.

Against this backdrop UNIZULU has embarked on asserting its identity as a node for African thought, a mission that is expressed not only through this inaugural African Thought conference but also officially in the university's current strategic plan which was recently approved by the University Council. To this end, UNIZULU seeks to promote the systematic blending of decolonial, postcolonial, Afrocentric and Afro-sensed grammars and vocabularies of change. In doing so it will consciously avoid taking a nativist or fundamentalist approach while also refusing to follow the crowd with empty sloganeering or grandstanding.

Given that African thought is inherently polyvocal, reflexive, responsive and dynamic, the University's mission of developing itself to become a node of African thought is informed by an ecology of plural ideas and diverse ontologies. The University sees this as part of its contribution to the broader struggle for the total emancipation of African people and oppressed people in general. This will be achieved by re-contracting with the University's local, provincial, national, continental, and planetary publics. This is a paradigm shift from the colonial ideational and institutional model through which many universities in Africa and elsewhere have been co-opted into hegemonic knowledge systems that alienate them from their respective communities and societies.

The University is of the considered view that the project of transforming itself into a node of African thought will not only open up the scholarship beyond the constraints of Eurocentric/Northern colonial theory, but will also chart a way of addressing the urgency around the decolonisation project. The University is not oblivious to the challenges and complexities of decolonising higher education. To begin with, there is need to grapple with and elaborate on the terms and perspectives that this project will have to deploy to regain the power of what Freire (1972) refers to as the ability to 'name the world', that is, reclaim significance as human beings by

making sense of the world as Africans, and not through the eyes of the coloniser. In this connection Hayes et al. (2021:895) advocate for a 'two-eyed seeing' approach with the view of deconstructing the colonial lens and facilitating the practice of 'culturally safe' learning. It does so by '…learning to see [with] one eye with the strengths of Indigenous Knowledge and ways of knowing. And from the other eye with the strength of Western knowledge and ways of knowing…and learning to use both these eyes together for the benefit of all'. This proposition raises a fundamental question about the advisability and possibility of a one-eyed or two-eyed version of the envisaged African thought. Ultimately, what choices are made will have implications on how the decolonisation of the curriculum will be approached.

As the project unfolds, it is inevitable that conference deliberations will trigger intellectual debates. Some of these will relate to, among others, the questions of what it means to be African. For instance, does intellectual work become 'African' simply because it is produced or promoted by Africans in Africa? Such a view, according to Higgs (2010), uses a geographical criterion. On the other hand, does academic work become 'African' if it directs its attention to issues concerning the theoretical and/or conceptual underpinnings of African culture? This view is seen as using the cultural criterion to determine what being African means. While it may be reasonable to assume that African identity should not be constituted by a case of either/or, but rather by both geographical and cultural factors, there may be other related issues that may arise. Other questions emerge which have to do with how the African diaspora is incorporated in all this; and what are the implications for the University's understanding of what can be viewed as African culture?

These questions are important given the context of African colonial legacy and the slavery that not only dislocated Africans from their motherland but also, through European cultural hegemony, language which became one of the mechanisms for domination and

alienation. Drawing from the work of Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1986) and Prah (2009), Tondi and Fredericks (2020:15001) argue that:

> as part of the plan the processes of subjugation and domination did not only have to do with the colonised having to inherit alien syntax or lexicology, but also the ways in which they ultimately perceive self and the world, and how to relate with European in their assumed superior status.

By contrast, one of the opportunities that the Node of African Thought vision presents is one of mobilising what Antonio Gramsci (1971) calls organic intellectuals. These are scholars, theorists and social activists of various political persuasions and social movements whose ideas converge to promote processes of emancipation for the oppressed and relegated people. In other words, the Node of African Thought must be composed of a critical mass of networked organic intellectuals who will be strategically positioned to undertake numerous tasks that the decolonisation project entails. The examples include but are not limited to developing and promoting:

- New Afrocentric pedagogies;
- New curricular which consider the issue of language and indigenous knowledge systems;
- Research anchored on African ontologies and epistemologies;
- New programme accreditation criteria.

It is towards these ambitious but very achievable ends, that UNIZULU lined up the carefully chosen presentations and engagements in its inaugural conference of African thought. These are envisaged to facilitate the creation of a clear, practical, and feasible blueprint to systematise, operationalise and institutionalise African thought at UNIZULU.

Finally, the creation of a Node of African Thought at UNIZULU cannot be achieved by proclamation alone. It will have to be earned

through the hard work of intellectual inputs that will shape what it will look like. This fact notwithstanding, it is our considered view that the description A Node of African Thought should not be understood as static. Instead, it must be seen as a way of becoming and an intersection of African scholarship that privileges the ways of knowing of the Global South. This perspective encourages continuous improvement and adaptation to both the prevailing and changing contexts of the time.

Xoliswa Mtose
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INTRODUCTION

XOLISWA MTOSE AND SIPHO SEEPE

This book is an outcome of the *Inaugural Conference on African Thought* that was hosted by the University of Zululand (UNIZULU) between 17 and 19 November 2022. The overall objective of the conference was to give practical expression to UNIZULU's strategic goal of establishing the University as an authentic African University and as a node of African thought.

The decision to foreground UNIZULU as a distinctly African university should be seen within the context of the broader transformation agenda that South Africa has embarked upon following the ushering in of the new political dispensation in 1994. The agenda for the transformation of higher education has been adequately articulated in the 1997 Department of Education *White Paper 3: A Programme for the Transformation of the Higher Education System*. The White Paper envisages the higher education system that would, *inter alia*,

> Promote equity of access and fair chances of success to all who are seeking to realise their potential through higher education, while eradicating all forms of unfair discrimination and advancing redress for past inequalities and contribute to the advancement of all forms of knowledge and scholarship and in particular address the diverse problems and demands of the local, national, southern African and African contexts, and uphold rigorous standards of academic quality.
>
> (DoE 1997:6)

Properly understood, there are two interrelated aspects of transformation that the White Paper sought to highlight. One aspect relates to the challenge of having to redress the past through

broadening access, representation, and the eradication of discriminatory practices within the higher education system. The second aspect relates to epistemological issues that fall within the realm of ideas and knowledge formulation. For lack of better words, epistemological issues are ideological in nature in that they are informed by the kind of society that the post-1994 dispensation sought to achieve. The ideological aspect of an educational system was eloquently captured by Richard Shaull's foreword to Paulo Freire's book, *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Shaull writes:

> There is no such thing as a neutral educational process. Education either functions as an instrument that is used to facilitate the integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity to it, or it becomes "the practice of freedom," the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world.

The apartheid educational system had an unambiguous intention to render Africans third-class citizens in their own country. Thus, any appraisal of the apartheid system must address its social, cultural, and economic underpinnings. The higher education system was part of the broader system of apartheid. Mahmood Mamdani (1999) takes this further and he argues that:

> Both the white and black institutions were products of apartheid, though in different ways. The difference was not only in the institutional culture that the former enjoyed institutional autonomy and the latter were bureaucratically driven. The difference was also in their intellectual horizons. It was the white intelligentsia that took the lead in creating apartheid-enforced identities in the knowledge they produced. Believing that this was an act of intellectual creativity un-

> related to the culture of privilege in which they were steeped, they ended defending an ingrained prejudice with a studied conviction. The irony is that the white intelligentsia came to be a greater, became a more willing, prisoner of apartheid thought than its black counterpart.

The idea of an African University is premised on the basic understanding that universities are social institutions. As social institutions, they are not only influenced by their contexts, but are in the main, products of their social and cultural contexts. Given South Africa's political history, the establishment of an authentic African University would involve the process of construction and de-construction. The process of deconstruction involves getting rid of apartheid's geo-political imagination that still haunts the corridors of South African universities.

Constructing an authentic African university speaks to the urgent need to establish a scholarship that speaks directly to socio-economic and cultural challenges faced by the African majority. This scholarship would serve as a countervailing force to the current and dominant paradigm that not only mimics but is "intended to meet the theoretical needs of our Western counterparts and answer the questions they pose" (Hountondji 2009), instead of addressing national challenges.

This inaugural conference on African thought must thus be seen as part of the ongoing conversations that the University has embarked upon as it transforms itself. In providing a guiding framework for the conversations, UNIZULU defines an authentic African University as:

> a university which in the first instance serves the needs of an African constituency and intellectually wears the vestments of its social environment but also fundamentally embraces universal values which eschew narrow partisan sentiments. An institution which responds to the needs of the society in

> which it is located and helps to transform for the better the lives of the people in whose preoccupation and location it is embedded. To achieve this object the university needs to engage with the people, draw them into a creative dialogue about transformation and improvement of the existential circumstances of the population and put knowledge and its process of production at the service of the people.
>
> (UNIZULU Conversations 2020:15)

Accordingly, it is equally argued that:

> an African university must answer to African requirements, building on what has been culturally inherited from time immemorial but upgraded and modernized on robust and uncompromised African cultural foundations. Otherwise in our intellectual pursuits, like Sisyphus, we relegate our endeavours to meaningless routinized tasks and processes, chasing fleeting and fashionable epistemological phantoms which deny existential solutions in our collective social lives as Africans.

UNIZULU intends to position itself as a node for African thought. In doing so, it has:

> decidedly embraced epistemologies of the Global South as part and parcel of its geo-politics of knowledge vis-à-vis the problematic epistemologies of the Global North. This posture finds concrete expression in the University's new strategic plan. By embracing African epistemologies UNIZULU affirms its identity as an African university rather than a westernised university in Africa. UNIZULU is located in the semi-rural setting of KwaZulu-Natal in post-apartheid South Africa making it crucial for the university to take seriously the indigenous epistemologies, ontologies as well as the historical

> and socio-economic realities of its immediate communities. UNIZULU is thus ideally located to tap into the knowledges 'otherwise' that are no longer fully at the immediate disposal of those universities located in urban centres where western modernity is concentrated. UNIZULU is thus well-positioned to harness, among others, long-standing knowledge practices and indigenous spiritual divination of the Nguni civilizations which are predominantly found in its home province without compromising its international outlook.
>
> (UNIZULU unpublished concept paper)

In crafting the invitation to the conference, organizers highlighted the fact that UNIZULU's intellectual project is aimed at privileging:

> epistemologies of the Global South and indigenous African knowledges by systematically blending decolonial, postcolonial, Afrocentric and Afro-sensed grammars and vocabularies of change in ways that are non-fundamentalist, non-nativist, and non-faddist. Given that African thought is inherently polyvocal, reflexive, responsive and dynamic, our mission as a node for African thought is informed by an ecology of pluralistic perspectives and ontologies across space and time. As our contribution to the broader struggle for the total emancipation of African people, we are taking bold, deliberate and calculated steps to renegotiate and re-contract with our local, provincial, national, continental and planetary publics through a paradigm shift from the colonial intellectual model that has alienated many universities in Africa and elsewhere in the non-western world from their societies while co-opting them into hegemonic Eurocentric epistemological systems. (ibid.)

To be consistent with the notion of turning UNIZULU into a node of African thought, organizers ensured that the conference is composed

of local and renowned international scholars who are steeped in African scholarship. Michael West, professor of African American Studies, History, and African Studies and Head of the Department of African American Studies at Pennsylvania State University, opened the conference with a paper titled 'The Regeneration of Africa Reconsidered: Thoughts on a Global African University'. West's paper was deliberately crafted to build on KwaZulu-Natal-born Pixley ka Seme's 1906 paper on the 'The Regeneration of Africa' delivered at Colombia University in New York.

Opoku Agyeman, a professor at the Pan-African Society and Foundation in the US picked up where West left off with his paper titled 'Systematizing, Operationalising, and Modelling African Thought in an Epistemological Vortex of Global Africana'.

Mogomme Masoga, Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at UNIZULU brought the discussion closer to home with his paper simply titled 'On African Thought'.

Sinfree Makoni, a professor in Applied Linguistics and African Studies at Pennsylvania State University in the US presented a paper on 'The Role of African Studies Forum in Shaping Scholarship Globally'. This paper is in keeping with the notion that the challenges facing African people are necessarily global in character, and as such would require a global response.

Tunde Bewaji, a professor at the University of West Indies, Jamaica, delivered a paper on 'Indigenous Knowledge Systems: The challenge of epistemicide and ontological suicide'. The paper built on his distinguished research work on aesthetics, epistemology, the philosophy of culture, philosophy of leadership, and African diaspora.

Interlocuters to the papers presented at the conference included a number of scholars. With no order of preference or importance, these included Professor Siphamandla Zondi, the Director of the Institute for Pan African Thought and Conversation (IPATC) at the University of Johannesburg, and Morgan Ndlovu, professor of Anthropology in the Department of Anthropology and Development Studies at the University of Zululand.

The conference was ably directed by Dr. Akpome, a senior lecturer in the Department of English at the University of Zululand.

The responsibility of a rapporteur was left to equally competent Mr. N.S. Ratau, a lecturer, poet, and writer in the Department of English at the University of Zululand.

The inaugural conference has not only laid a firm foundation for the development of an authentic African university but has provided 'a feasible roadmap for systematising, operationalising and modelling African thought at UNIZULU'.

What follows is a bird's-eye view of the contributions that were made at the conference. The introductory remarks, however, do not serve as substitute for the richness, depth, and complexity of the contributions.

Michael West

In his paper 'The Regeneration of Africa Revisited: African Thought and the Global African University', Michael West revisits a similar theme contained in the famous address delivered by Pixley ka Seme at Columbia University New York in 1906. Seme, putatively one of the founding figures of the African National Congress, is among the famous public intellectuals to have contributed to African thought.

For West, African thought is a vindication of African historicity and humanity. It is:

> a concerted effort to defend African peoples against the Eurocentric and white-supremacist defamation that they were devoid of history; that they were a people without a past, at least a past worth noting; and that Africans and their descendants worldwide occupied the lowest rungs on the human ladder, if they had a foot on the ladder at all. The vindication, or defence, of African historicity and black humanity was so important precisely because the oppressors and traducers of African peoples worldwide – the enslavers

> and colonizers, along with their intellectual confederates – denied both. In this way, the dispossession of African land, natural resources and labour, of the very African body, proceeded hand in hand with discursive dispossession.

Taking a leap into the future, West argues that 'a regenerated Africa is precisely the aim of moving toward an African university – a university centred on African thought, one striving for African intellectual self-emancipation'. Accordingly, West continues: 'the mission of the African university is to challenge, to question, to disrupt. To stand firmly against what is, and to hold high the banner of what ought to be. And what ought to be is a university dedicated to African self-emancipation, beginning with intellectual self-emancipation.'

West adds an important caveat that runs throughout the paper:

> The African university also ought to be global. It ought not be, it must not be, a university whose focus is solely continental. It should be a university whose vision is global in scope. In particular, the African university should encompass the experiences of peoples of African descent worldwide, in and out of the African continent—that is to say, a global African university. A global African university would be consistent with the vindicationist vision of Seme, who built on foundations laid by previous cohorts of intellectuals of African descent. Notably, many of Seme's predecessors were Africans of the diaspora.

West could not have provided a clearer vision of what a node of African thought ought to be. As with all struggles for emancipation, contributors at the conference were conscious of the fact that such a posture as taken by UNIZULU was unlikely to proceed without resistance. In this regard, West warns that:

> [it] would be folly to assume that the vision of an African university, and of African thought, has no foes. Nor is the struggle for an African university as a centre of African thought a new one. That battle was joined long ago. Seme's contribution is evidence of it. Even more powerful evidence can be found in the life and labour of Edward Wilmot Blyden, one of those on whose shoulders Seme stood. Arguably the foremost pan-African intellectual of the 19th century, Blyden is a pivotal figure in the historic struggle for an African university.

A keen observer of socio-political and economic developments in Africa, West cautions that while

> Africanisation [of universities] is necessary. It is also insufficient. Africanisation is a means to an end, not an end itself. The end is transformation. That is, transformation of the structures of power, and the structures of wealth, created by colonialism, including of the apartheid variety. Those structures must be transformed, turned upside down, socially levelled. Africanisation without political transformation is political corruption of the rankest sort – a betrayal of the struggle for self-emancipation.

As intimated earlier, UNIZULU's decision to transform the University into an authentic African University takes place within the broader agenda of South Africa's socio-economic transformation. At the global level, this initiative takes place against the backdrop of the centuries-old colonial conquest and enslavement of people of African descent. At the heart of both slavery and colonialism was the dehumanization and socio-cultural domination of Africans. The response to the form of domination that Africans have suffered and continue to suffer should necessarily be global in character and orientation.

Opoku Agyeman

Agyeman's paper 'Systematizing, Operationalizing, and Modelling African Thought in an Epistemological Vortex of Global Africa' does exactly that. This becomes clearer from the very beginning of Agyeman's paper. He wastes no time in defining both the terms and the terrain of such engagement. He argues that:

> The global North and South are not geographical concepts. The North is used as a shorthand description for the world's rich, industrialized, former colonial powers of Western Europe, plus the United States, Canada, Japan, Australia, and New Zealand. The South is shorthand for the world's recently colonized, less developed or developing countries, ranging from the suddenly rich but yet-to-industrialize oil states of the Middle East, to the so-called Fourth World of states, the poorest countries of the globe located for the most part in the Indian subcontinent, sub-Saharan Africa, and the Caribbean region. Between the Fourth World and the suddenly wealthy oil countries is the so-called Third World encompassing most South American countries and others from Asia and a few from Africa. Any effective forging in the South of epistemologies born of struggle against the North's customary imperialistic hegemony depended on the South's capacity to drum up effective cohesion from its many fragments.

Agyeman takes us through a scholastic journey in which he catalogues various forms of brutality that Africans have had to endure under colonialism and Western imperialism. Indeed, both forms of domination were never intended to be benign to non-European people. It was all about exploitation. It is through the process of deculturation and miseducation that people of African descent were subjected to thorough psychological manipulation. Agyeman continues:

> Deculturation involves the systematic stripping away of the intended victim's ancestral culture and replacing it with European culture, while Miseducation refers to the destructive effects of a pedagogy and curriculum 'that deliberately omits, distorts, or trivializes the role of a subjugated people in regard to their contributions to world history and culture.

Arguably, the colonial strangulation of African people continues to this day. The relations that Africans have sought to build with others have been asymmetrical at best and have generally not been in the interests of African people. For Agyeman, this should lead to the inescapable conclusion that Africans must assume full responsibility for their own liberation. Agyeman argues that:

> Herein lies the supreme rationale of a developmental logic of Pan-Africanism based on the principle of Exclusive Racial Instrumentality—the necessity for black people to be their own instruments of recovery from historic prostration and degradation. The postulation is that there is something about the African history of the last 500 years, in its tragic dimensions of powerlessness and persistent subservience to others, that absolutely requires the solution of African self-repair. Dignity is not a postulate of charity one people bestows on another. Only the one assumed to be inferior can invalidate the charge through self-agency of sustained, stupendously outstanding and superior accomplishments. Any involvement of outsiders would only complicate and undermine the integrity of such demonstration.

This is about ensuring that Africans achieve historical meaning for themselves. An authentic African university cannot outsource this responsibility. The task for an African university should be informed by the understanding that 'the fight for African emancipation is Africa's alone; the battleground is the African mind; and the soldiery is a University of The Black World'.

Mogomme Masoga

In his paper, simply titled 'On African Thought', Professor Mogomme Masoga directs us to appreciate why the idea of African thought is a revolutionary concept. Many scholars have alluded to this in various ways. In this regard, Steve Biko was correct to point out that 'the most potent weapon in the hands of the colonizer is the mind of the colonized.'

Given the context of colonialism, a node of African thought should thus be seen as a search for epistemic freedom. It is a rejection of

> the advent of coloniality as a global power structure that defines, evaluates, negates, and affirms the thinking capacities of modern subjects. African thought in this regard is a struggle to insert other bodies such as the bodies of indigenous Africans, black people, women, queer people, and people of colour into the equation of knowledge production and the politics of shaping the future of the world.

In this way:

> African thought must be premised on rehumanizing dehumanized African subjects by producing knowledge with them and from their perspectives rather than about them as though they are passive objects of research. At the same time, it must be premised on de-centering the Western archive and co-centering the African archive in knowledge production. This also entails the deliberate privileging of African intellectuals and scholarly works produced by Africans as well as reversing the politics of dominant recognition found in the citations of Western scholars to the detriment of those of Africa and the Global South.

Finally:

> African thought in the university context must strive to reconstitute and reconfigure the university as a successor

> institution to long-standing black radical intellectual traditions. This means that African thought must not only look back to revive the continent's best ideas but also look ahead to both pre-empt and respond to new forms of coloniality that have emerged since the late 1960s and which may emerge in the years to come.

Sinfree Makoni and Cristine G. Severo

In their paper 'Sociolinguistics and Southern Epistemologies', Sinfree Makoni and Professor Christine Severo provide a practical guide on how the notion of the epistemologies of the [Global] South can shape both the orientation and approach to scholarship. The paper frames 'language studies in Africa and their diasporas through the lens of *Theory from the South* (Comaroff & Comaroff 2012) and *Southern Theory* (Connell 2007: 2018)'. Most importantly, the paper argues that

> even though there is no single theory of the South, all the theories seek to increase the impact of experiences of people from the South on the formulation of linguistic theory. The theories are a product of the impact of subjugated groups on the formulation of linguistic theory. In addition to the Global South providing raw materials, it should also supply insights which are relevant to the rest of the world through the deployment of analytical heuristics such as *inventions, accommodations,* and *hybrids*.

The effect of this approach is to rectify the weaknesses in linguistics because of its Eurocentrism by proposing 'a conceptual vocabulary' and 'developing a political grammar' of language studies from the Global South. The 'conceptual vocabulary' and 'political grammar' will be founded on at least three principles: (i) innovation, (ii) animation and (iii) transgression (Nair & de Souza 2020). Doing so would also have the effect of advancing alternative universalisms

whose impact would include challenging 'Eurocentrism and white, male, heteronormative foundations which dominate the field of language studies'.

The development of the Southern epistemologies invariably shifts 'geography of reason', the paper argues. Applied to African sociolinguistics, this shift would challenge the trope that it has too many languages. According to Prah (1995), viewing language from a perspective that is incompatible with Global Southern perspectives is reflected in the trope that Africa has too many languages. Such a perspective is incompatible with Southern epistemologies because what is called 'languages' in Africa are, from Prah's (1995) perspective, 'variants' of what he refers to as 'core languages/ clusters' which can share the same spelling system.'

The paper concludes by addressing three critical questions. What does a sociolinguistics from the Global South look like? What does a sociolinguistics from the Global South look like when we seriously take the complexity and heterogeneity of the city into account? How can we go beyond sociolinguistics which is human-centered in the Global South, by challenging the human/nonhuman distinction which is one of the devastating consequences of modernity?

Morgan Ndlovu and Aghogho Akpome

By way of acknowledgement, Professor Morgan Ndlovu and Dr Aghogho Akpome begin their paper with an appreciation of the fact that the inaugural conference on African thought is the brainchild of the Vice-Chancellor (VC) and Principal of the University of Zululand, Professor Xoliswa Mtose. And that it was her 'long-standing concern about the identity and the place of UNIZULU within the broader struggle for social, cultural, and economic relevance that confronts many universities in Africa today'.

Indeed, the conference sought to give expression to the university's commitment to turn UNIZULU into a node of African thought. At the time of hosting the inaugural conference on African thought, the idea had already been canvassed within the Senate

and Council of the University. The conference served as a useful platform to extend the notion and discussion within the broader university community and beyond. The objective was to ensure a shared and in-depth understanding among the university's critical stakeholders. Ndlovu and Akpome's paper, 'Audience's voices during the Inaugural Conference on African Thought,' reflects on how far this objective has been achieved.

Poignantly, Ndlovu and Akpome argue that conferences are useful 'platforms for contesting, testing, legitimizing, re-affirming, and negotiating ideas in academia. At the centre of the idea of an academic conference and the process of conferencing, is knowledge production, a phenomenon that is an inherent part of being human.' Capturing the voices of listeners has assisted the university 'to understand the nature of the discursive "force-field" in which African thought is to be implemented.' Equally, this has provided an insight into 'the effectiveness of the pedagogic discourse of the presentations, to re-negotiate meanings and to co-learn between the audience of different disciplinary backgrounds as well as between the audience and presenters.'

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THE UNIZULU INAUGURAL CONFERENCE ON AFRICAN THOUGHT 17 NOVEMBER 2022

XOLISWA MTOSE

It gives me great pleasure to address what I understand to be the Inaugural Conference on African Thought at my alma mater, the University of Zululand.

My formative undergraduate years were spent here, a place which is close to my heart, not only because of the deeply personal imprint it has left on my own social and political imagination, but also because UNIZULU's history epitomizes the spirit of the oppressed to turn that which is designed for its subjugation into a source of emancipation.

Conference Theme

It is my understanding that the rationale for this conference stems from UNIZULU's strategic plan. According to the organizers, your aim is to transform UNIZULU 'into an authentic African university where epistemologies of the Global South and indigenous African knowledge are privileged. As our contribution to the broader struggle for the total emancipation of African people, we are taking bold, deliberate and calculated steps to renegotiate and re-contract with our local, provincial, national, continental and planetary publics through a paradigm shift from the alienating colonial model.'

These are indeed a bold and ambitious set of goals – which from the onset I should say I fully embrace and support. In my view the process of privileging epistemologies of Africa and the Global South requires a multiplicity of inter-related tasks:

- Firstly, the process of reclamation, restoration and promotion of a radically alternative world view requires a *systematic*

and planned strategy of capacity-building, orientation and mobilization of the university scholarly community (students and academics) to consciously develop new paradigms, bodies of knowledge and modes of teaching and learning. This is not an easy, and certainly not a once-off task;

- Secondly, it will require UNIZULU to locate its efforts within a wider network of universities both in South Africa and progressive locations in the Global South – particularly, but not only the BRICS networks, Latin America and crucially, our wider continent. This means, per definition, that your pan-Africanism must be linked to a broader *progressive internationalism*.
- Thirdly, it should also be clear that any process of reconstruction will require a process of contestation and disruption of dominant paradigms, ideas and narratives – thus implying that this community must actively engage in public discourse. In my political language, we call this *Umrabulo.*
- Fourthly, the very act of linking your search for new epistemologies to 'the broader struggle for the total emancipation of African people' means that you have to link the knowledge production project to the struggles of local *communities* for social, economic and political emancipation.

The task of constructing and promoting pan-African knowledge systems is not merely a scholarly and intellectual process. If it is to find its true potential, it must be an *engaged* pan-Africanism in which your work must be infused within wider mass struggles and social consciousness-raising. This will require university intellectuals to work in partnerships with local and regional communities in co-creating radical alternatives to prevailing orthodoxies.

Finally, I should also point out that pan-African knowledge systems can only flourish in the context of a supportive ecosystem – networks of institutions, centres, departments, writers and professionals, editors, publishing houses, investors etc. Without

this support system it cannot hope to survive and come of age. I can simply point to the symbiotic and circular economic networks into which English liberal and Afrikaans intellectual traditions are woven.

Universities, African Epistemologies and Transformation

It has now been some 27 years since the transition to political democracy in South Africa and there is no doubt that tremendous progress has been made in many aspects of the higher education system inherited from apartheid. We have a new legislative and policy landscape, a single, more integrated and responsive system, new quality assurance system, a unique student financial aid system, massive investments in infrastructure, including student housing, significant growth in the access and success of black and female students, and still slow but significant changes in the demographic profiles of our academics. Nonetheless, despite these positive material and institutional landscape of our higher education system, we still face formidable challenges in the transformation of the *intellectual foundations* of our university system.

Our higher education system, as you know, has evolved over the three major historical periods – colonialism, apartheid and more recently, the democratic era. Most of our 26 universities were formed under colonialism and later, the apartheid system. This historical context shaped the dominant social relations of knowledge production, knowledge forms, curricula, teaching pedagogies, research orientations and academic and institutional cultures at these institutions. The fundamental design features (if you like, DNA), internal social structure, institutional cultures and modes of knowledge production of all our universities have been, and in a large measure remain based on the English 'liberal arts model' transported by the British settlers during the long period of colonial rule.

However, this did not prevent the emergence of other intellectual traditions – partly as a result of shifts in political power.

For example, the rise to power of Afrikaner nationalists in 1948 paved the way for the vigorous promotion of Afrikaans Christian-nationalist intellectual traditions; and the post-1960 period also saw the establishment of many so-called homeland (Bantustan) universities – which also evolved distinctive intellectual and institutional cultures. Nevertheless, the English liberal arts epistemic traditions have tended to remain dominant – mainly because they were locked into and supported by a much wider, multinational Anglo-Saxon knowledge economy.

These official epistemic doctrines have of course been challenged throughout our history by students and insurgent intellectuals. This was the case in different periods of our history – for example, the rise of African nationalist and pan-Africanist ideas at Fort Hare in the 1930's and 1940's, black consciousness in the 1970's, and Marxist and African humanist ideas that found their way into several of our universities during the 1980's.

What made these insurgent epistemic traditions distinctive is that they were rooted in social and political struggles waged by students, academics, communities and workers. At the core of these struggles was a strong desire to transform what Paulo Freire called the pedagogy of the oppressed, into a pedagogy of emancipation – one focusing on social justice, radical equality, democratic citizenship, etc. In one of the struggle language formulations of the 1980s – People's Education for People's Power! these insurgent epistemic traditions were, in my view, always *political*, and always rooted in mass struggles. This is of course not unique to the South African experience.

The *political nature and societal character* of knowledge production has long been recognized by liberation movements and articulated in the writings of leaders such as Julius Nyerere (Ujamaa), Amilcar Cabral (culture and liberation), Franz Fanon (colonial subjectivity), Patrice Lumumba (African humanism), Thomas Sankara (anti-imperialism) and many others. What made these ideas resonant was that they were rooted in wider mass movements, and not simply (as

important as that is) among university scholars. Taken to its logical conclusions, a radical pan-Africanism is therefore also one aimed at disrupting and transforming dominant relations of power in society as a whole.

I hope the ideas of pan-Africanism being debated at today's conference will be progressive and internationalist in orientation – examining different approaches that can interact with other traditions of thought, particularly those committed to:

- Social justice and class equality;
- Anti-racism and anti-imperialism;
- Gender equality and non-patriarchy;
- Participatory democracy; and
- Ecological justice and sustainability.

It is for this reason that I contend that a progressive pan-Africanism must place anti-racism, gender equality and anti-imperialism as its core.

The Crisis of the Present World Order and Limits of the Neo-Liberal World View

One of the remarkable things about the global capitalist system has been its capacity – at least to date – to have survived many serious ruptures and crises over hundreds of years, despite deep-seated internal contradictions. There are of course many reasons for this, not least the use of force. But its ideological power should not be underestimated. It has been a central source of its own reproduction, promoted by powerful corporate interests, mass media, political parties and through our educational systems. In this narrative, neo-liberal capitalism is presented in trans-historical terms (as if it has been with us forever), as 'natural' and without any 'workable alternatives'.

However, in recent years this system and its central tenets have been in serious crisis, especially after the global financial crisis of 2007/08. Whilst there have been previous crisis periods in the

history of capitalism, what makes the present-day crisis serious, arguably, is the existential risks it poses not only to capitalism itself, but the future of the planet.

Colleagues, we are meeting at a time when a series of convergent crises is battering the world – of neo-liberal economic globalization, ecological sustainability and social reproduction (inequality) – which collectively and cumulatively register all the hallmarks of a generalized global (planetary) crisis. As the crisis deepens, we are also witnessing elites in powerful nations relentlessly stoking all sorts of geo-political tensions, most notably in China, presumably to deflect the attention of their domestic publics from the real problems.

The roots of the crisis are to be found in the most successful (and most destructive) economic system in the history of modern economics – capitalism. Despite its many stunning achievements, as Karl Marx so forcefully described in *Das Kapital* (1867), this system has also presided over accumulation strategies which, over the last 250 years or so, had begun to push many of the earth's life supporting systems to a series of 'tipping points' – global warming, destruction of forests to make way for mass agriculture, pollution of terrestrial ecosystems, acidification of the world's oceans, etc. These 'tipping points' point to what Marx tellingly termed a 'metabolic rift' – a rupture in the interaction between humanity and the rest of nature following the destructive forms of capitalist production, thereby threatening the life-giving systems of the earth.

The current planetary-scale crisis is unprecedented in that it poses an existential threat to the future of all humanity. At its core, as the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has starkly warned, has been steadily rising levels of global warming (climate change), unmistakably induced by human social and economic activity over the past 205 years of global industrial development.

Whilst there are natural drivers of climate change, it is now widely accepted that human factors have directly altered the biophysical dynamics of the earth. Neo-liberal elites argue that

the capitalist system might be imperfect and generate inequalities over time, but they claim there is no meaningful or workable alternative. They also espouse claims about human nature – that we are 'hardwired' to be selfish, greedy, competitive and that the fittest will survive. I contest and reject this ontological claim. The historical record is replete with much longer periods than the recent history of capitalism, demonstrating an alternative set of values on the basis of which our species survived over 300 000 years - cultures of cooperation, sharing, caring and solidarity.

In fact, the first humans, Africans – our great ancestors – could have only survived their incredible exodus across the continent into what is now known as Europe and the New World, some 70 000 years ago, on the strength of cooperation and solidarity. These values are held onto by Africans across the continent still today – Ubuntu, sharing, communalism and compassion – and can be directly traced back to this great historical experience. In my view, neither the essentialist claims about human nature, nor the inevitability of capitalism stand up against the critical scrutiny of history.

Knowledge Production, Innovation and South Africa's Current Crisis

The South African economy, which is deeply integrated into this new global economy, is facing stark challenges with legacies of social inequality and economic exclusion built over three centuries of apartheid-colonial history. Today, there is widespread agreement that substantial changes must be made to overcome deep structural barriers to economic participation by black people in the economy. There is also agreement that we require a capable development state. However, the most important requirement, in my view, is to create space for millions of our people to reclaim their sense of agency over their own lives – in the production of food, energy, education, community safety and security, in sustainable livelihoods. We need a capable state as a partner to work with, but not to displace or usurp the crucial role to be played by citizens – communities – in shaping

our common futures. If we are to overcome the serious existential challenges facing our people – the multiple crises of climate change, energy, food and social reproduction – our entire developmental model must be one rooted in a mass-based participatory approach. We must therefore dismantle patronage in all its guises and forms. And we must place the role of grassroots organizations of youth, women, elderly, traders, local businesses, workers, etc. at the centre of our development model.

In this context, capacity-building through knowledge and skills are of critical importance. It requires an education system that reflects and transforms the realities of the lived experiences of our people. It must be rooted in African realities, drawing on the cultural and social ingenuity of our ways of being and solving problems at a local level. This ingenuity, as I once again remind you, is rooted in a long history of survival predating the colonial experience by thousands of years. It is in this context where African pedagogies and technologies come into being as they are organically rooted in what people already know – deeply-embedded ways of being and knowing and passed from one to the next generation.

Colonialism and apartheid certainly disrupted and distorted many of these 'ways of being and knowing', but it did not destroy them. When the COVID-19 pandemic erupted, our domestic economy had already passed through two consecutive recessionary quarters, marked by major job losses in key economic sectors, including the financial and manufacturing sectors. The pandemic simply added fuel to the fire. Faced with the prospect of a catastrophic failure of the domestic economy as a result of the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the government introduced the Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Programme (ERRP). It provides the framework for wide-ranging efforts to renew and transform our stagnating economy.

The ERRP of course draws its inspiration from our Constitution and National Development Plan which provides an overarching and long-term vision of the future South Africa by 2033. The state

is identified as a key driver and enabler in promoting the policy goals set out in the NDP and ERRP. But we must acknowledge that the state itself has been severely weakened by 'state capture' and corruption in recent years. Whilst major steps are being taken to reverse these shortcomings, it will probably take many years to recover and rebuild critical capabilities. Renewal and transformation can only work if we build long-term social and economic capacity at grassroots level rooted in the daily experiences of our people. A top-down approach to development simply will not work. The valuable role that UNIZULU must play in building social capabilities in this context cannot be over-emphasized. But it must promote this role in alliance with other universities, TVET and community colleges in tackling the big existential challenges.

Working together to cooperate and share resources in the pursuit of common goals is vital, and a core value and organizing principle of African epistemologies. Cooperation and sharing in goal promotion are also necessary if we want to achieve economies of scale and impact. There are of course a whole range of different ways in which UNIZULU can pursue developmental goals – that is, in addition to its core mandates of educating and training students. In the interests of brevity, I will simply highlight three areas by way of *example*, in which you can play a seminal role in line with the goal stated by this conference.

Firstly, there is the challenge of achieving a 'just transition' in moving from carbon-intensive to more climate-friendly forms of energy. This is a challenge common to all developing countries of the Global South. To build sustainable sources of *renewable energy* production and supply at local level, organized in micro and meso-level grids, is going to be key to a future likely to be disrupted by climate events. This university must build African knowledge systems to support the production of solar energy and green hydrogen energy, and form part of the wider national efforts by government to promote long-term energy security and sovereignty. The Hydrogen SA Roadmap strategy announced by the Cabinet

earlier this year provides major strategic opportunities for all our universities to join hands in the national effort to secure our energy futures. Our academics and students must therefore join hands with local government and other stakeholders in Kwadlangezwa and Richard's Bay areas to pioneer local energy production networks for future resilience and energy sovereignty.

Secondly, South Africa, like developing countries in the Global South, is facing severe challenges of *food security,* especially in working class and poor communities, due to climate instability and corporate greed. Under neo-liberal economics, the world's food production systems had been increasingly corporatized, with a few giant multinational monopolies dominating almost every part of the food production and trading value chain. The Bio-Economy Strategy of the Department of Science and Innovation (currently under review by NACI) provides exciting new opportunities for the use of IKS to promote food sovereignty. It focuses on building the resilience and adaptive capabilities of community-based (township, village) economies based on localized food production, trading and cooperative networks. The bio-economy strategy specifically promotes IKS innovations to produce ecologically sustainable and circular-economic food, medicinal, cosmeceutical and nutraceutical products and services at local level. It is hoped that UNIZULU will target its faculties of Science, Arts and Commerce to actively engage in this space as it opens up huge opportunities for novel experiments, student entrepreneurship and enterprise development rooted in the cultures and ecologies of local communities.

It also offers opportunities to forge new solidaristic and cooperative networks of organic intellectuals, students and local communities to build strong local social capital to promote secure and sustainable futures. A third example of new opportunities in which UNIZULU could really play a highly innovative role is that of the development of *indigenous languages* using AI (artificial intelligence) tools now increasingly available in the market. After a recent visit I undertook with a large delegation, including Professor Mtose, to

Silicon Valley in the US and meeting with Google Deep Learning, I am convinced that we can rapidly accelerate the development and use of indigenous languages, drawing on machine-learning and deep-learning tools, in both social and commercial life. As you know, language is the most powerful transmitter of cultural and social values, and its future development beyond social communication is vital if we are to foreground African epistemologies, as the conference seeks to do. UNIZULU is in a unique social setting to drive the digitization of indigenous language tools and link such efforts to work being done at other universities in this respect.

Finally, I have to say that one of the things that has pained me deeply in recent years has been to witness the neglect and degradation of *public and community libraries*, including here in our province. I recently visited a public library in Pietermaritzburg and was alarmed to find out that they lacked basic digitization equipment to copy and preserve precious archival material of our history, yet it is one of the few libraries of record in our country. Perhaps UNIZULU can team up with other institutions like UKZN, DUT and MUT to collaborate with local government and the Department of Arts and Culture, to save our public and community libraries. Having focused on these local examples, I must reiterate the central argument that a progressive tradition of African knowledge systems can only succeed in reaching its true social and economic potential if it is joined up with a wider set of pan-African and pan-developing world alliances. I want to briefly cite three areas where much work has to be done:

- In 2023 South Africa is chairing the BRICS network and we will have an opportunity to expand this network and its impact on the struggle for an inclusive multilateral global system – not one based on unilateralism, military aggression and imperialism;
- Efforts to establish a new pan-African university dealing with continental policy studies, an initiative led by Professor Ibbo

Mandaza and other colleagues, to train the next generation of policy-makers able to tackle the 'grand challenges' of African and South-South cooperation and solidarity; and

- My own wish for an African research and innovation foundation to work across the continent to drive game-changing, breakthrough science and technology innovations. These would underpin the quest of the African continent to break free from the grip of neo-colonial dependency, imperial patronage and under-development.

Concluding Remarks

In conclusion, may I reiterate that a progressive pan-African and South-South knowledge paradigm requires us to be an engaged scholarly community, aspiring to be organic (not comprador) intellectuals rooted in the lived experiences of the masses. It also requires an open, self-critical intellectual disposition, able to place its world view firmly on the ground whilst selectively appropriating, adapting and assimilating the insights and experiences of other world views that are compatible with its historic interests. In my language, this is the dialectical materialism that must underpin the quest for a new progressive pan-African and South-South agenda.

I have sought to raise epistemological issues through concrete challenges facing the world, our continent, and our country. Generating theories from the analysis of concrete conditions is theoretical clarity informing, equally as important as concrete actions. Lenin put it aptly, 'Theory without practice is sterile, and practice without theory is blind'! This remains an important point of departure for African epistemology.

THE REGENERATION OF AFRICA REVISITED: AFRICAN THOUGHT AND THE GLOBAL AFRICAN UNIVERSITY

MICHAEL O. WEST

African thought. That was the title of the conference, held at the University of Zululand, where this chapter was first presented. The conference was part of a larger effort to position UNIZULU as 'a node of African thought'. Not without reason. UNIZULU faculty and alumni have contributed much to African thought and continue to do so. So too, historically, have scions of the province of KwaZulu-Natal. Notable among the latter is Pixley ka Isaka Seme. Although best remembered nowadays as a founding figure of the African National Congress (which began life in 1912 as the South African Native National Congress) and a pioneering black lawyer in southern Africa, Seme first gained fame as a public intellectual for his contribution to African thought (Bongani, 2017; Ngcukaitobi, 2018). Specifically, Seme initially earned his spurs in the world of letters as a vindicator of African historicity and black humanity.

Vindicating African historicity and black humanity was a foundational tenet of African thought in the modern world (Drake 1987 & 1990). This was a concerted effort to defend African peoples against the Eurocentric and white-supremacist defamation that they were devoid of history; that they were a people without a past, at least a past worth noting; and that Africans and their descendants worldwide occupied the lowest rungs on the human ladder, if they had a foot on the ladder at all. The vindication, or defence, of African historicity and black humanity was so important precisely because the oppressors and traducers of African peoples worldwide – the enslavers and colonizers, along with their intellectual confederates – denied both. In this way, the dispossession of African land, natural resources and labour, of the very African body, proceeded hand-in-

hand with discursive dispossession – in fine, epistemicide, a term that was widely deployed at the UNIZULU conference.

As an opponent of epistemicide and a vindicator of African historicity and black humanity, Seme's outstanding contribution was his famous oration at Columbia University in New York City in 1906. Titled 'The Regeneration of Africa', Seme's oration remains redolent with lessons for the present. A regenerated Africa is precisely the aim of moving toward an African university – a university centered on African thought, one striving for African intellectual self-emancipation. The role of the university is to produce, organize, and disseminate knowledge. That usually means knowledge that subserves the material interests of the ruling classes and underwrites their ideological dominance. The university in Africa can play this role, subserving the interests of the ruling classes. The African university cannot. The mission of the African university is to challenge, to question, to disrupt. To stand firmly against what is, and to hold high the banner of what ought to be. And what ought to be is a university dedicated to African self-emancipation, beginning with intellectual self-emancipation.

The African university also ought to be global. It ought not be, it must not be, a university whose focus is solely continental. It should be a university whose vision is global in scope. In particular, the African university should encompass the experiences of peoples of African descent worldwide, in and out of the African continent – that is to say, a global African university. A global African university would be consistent with the vindicationist vision of Seme, who built on foundations laid by previous cohorts of intellectuals of African descent. Notably, many of Seme's predecessors were Africans of the diaspora. In his Columbia oration, Seme spoke not in continental but in global terms. He spoke for Africa and the scattered descendants of Africa everywhere in the world.

'The brighter day is rising upon Africa', Seme's Columbia oration asserted. 'Already', he continued, 'I seem to see her chains dissolved, her desert plains red with harvest, her Abyssinia and her Zululand the seats of science and religion, reflecting the glory of the

rising sun from the spires of their churches and universities.' Now waxing poetic, Seme concluded:

> Yes, the regeneration of Africa belongs to this new and powerful period! O Africa! Like some great century plant that shall bloom, In ages hence, we watch thee, in our dreams see in thy swamps the Prospero of our stream, Thy doors unlocked, where knowledge in her tomb: Hath laid innumerable years in gloom. Then shalt thou, walking with that morning gleam, shine as thy sister lands with equal beam.

Such was Seme's vision of a new Africa. It is a vision worth preserving and augmenting. Seme, however, seems to have gone officially unrecognized at UNIZULU. The neglect should be rectified, perhaps with a speakers' series on global Africa named after him. The prophet of a regenerated Africa ought to be honored at the node of African thought in his natal province. UNIZULU should hardly do less than Columbia University, which now recognizes Seme through an annual lecture series.

It would be folly to assume that the vision of an African university, and of African thought, has no foes. Nor is the struggle for an African university as a centre of African thought a new one. That battle was joined long ago. Seme's contribution is evidence of it. Even more powerful evidence can be found in the life and labour of Edward Wilmot Blyden, one of those on whose shoulders Seme stood. Arguably the foremost pan-African intellectual of the 19th century, Blyden is a pivotal figure in the historic struggle for an African university. Blyden's biography also illustrates a notable theme in the story of the African diaspora in the Americas, namely a yearning to return. That is to say, a desire to turn the Atlantic slave trade on its head, reverse sail, and go full circle back to the ancestral homeland. This yearning among Africans of the western diaspora to return lingers on in, among other places, the culture and music of Rastafari, which has found audiences and adherents on the African continent. Consider that biblically-inflected song of Reggae, the

iconic musical form of Rastafari: 'By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, we wept when we remembered Zion, how can we sing King Alpha's song in a strange land?' The Caribbean-born Blyden, who died some two decades before the rise of Rastafari, was among the many who refused to sing King Alpha's song in a strange land. Blyden was also among a relatively small number of Africans of the western diaspora to actually abandon Babylon for the African continent, spending almost his entire adult life between Liberia and Sierra Leone (Lynch, 1967; Tibebu, 2012; Odamtten, 2019).

Among other accomplishments, Blyden was president of Liberia College, now the University of Liberia. His inaugural address as president of Liberia College, in 1881, should find a place of honour on the syllabus of those struggling to create an African university today. It is a struggle, Blyden noted, not merely of Africanizing the university's staff and leadership, vital and important though that may be. It means something, something vitally important, that the host of the UNIZULU conference and the current vice-chancellor of the University of Zululand, Professor Xoliswa Mtose, is an African, an African woman, no less. That would have been virtually impossible under the apartheid system of damnable memory. Africanization has emancipated the potential of the Xoliswa Mtoses of South Africa. Africanization is necessary. It is also insufficient. Africanization is a means to an end, not an end itself. The end is transformation. That is, transformation of the structures of power, and the structures of wealth, created by colonialism, including of the apartheid variety. Those structures must be transformed, turned upside down, socially leveled. Africanization without transformation is political corruption of the rankest sort – a betrayal of the struggle for self-emancipation. As in politics, so too in thought: Africanization and transformation must be inseparable (Mamdani, 1996).

To be sure, Blyden – like Seme, and like the leaders of contemporary Africa, whether in the continental or global sense – was no social leveler. Blyden was, however, unswerving in his dedication to the African university. Listen to his diagnosis of the problem facing builders of an African university, as articulated in

his inaugural address as president of Liberia College some seven score years ago:

> All our traditions and experiences are connected with a foreign race. We have no poetry or philosophy but that of our taskmasters. The songs that live in our ears and are often on our lips are the songs which we heard sung by those who shouted while we groaned and lamented. They sang of their history, which was the history of our degradation. They recited their triumphs, which contained the records of our humiliation. To our great misfortune, we learned their prejudices and their passions, and thought we had their aspirations and their power.
>
> (Blyden, 1967:91)

This was, above all, a call for global African intellectual self-emancipation. Blyden was a key link in the evolution of a global Africa world view, conjoining cohorts of African intellectuals who came before and after him.

A defining contribution of the western African diaspora was precisely this global Africa world view. It was a spatially unbounded project, the global Africa world view, conceiving of peoples of African descent not in ethnic, national, imperial, regional, or even continental, but in global terms. Thus, was born the idea of Africans as a global people with a set of congruent interests. This was a novel conception of black transnational solidarity, one centred not on notions of shared African essence but on common historical experiences of enslavement, colonialism and racial oppression, that is, the degradation of blackness and Africanness. In a sharp retort, the global Africa world view envisioned a world free of human bondage and racial oppression. Taken together, the global Africa world view amounted to a rebuke of western modernity, meaning capitalism and the Enlightenment, the one founded to a great extent on black bodies and the other premised largely on opposition to blackness and Africanness (Eze, 1997; Bogues, 2003; Curran, 2011).

Roughly, the Enlightenment advanced two overarching claims. The first asserted the autonomy of the individual in relation to established authority, as represented by the state and the clergy, the monarchy and the church, a claim advanced in the novel language of liberty, human rights, and happiness. The second claim of the Enlightenment asserted the sovereignty of the collective, or the people, in relation to established authority, denying the legitimacy of any act not endorsed by popular will. But then came the negation. In its denial of African historicity and black humanity, the Enlightenment excluded peoples of African descent from both claims, rendering them merely as unconscious hewers of wood and drawers of water for capitalism. It was the genius of the global Africa world view, which constituted a veritable black counter-Enlightenment, to negate the negation of African historicity and black humanity.

The intellectuals had done their work, having written in black, so to speak. It remained for the global Africa world view to be written in blood, black blood. That was the historic mission of the Haitian Revolution. By transforming thought into action, black self-emancipating action, the Haitian Revolution offered the most profound rebuke to the racially exclusionary claims of the Enlightenment. It is not without reason that African vindicators like Seme and Blyden were so fond of history. The great lesson of history is this: the present does not necessarily look like the past. The transformative conclusion, the revolutionary conclusion, to be drawn from that lesson is this: the future need not look like the present. Tomorrow can be better than today.

Which is where the Haitian Revolution comes in. Today, Haiti is a byword among nations, the poorest place in the Americas, its fleeing denizens disdained wherever they seek refuge in the hemisphere. It has not always been that way, which is another way of saying it need not remain that way. More than a century and a half after the conclusion of the Haitian Revolution, the global Black Power movement (dubbed Black Consciousness in South Africa) would raise the question of black beauty in all forms. Black – cried out Black

Power militants everywhere, against all Eurocentric proclamations and actions to the contrary – is beautiful. Never before, or since, has the beauty of blackness, in the form of self-emancipatory armed struggle, been more brilliantly, and successfully, displayed as it was in the great historical saga that was the Haitian Revolution, which began in 1791 and ended in 1804 (James, 1963; Trouillot, 1995; Dubois, 2004; Scott, 2018).

It was one of the most improbable events in the entire human experience, the Haitian Revolution. Defying all the odds of the era, the Haitian Revolution stood as the mother of all displays in global African self-emancipation against slavery, colonialism, white supremacy, and other forms of oppression associated with the creation of capitalism. At the time of the revolution, more than half of Haiti's population, half of which died in the revolution, had been born on the continent of Africa. As a military undertaking, the success of the Haitian Revolution owed much to tactics, strategies, and training that survived the Middle Passage, having been brought from the African continent to the Americas by survivors of the Atlantic slave trade (Thornton, 1991; Thornton, 1993; Davis, 2016). For socially transformative effect, the Haitian Revolution put to shame the other two revolutions that happened in that era in the North Atlantic world, namely the American and French revolutions. All three revolutions – in the United States, France, and Haiti – confronted the same trinity of oppression: colonialism, slavery, white supremacy. But only the Haitian Revolution, and the Haitian Revolution alone, abolished the entire unholy trinity, profoundly disrupting the global capitalist plantation system in the process. For so daring an act of self-emancipation, Haiti was scorned by the powers of the white Atlantic. Boycotted diplomatically, its blood-soaked independence unrecognized, Haiti was disdained intellectually, its unparalleled revolutionary achievements largely silenced in western scholarship, all before being invaded and occupied by the United States in the early decades of the last century. This unrelenting external assault – which, although changing form,

has not ceased up to the present time, and which historically has enabled the country's predatory ruling classes – goes a long way toward explaining Haiti's current dilemma.

The debt. For majesty and model, the majesty of the model produced by the revolution, plus the price paid by Haitian society and the Haitian masses for more than two centuries running, all global Africa, indeed all oppressed humanity in the modern world, owe Haiti a special debt. That debt is little known, much less acknowledged, on the African continent (Ly, 2006). It is a debt that the African university must repay, intellectually and morally. In the African university, the Haitian Revolution must take pride of place in the study of revolution, which in turn must be a key subject. African thought can never be complete without coming to terms with the global, especially the global African, implications of the Haitian Revolution.

As a node of African thought, UNIZULU is uniquely situated to play a catalytic role in a particular form of comparative pan-African revolutionary studies, with a focus on the Haitian Revolution and the Zulu Revolution. To begin with, the two events are closely related in time, the Zulu Revolution having happened hard on the heels of the Haitian Revolution. But what if there are also causal connections between the two revolutions, at least in indirect and roundabout ways? Consider, for a moment, certain consequences of the Haitian Revolution for French colonialism, including colonial slavery, and for imperialist rivalry worldwide, including in and around South Africa. After the defeat in Haiti (the crown jewel of their empire) the slaveholding French colonialists, under Napoleon, were forced to sell, at a steep discount, their huge mainland North American possessions to the emerging United States. Except for a few small islands in the Caribbean, the French empire in the Americas had collapsed. One result was increased imperialist rivalry in other parts of the world, especially between France and Britain, including in contemporary South Africa. It was against this fraught backdrop that the Zulu Revolution unfolded. Future

research could well uncover more direct connections between the Haitian and Zulu revolutions. One failure that African thought and the African university must overcome is the failure of imagination, including historical imagination.

In southern Africa, at any rate, there is no need to imagine the impact of the Zulu Revolution. It was, perhaps, the most consequential African-initiated event, or series of events, on the subcontinent in the 19th century. Altogether, the Zulu Revolution and related transactions reshaped the demographic and political geography of southern Africa, as far north as Tanzania (Cooper, 1966; Eldredge, 2014).

Another important outcome of the Zulu Revolution, and its aftereffects, was globalization of the Zulu nomenclature – of the Zulu name – along with an association of Zuluness with anticolonial resistance. The latter process was especially marked among those of African descent in the Americas. Few, if any, African ethnic groups would see their stock rise in the transatlantic African diaspora in the post-slavery era as much as the Zulus. Yet it is largely in vain that one searches the record on slavery for references to Zulus. The reason is not far to seek. Apparently, very few individuals of Zulu heritage were enslaved in the Americas. This paradox – the increasing legend of the Zulu nation among Africans of the diaspora following the end of slavery in the Americas, in the absence of any appreciable Zulu presence during slavery – can be explained by events that had their origins in the Zulu Revolution, beginning with the creation of a powerful Zulu state with a military to match.

One event, during the high noon of the European conquest of the continent, the so-called Scramble for Africa, was foundational in the making of the Zulu legend worldwide, including in the African diaspora. This was the Battle of Isandlwana, in 1879, when the Zulu army defeated invading British forces (Lock & Quantrill, 2002; Ntuli, 2019). As a demonstration of African military capacity in the face of better-equipped and more technologically proficient European armies during the Scramble for Africa, the Battle of Isandlwana was

exceeded only by the 1896 Battle of Adwa, when Ethiopia decisively vanquished Italy (Jonas, 2011). That the British soon reversed the tide and subdued the Zulu nation (as fascist Italy would eventually do to Ethiopia some four decades after Adwa) hardly mattered. The die had been cast. The Battle of Isandlwana greatly boosted the Zulu legend in global Africa, prefiguring the even more rapturous reception that would greet the Battle of Adwa. Indeed, Seme's Columbia oration would allude to the linking of these two events, Isandlwana and Adwa, envisioning Africa's 'Abyssinia [another name for Ethiopia] and her Zululand [becoming] the seats of science and religion, reflecting the glory of the rising sun from the spires of their churches and universities.' Not coincidentally, Seme spoke in the immediate aftermath of a major addition to the record of Zulu opposition to colonialism. The event this time, in 1906, the year of Seme's oration, was the Bambatha Rebellion, the proximate cause of which was the onerous taxation of the colonial state, exactions hated by colonized peoples at all times and in all places (Marks, 1970). The Bambatha Rebellion further sealed, in the minds of many, friends and foes alike, the association between Zuluness and anti-colonial resistance.

The foes included John Buchan, who, ironically, also offered an entrée into the mindset of some of the friends. A Scottish apparatchik of British colonialism who ended his career as governor-general of Canada, Buchan's service to empire included a stint in South Africa in the years leading up to the Bambatha Rebellion. In 1910, Buchan, who was also a noted writer, penned Prester John, his famous novel vilifying the Bambatha Rebellion (Buchan, 1910). A key character in the novel is John Laputa, who unsuccessfully tried to overthrow white colonial rule, rather like the eponymous Zulu chief, Bambatha, who had spearheaded the 1906 revolt. But whereas Chief Bambatha belonged to the system that colonialism had sidelined, Laputa was a product of the colonial system. He nevertheless challenged colonialism in various ways, in the manner of Seme and Seme's even more famous Zulu mentor,

John Langalibalele Dube, the founding president of the African National Congress (Hughes, 2011). Like Dube, to whom he bore an eerie resemblance, including sharing the same first name, Laputa was a clergyman who had been educated in the United States and had African American affiliations. In the novel, an intelligence officer, that indispensable handmaiden of colonialism, sized up Laputa:

> [He] preached more than the Gospel. His word was 'Africa for the Africans,' and his chief point was that the natives had had a great empire in the past and might have a great empire again. He used to tell the story of Prester John, with all kinds of embroidery of his own. You see, Prester John was a good argument for him, for he had been a Christian as well as a great potentate. For years there had been plenty of this talk in South Africa, chiefly among Christian Kaffirs. It is what they call 'Ethiopianism,' and American Negroes are the chief apostles.
>
> (Buchan, 1910:90)

Of course, the nomenclature American Negroes has since been upgraded to African Americans. While Chief Bambatha likely never met a single one, African Americans overpopulated the colonial imaginary in Africa, especially in the settler colonies of southern Africa where they were portrayed as subversive evil geniuses inclined to collude with 'native' agitation. Oppressors in colonial Africa, like their counterparts everywhere, never absorbed the lesson that oppression, actual oppression, not imaginary outside agitators, was the chief cause of agitation by the oppressed.

For their part, African Americans were well represented among those who came to associate Zuluness with anticolonial resistance (Vinson & Edgar, 2007). It is an association that was strengthened in the era of Black Power, when the names of famous Zulu leaders and military commanders – especially Shaka (Chaka), Cetshwayo, and Bambatha, who came to constitute a kind of Zulu resistance trinity

– were lustily adopted by many African Americans, mostly men, professing Black Power allegiance. Little wonder, therefore, that a founding apostle of Hip-Hop in the United States, which in some ways emerged out of the ashes of the Black Power-inflected Black Arts Movement, assumed the stage name of Afrika Bambaataa, as if to make the Zulu chief, in all his martial militancy, a proxy for black struggles globally. Even today, the linkage between Zuluness and no-nonsense has not entirely lost its potency in some African American circles. Thus, an African-themed curio shop on Chicago's predominantly black southside, whose operator was described by an interlocutor in that city as 'an eccentric Kenyan/South African who calls herself Princess Rose Kiowa', markets ornamental swords under the rubric, 'Papa Zulu Don't Take No Mess!', a riff on James Brown's Black Power-era song, 'Papa Don't Take No Mess'. Princess Kiowa is hardly the first person in the United States to have espied a commercial opportunity in the Zulu martial reputation. Legions of others, black and nonblack, the former including an occasional individual of Zulu heritage directly from South Africa – exhibitionists, showmen, fabulists, and charlatans prominent among them – have been exploiting American stereotypes about fearsome and fearless Zulus for personal gain since the time of Cetshwayo, hero of the Battle of Isandlwana.

The Zulu Revolution, like its near contemporary, the Haitian Revolution, has had amazing, and strange, afterlives. To be sure, some of those afterlives have taken regressive forms, centered on colonized and racialized stereotypes and on commercialized huckstering. In their most progressive iterations, however, the afterlives of the Zulu Revolution, again like those of the Haitian Revolution, have been deployed in the service of African liberation and black vindication globally. Such prospects have long frightened foes of African liberation and black vindication. Thus, John Buchan of Prester John fame, or infamy, had linked Ethiopianism, the assigned ideology of John Laputa, his fictionalized Chief Bambatha, with Haitian and African American religious practices, all of

which he considered 'bastard Christianity'. Using the same racist terminology to refer to African-descended peoples of both sides of the Atlantic, Buchan made one character say: 'The Kaffir finds it an easy job to mix up Christian emotion and pagan practice. Look at Hayti and some of the performances in the Southern States' (Buchan, 1910:67). It remains for the African university, firmly grounded in African thought, to look at the Haitian and Zulu revolutions, and demonstrate their meaning to the struggles for global African emancipation, then and now. In this way the regeneration of Africa, of global Africa, as envisioned by Seme, would be revisited. The UNIZULU contribution to such an endeavour could be seminal.

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SYSTEMATIZING, OPERATIONALIZING, AND MODELLING AFRICAN THOUGHT IN AN EPISTEMOLOGICAL VORTEX OF GLOBAL AFRICANA

OPOKU AGYEMAN

Introduction: The Problematics of Global North and Global South

The global North and South are not geographical concepts. The North is used as a shorthand description for the world's rich, industrialized, former colonial powers of Western Europe, plus the United States, Canada, Japan, Australia, and New Zealand. The South is shorthand for the world's recently colonized, less developed or developing countries, ranging from the suddenly rich but yet to industrialize oil states of the Middle East, to the so-called Fourth World of states, the poorest countries of the globe located for the most part in the Indian subcontinent, sub-Saharan Africa, and the Caribbean region. Between the Fourth World and the suddenly wealthy oil countries is the so-called Third World encompassing most South American countries and others from Asia and a few from Africa. Any effective forging in the South of epistemologies born of struggle against the North's customary imperialistic hegemony depended on the South's capacity to drum up effective cohesion from its many fragments. Failing this, acute and persistent centrifugal tendencies would make disaggregation of the unit all but inevitable. China is located on the sidelines of this North-South conflict. In the wake of the Opium Wars of 1839-42 in which Britain sought to open the country up for British narcotics trafficking, and following the collective effort of the Western powers to carve it up ahead of the 1884-5 European balkanization of Africa, China fought and continues to fight toward restoring the 15th century technological and military primacy it achieved under the Ming

dynasty. Japan is, in the main, co-opted into the West, thanks to its historic escape from the wreckage of European colonialism; its rise to technological heights had a lot to do with the fact that it was never colonized, and therefore was never subjected to the grim experience of colonial underdevelopment at the hands of the Europeans.

The North

The roots of Western imperialism, as Claude Barlow and Tony Clarke (2002:81) remind us, 'go back five hundred years to a time when the empires of Europe competed with each other in their race to seize control over valuable resources like gold, silver, copper, and timber that natured had stored in Asia, Africa, and the Americas'. It was decidedly a globalization under European domination for European benefit, propelled, in the words of Jeffrey Sachs (2005:43), by the ideology of 'the right and obligation of European and European-descended whites to rule the lives of others around the world….'. Europe's 'superiority of force', Adam Smith added, enabled the Europeans 'to commit with impunity every sort of injustice in …remote countries' (Quoted in Sachs, 2005:43). Indeed, in Felix Greene's notable rave about the British Empire, 'Never before had so many people – one quarter of the human race – been subjugated and put to work for the enrichment of so few' (Quoted in Rosberg, 2006: 90-91). It remained for the *Atlantic Monthly (*February 1925) to enter a final plea of a totally unapologetic rationale for the wholesale destruction of non-European people around the world:

> Exploitation is the primary and legitimate aim of imperialism… The weak, the ignorant, and the slothful races cannot expect to remain undisturbed in their habitat. It is much that they are allowed to remain at all, a concession rather to the humanity of their betters than to their own right. Interference, guidance and control are the indispensable condition of this tolerance… We cannot leave them to their indolent siesta, if they hold in accidental and unconscious keeping the energies needed for advancing civilization.

Given the exceeding ferocity and brutality the Europeans unleashed, particularly on Africa and its people who were noticeably at a downward turn of political power, it is reasonable to speculate as to what unusual dynamic of character and psychology made such savagery and wreckage and destructiveness of untold human lives and souls across the globe possible. It is an established fact that the plague of 1348, instinctively dubbed Black Death, killed off half of Europe's total population, and so traumatized and devastated the European psyche that it was considered a harbinger of apocalypse, even as it set off a monstrous upheaval including a witch-hunting craze through the 16th and 17th centuries (Christian, 2011).

It is legitimate to wonder to what extent it also contributed to an orientation of total disregard for the humanity of non-Europeans.

After all, notable historical empowerment of societies elsewhere outside of Europe did not result in such monstrosity of values and outlook. Chinese historical rise in the 15th century, and the relationship it forged with the outside world, is a case in point. As Paul Kennedy expatiates, of all the civilizations of pre-modern times, none appeared more advanced, none felt more superior, than that of China. Its considerable population, 100-130 million compared with Europe's 50-55 million in the fifteenth century; its unified, hierarchic administration run by a well-educated Confucian bureaucracy; its technological precocity, as well as a navy possessing 1 350 combat vessels, including 400 large floating fortresses and 250 ships designed for long range cruising, all made the Chinese natural candidates for overseas explorations and expeditions. And yet, in spite of their overwhelming power, the Chinese never set out to plunder or murder, unlike the Portuguese, Dutch, and the European invaders of the Indian Ocean. The self-restraint was embedded in the Confucian Code that deplored warfare and considered armed forces to be necessary only for purposes of deterring foreign attacks (Kennedy, 1987: 3-9).

Alongside the brutal imperialist campaign, the Europeans utilized 'deculturation' and 'miseducation' to perfect a method of

psychological manipulation and control that resulted in a world-wide imposition of a European world view and lifestyle as the human norm. Deculturation involves the systematic stripping away of the intended victim's ancestral culture and replacing it with European culture, while mis-education refers to the destructive effects of a pedagogy and curriculum 'that deliberately omits, distorts, or trivializes' the role of a subjugated people regarding their contributions to world history and culture (Hotep, 2011).

While these scourges have been felt to some extent in all areas and among all the people who have been subjected to European colonial strangulation, they have particularly ravaged African people universally through 'conceptual incarceration', by which they have been imprisoned in 'white' belief systems and knowledge bases, and through 'learned indifference', by which they have almost compulsively cut themselves off from 'self-knowledge' and ended up identifying with and embracing European history, traditions and culture as their own, while jettisoning and relegating African history, traditions, and culture (Hotep, 2011).

From the sixteenth century onwards Western historiography reflected a belief that the central purpose of all scholarship was to fabricate and propagate a notion of the intrinsic superiority of everything European. It is not at all surprising that as a result, the production of knowledge in the North has been infused with and embedded in tremendous intellectual dishonesty, deceit, and arrogance, driven by a motive force, above all, to proclaim African congenital inferiority; to promulgate a doctrine of a people with no history of civilizing accomplishments of any sort; indeed to enunciate a creed of Africans as 'natural servitors', a people whose only reason for existence is to be the slaves of other races, principally the Europeans.

Thus, David Hume wrote: 'the African is a man without a past. Africa is a continent where men by their own efforts have never raised themselves much above the level the beasts: no indigenous manufacturers among them, no arts, no sciences; no approach to

the civilization of his white fellow creatures whom he imitates as a monkey does a man.' (Quoted in Asher, 2020). Not to be outdone, Hugh Trevor-Roper, once a Regius Professor of Modern History at the University of Oxford, pronounced as recently as 1965: 'Perhaps in the future there will be some African history to track. But at present there is none, or very little: there is only the history of the Europeans in Africa. The rest is largely darkness, like the history of pre-European, pre-Columbian America. And darkness is not a subject for history.' (Quoted in Chimee, July 2018).

The triumphant success of a campaign rooted in such cognitive conspiracy and calumny is indicated by the fact that, even at this stage of the 21st Century, intellectual and social consciousness remain sealed off from the hard scholarship pertaining to the glorious, seminal achievements of the world's most ancient people (Davidson,1987; Wade, 2011; *The Guardian*, 2019; Eliot, 1910; Diop,1974; McSchmeck,1986; Rensgerger,1979; Wilford, 1992; *The New York Times*, 1980; *CNN,* 2002; Whiting, 2022). Western academia's promulgation of the centrality and primacy of Europe remains triumphant and entrenched, no matter the mental twists and turns and gyrations it has taken to sustain it (Anderson, 2006). The hegemonic role of Western epistemology that accompanied Western colonial rampage continues to sustain itself through the exclusion and othering of other epistemologies (Breidlid, 2012).

Egypt, which an enchanted Herodotus saw when visiting as a land of 'wonders more in number than any other land' inhabited by people of 'curly hair' and 'of a black colour by reason of the burning heat', whom he considered 'the most learned in history by far' (Eliot, 1910) was emphatically not the starting point but the fruit of earlier, more seminal, more fundamental civilizations that lay to the south of it. Ethiopia was one of these. Indeed, Diodorus Siculus, historian of the first century BC, characterized Egypt as made out 'of the mud and slime of Ethiopia'. Another principal source of nurturance of Egypt was Nubia, which reached a high stage of political development as long ago as 3300 BC, several generations

before the earliest documented Egyptian king. Indeed, according to researchers at the University of Chicago, Nubia is the oldest recognizable monarchy in human history. A study of artifacts recovered from the Qustal cemetery in 1964 showed that 'the various symbols of Nubian royalty are the same as those associated in later times with Egyptian kings' (Rensberger,1979). And Robert Draper asserts in a National Geographic article that Nubian pyramids at El Kurru, Nuri and Meroe were 'greater in number than all of Egypt's' (Cited in Rensberger,1979).

Interestingly, all these three ancient African civilizations are excluded from 'Classical Studies' of Western universities. Studies of antiquity are confined to Greece and Rome, while Egypt is in fact, cut off from Africa altogether and consigned to 'Oriental Studies'. Emphatically, Egypt and Africa are considered separate entities altogether. Meanwhile the looting, bleaching and overall camouflaging of ancient artifacts unearthed from Egyptian tombs continued apace in a desperate effort to deny their African progeny. In particular, against all the evidence that point conclusively to his African identity, including a high-tech facial reconstruction conducted by scientists and special effects artists in 2002 that reveals an outright African identity bearing no resemblance to his golden death mask (CNN, 2002), King Tutankhamun, probably history's most recognizable pharaoh, continues to be fraudulently and blatantly passed off as a non-African entity in all the exhibitions staged by Europeans around the globe.

Christianity's links to Africa are unquestionable. By Biblical authority, the Christ was called out of Egypt. And Ethiopia is the first land ever to adopt Christianity, several hundreds of years before Europe. To mark the fourth century rejuvenation of Christianity, King Lalibela set out to build churches 'that the world had never seen'. The result was eleven sunken churches chiseled out of red-hued rock within walking distance of each other and connected by a labyrinth of tunnels and passageways. The twelfth church, Medhane Alem, is the largest monolithic rock-hewn building in the

world. Fittingly, UNESCO designated these churches of Lalibela a World Heritage Site in 1960, describing them as 'A remarkable coupling of engineering and architecture and a unique artistic achievement' (Onishi, 2001).

Whereas there is historical evidence pointing to the identity of the historical Christ as African, as a Black person, there is not one such piece of evidence suggesting a contrary identification. In fact, a gold coin struck by Justinian the Second around A.D. 705 supposedly shows the full-face bust of Justinian on one side, and a full-face bust of the Christ on the other, exhibiting an African identity. It was W.E.B. DuBois' view in 1944 that 'This coin places beyond dispute' the African identity of Jesus. But Warner Sallman (1892-1968), a painter from Chicago, creator of commercial and advertising images and freelance illustrator, was about to change all that. His portrait, Head of Christ, which he fashioned after a relative who sat for him, transformed the Christ instantly into a European. Thereafter, backed by colonial armies, European missionaries, and the powerful Hollywood propaganda industry, the solemn project of 'Christianizing' and 'civilizing' Africa and places beyond began in earnest. Soon, 500 million copies of the European Christ were to be sold around the world, becoming a fixture in churches and homes across the Black world (Graves, 2010; Morgan, 1996; Lundboom, 1999).

A good idea of what many Europeans would make of their 'Christianity' is provided by the Afrikaner President Kruger of the Republic of South Africa in this enunciation of the destiny of non-Europeans in the African country: 'You are the descendants of Ishmael and therefore from your very birth bound to slave for the descendants of Esau. As descendants of Esau, we cannot allow you to rights placing you on equality with ourselves. You must rest content with what rights we grant you.' (Quoted in Power, 1969).

The title of Walter Rodney's work, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa,* stirs considerable uneasiness among scholars wedded to Western epistemology. There is no question that the dialectical

relationship between Africa and Europe that ensued paved the way for Europe's development, while wreaking total havoc on Africa. The population loss occasioned by the slave trafficking alone, whose impact was developmentally shattering, totaled around 200 to 300 million in the period from 1650 to 1900 (Rodney, 1972: 97-98). This is not to mention the massive plunder of African resources, or the psychological brutalization and paralysis that emanated from being categorized and treated as less than human.

Eurocentric thinkers customarily deal with the unpleasant facts of Europe's brutal destruction of Africa and its people through the device of cognitive escapism. Thus Jeffrey Sachs, typical of the breed, starts off grudgingly with the statement: 'Little surpasses the western world in the cruelty and depredations that it has long imposed on Africa…' and then jumps to what he considers the central cause of Africa's developmental gap – its geography – in that it 'lacks navigable rivers with access to the ocean for easy transport and trade. Moreover, much of Africa's population lives in the interior of the continent rather than the coast' (Sachs, 2005: 208). The Columbia professor must have been inspired by Adam Smith who observed in 1776 in *The Wealth of Nations:* 'that Africa had been poor from time immemorial because it lacked the navigable rivers and natural inlets that afford the benefits of low-cost, sea-based trade' (Quoted in Weston, 1972:192).

The South

Even though the great majority of the populations of the Global South live in countries of the southern hemisphere, this designation, as previously indicated, is not a geographical concept. As Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2012: 43-67) explicates:

> The South is here rather a metaphor of the human suffering caused by capitalism and colonialism at the global level, and a metaphor as well as the resistance to overcome or minimize such suffering. It is, therefore, an anti-capitalist, anti-colonialist,

> and anti-imperialist South. It is a South that also exists in the global North, in the form of excluded, silenced, and marginalized populations.

The South's 'resistance to overcome' took place largely within two organizations. The Non-Aligned Movement, wedded to the 'struggle against imperialism, colonialism, Neo-colonialism, racism, and all forms of foreign aggression, occupation, domination, interference or hegemony, as well as against great power and bloc politics', was founded and held its first conference in 1961 under the leadership of Josip Bros Tito of Yugoslavia, Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt, Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, and Sukarno of Indonesia. The Group of 77, born at the first session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in 1964, emerged as the principal organ for the articulation and promotion of the collective economic interests of the countries of the South. As Tanzania's Nyerere would put it: 'Each of our economies has developed as a by-product and a subsidiary of development in the industrialized North…We are not the prime movers of our own destiny; economically we are dependencies – semi-colonies at best, not sovereign states.' The objective, therefore, was 'to complete the liberation of the Third World countries from external domination' (Sauvant, 2014: 43-67). Therefrom, on May 1,1974, the Sixth Special Session of the UNGA adopted a *Declaration and Programme of Action on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order*.

But, as Karl Sauvant has elucidated, shared epistemic outlook was one thing; creating a strong, unifying institutional force, quite another. Since the Group of 77 (later to grow to 134) was by no means homogenous, group cohesiveness proved to be not 'an easy matter to maintain'. The immediate interests and specific negotiating priorities of the members were different, as were their cultural, ideological, political and economic systems. Great differences in the level of regional economic development, especially as between the Latin American Group on the one hand and the Africa Group on the other, did not help matters. The individual weight of

some countries, especially when they were susceptible to being cultivated by developed countries into separate bilateral deals, complicated matters still. Additional complications were created by the continuation of strong 'traditional or neo-colonial links of some of the developing countries with some developed ones' (Sauvant, 2014), as in the relationship between francophone African states and France.

Predictably, the many negotiations that followed between North and South 'hardly made any progress…On the contrary, the gap between the North and South widened, particularly for the least developed among the developing states' (Sauvant, 2014). It is noteworthy that Southerners themselves, not just analysts from the North, made distinctions in UN and UNCTAD debates and documents, pointing to the 'least developed' countries (LDCs). Inequitable representation, engagement, treatment and outcomes in various operational arenas oftentimes poisoned the atmosphere of Southern solidarity. The exclusion of most Latin American countries from the preferential schemes of the Lome Convention is a case in point. Inaugurated in 1976, it focused on the aid and investment commitment of the EEC to the African, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) countries, and provided for duty-free exports of most agricultural and mineral exports into the EEC.

In the wake of the Arab-Israeli War of October 1973, the members of the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) led by Saudi Arabia, imposed a combination of oil price increases and embargo that boosted the earnings of the Arab states, while causing significant economic stress to almost all developing countries through increased petroleum costs and debt-servicing problems. One view is that, through it all, Southern responses 'were milestones in the story of how Asians and Africans discovered their own potential power against Caucasian might' (Hansen, 1979: 22). Another view, equally important, is that, while the OPEC was welcomed by most developing countries, the balance of payments burden of the increased oil price 'introduced

considerable strains into the Group of 77 and, for that matter, into the Non-Aligned Movement' (Sauvant, 2014).

In fact, a debt crisis erupted in Africa in the 1980s caused mainly by the devastating rise in interest rates and oil prices, and the devastating declines in commodity prices. The effect of the energy crises of 1973-74 and 1979-80 was particularly jolting, creating, in the words of William Cline of the Institute of International Economics in Washington, 'the single most important cause of the debt burden of non-oil developing countries' (George, 1990:28). This opened the way to the virtual return of colonialism 'in a new form' celebrated by Paul Johnson in his essay, 'Colonialism's Back – and Not a Moment Too Soon' (Johnson, 1993). Between 1980 and 1991, forty-three of the fifty-two countries in Africa were roped into the International Monetary Fund-World Bank stranglehold and forced to endure imposed austerities and sharply curtailed sovereignty resulting in a huge 'negative transfer of capital' from Africa's poor, underdeveloped economies to the industrial countries of the West. It did not help matters that, in the face of so much sacrifice in the service of Afro-Arab solidarity, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates set out massively to contravene a 1979 UN oil embargo against apartheid South Africa (Kielsmas, 1991).

The 1955 Bandung Conference which gathered twenty-nine 'free and independent nations of Asia and Africa' to discuss 'racialism and colonialism' epitomized, to Richard Wright, the illusion of Afro-Asian solidarity. Only six out of the twenty-nine countries formally represented were African nations or of the African continent: Egypt, Ethiopia, the Gold Coast, Liberia, Libya, and Sudan. Of the six, a third was from the Arab world, and the Gold Coast and Sudan were not yet independent. And so, despite the emphasis on Afro-Asian solidarity, the majority of Sub-Saharan Africa were not present at Bandung: 'Asian nations controlled the planning and the proceedings and dominated in both numbers and importance. Africa was hardly present' (Nopper, 2015). In effect, 'we cannot look at Black-Asian coalition today or the obvious imbalance

in power, prestige, wealth, authority, and the value between Africa and Asia…unless we trace the trajectory of that imbalance…I look at Bandung (in order) to situate it within a larger history and trajectory of what it means to be Black and Asian in the modern world.' (Nopper, 2015).

Amidst the crashing vortex of asymmetrical linkages, the virus of anti-African racism lurked across the South. There was no forgetting that the Arabs, the first people to develop specialized, long-distance slave trade from Africa, had for centuries derogated Africans as 'suited by nature for the lowest and most degrading forms of bondage'; castigated Africans as bearing 'close proximity to the animal stage'; and avowed that Africans were as naturally destined for enslavement as 'the domestication of beasts of burden' (Davis, 1984: 5,6,8). It bears noting that Arab enslavement of Africans continued in various forms until as recently as 1962 when Saudi Arabia begrudgingly removed legalized slavery from its statute books. Mauritania did so only in 1980. In a 1955 book, Nasser characterized Africa as 'the remotest depths of the jungle' and earmarked it as a prime candidate for Egypt's 'spread of enlightenment and civilization' by way of Islamization-Arabization (Nasser, 1955:109-110). Dr Reem Abou-el-Fadl stated categorically in 2020 that Afro-Asian internationalist affiliations did not make inroads in Egypt because 'they were often undermined by… racist attitudes fostered in turn by tropes of civilizational superiority and legacies of slavery' (Abou-el-Fadl, 2020).

During his twenty-one-year career in South Africa, Gandhi, the future leader of India, 'resisted any movement toward the social and political solidarity of African and Asian peoples'; he held his people 'apart from and above Africans to the extent that for Indians to be classified and treated as Africans was a basic grievance'. In a May 1895 petition to the British Colonial Secretary, he complained about Indians being 'huddled together' in the same compartment with Africans; he castigated Africans as an uncivilized lot mired in 'a life of sloth, indolence and superstition'; and he made it clear at

every opportunity that they deserved to be held down in their own land by the European racists. In 1939, he emphatically repudiated Indian socialist efforts to merge African and Indian interests in South Africa (Power, 1969: 441-55).

And what is the place of Africans in the social universe of 'pigmentocratic' Latin America, from Cuba to Venezuela? In Brazil, 'the most African nation outside Africa' where the largest population of African descent in the Western hemisphere dwells, Blacks 'are almost totally excluded from the decision-making centers' and the vast majority of them remain, generations after the abolition of slavery, 'at the very bottom of the economic and social pyramid' (Simons, 1988). In Columbia, where 15 percent of the total population of 35 million are Black, it is revealing that a 1991 Constitutional Convention, billed as 'a constitutional convention for all Columbians', reserved two seats for Columbia's 500 000 'Indians', but none to Blacks with a population ten times larger (Brook, 1994). In Peru, an Andean nation of 23 million people, the thinking is that it is 'esthetically pleasing to see Black people in subservient and demeaning roles' (Simms, 1996). And in Mexico, as in the other Latin societies, there exists what Colin Palmer calls a 'racial hierarchy' based on skin colour, 'with white the higher value as opposed to those who are brown and those, God forbid, who are Black' (Quoted in *The New York Times*,1995). In Argentina, where black Africans accounted for up to half the population in provinces like Santiago del Estero, Catamarca, Salta and Cordoba, 'mass disappearance' began to occur following slavery's abolishing in 1853, as the country's President, Domingo Faustino Sarmientz, during his tenure from 1868 to 1874, set out to wipe out the Blacks in the country through a policy of 'covert genocide' using extremely repressive policies. He mused in his diary in 1848: 'What is to be done with such Blacks, hated by the white race?' (Quoted in Ghosh, 2013).

In the face of so much internal racism in the South, it is no wonder that the North has continued to retain full hegemony, as in this 2000 triumphal testimonial by Samuel Huntington:

> The West is now at an extraordinary peak of power in relation to other civilizations. Its superpower opponent has disappeared from the map. Military conflict among Western states is unthinkable, and Western military power is unrivaled…It dominates international political institutions and with Japan international economic institutions. Global political and security issues are effectively settled by a directorate of the US, Germany, and Japan, all of which maintain extraordinarily close relations with each other to the exclusion of lesser of lesser and largely non-Western countries. Decisions made at the UN Security Council or in the IMF that reflect the interests of the West are presented to the world as reflecting the desires of the world community. The very phrase "the world community" has become the euphemistic collective noun…to give global legitimacy to actions reflecting the interests of the US and other Western powers. Through the IMF and other international economic institutions, the West promotes its economic interests and imposes on other nations the economic policies it thinks appropriate…The West in effect is using international institutions, military power and economic resources to run the world in ways that will maintain Western predominance, protect Western interests, and promote Western political and economic values.
>
> (Huntington in O'Meara, Mehlinger, Krain, 2000)

Africana

It is clear that the assumptions of Southern solidarity are largely specious travails of wishful thinking. There was never much to hold the disparate elements of the South together beyond a shared revulsion, a more or less fervent need, to draw on Frantz Fanon's words from his appropriately titled work, *The Wretched of the Earth,*

to leave '…this Europe where they are never done talking of Man, yet murder men everywhere they find them, at the corner of every one of their own streets, in all the corners of the globe', in the process for centuries stifling 'almost the whole of humanity' (Fanon, 1961). Alas, it turned out that this shared animus was never strong enough to overcome the internal dissensions of the group, particularly as propelled by anti-African propensities.

The distinctiveness of African people in the contemporary world centres on their unspeakably tragic association with slavery for hundreds of years at the hands of first the Arabs and then the Europeans. Even though race is not biological, has no genetic basis, and no one characteristic trait or even gene distinguishes all the members of one so-called race from all the members of another so-called race, it is nonetheless a powerful social idea to the point where everything is, arguably, about race (Waechter, 2016). Of course societies have enslaved others through much of human history, but often as a result of conquest, and not because of the physical characteristics or assumptions of the natural inferiority of the enslaved. Owing to a unique set of historical circumstances, Africans were the first to be embroiled in slavery where all the enslaved shared similar physical characteristics:

> Never before had racial slavery been justified by the dogma that some … variety of mankind was born to be the servant forever of others. …Nor had any systems of subordination ever developed a doctrine of racism teaching that some varieties of men had defective brains and emotions that doomed them and their descendants to low status forever.
>
> (Drake in Harris,1982: 386)

The dark skin colour of African people suddenly became a stigma of inferiority all over the world, sustained by Western epistemology loaded with racist theories of 'white' racial supremacy, fleshed out with mindless biological and ideological arguments. The seemingly

interminable duration of African bondage amplified the racial stigma by implying either that the victims accepted their human demotion as being rooted in the natural order, or that they could not summon from within themselves the inner spiritual, psychological and intellectual capabilities needed to upend it. The implied contempt from within the South, as in the Indian leader Jawaharlal Nehru's statement that 'Reading through history', the oppression and humiliation of Africans have 'not been equaled anywhere', bears this out (Quoted in Mazrui, 1967:199).

Herein lies the most fundamental existential problem that only Black people can solve. And herein lies the supreme rationale of the pan-Africanist developmental logic and principle of exclusive racial instrumentality – the absolute necessity for Black people to be their own instruments of recovery from historic prostration and degradation. The postulation is that there is something about the African history of the last 500 years, in its tragic dimensions of powerlessness and persistent subservience to others, that absolutely requires the solution of African self-repair. Dignity is not a postulate of charity one people bestows on another. Only the one assumed to be inferior can invalidate the charge through self-agency of sustained, extraordinarily outstanding and superior accomplishments. Any involvement of outsiders would only complicate, undermine, and destroy the integrity of such a project.

Indeed, how does one conjure up a solution of wishful, universalistic, idealistic multiracialism or co-religionism in the face of customary opprobrium and vituperation by people of pallor who claim that 'In physical, mental, social, inventive, religious, and ruling power the African race holds the lowest place'; that, therefore, 'to force this lowest stratum into a position of political equality with the highest is only to clog the progress of all mankind in its march…toward the highest planes of human aspiration?' (Quoted in Weston, 1972:11). 'It is evident', responded Frederick Douglass, a former African slave leader of the abolitionist movement, 'that we must be our own representatives and advocates …The man struck

is the man to cry out' (quoted in Harris, 1982:386). The principle of self-emancipation is echoed in the thoughts of Amilcar Cabral of Guinea-Bissau (quoted in Davidson, 1969: 88-90) as he conducted a guerrilla campaign against Portuguese colonialism:

> We want no volunteers, and we shall turn them back if they present themselves. Foreign military advisers or commanders or any other foreign personnel, are the last thing we shall accept. They would rob my people of their one chance of achieving a historical meaning for them-selves; of reasserting their own history; of recapturing their own identity.

In effect, the presumption of Africa's fruitful membership and participation in a Southern collective geared toward repudiating and fighting off Western hegemony was, from the first, unnecessary and misplaced. The fight for African emancipation is Africa's alone; the battleground is the African mind; and the soldiery is a University of The Black World.

Toward a University of The Black World

The 'central objective' in decolonizing the African mind, as Chinweizu (1987) has noted, 'is to overthrow the authority which alien traditions exercise over the African. This demands the dismantling of white supremacist beliefs, and the structure which upholds them, in every area of African life'. To play its role as the central motor of mental emancipation, the African university, heretofore constituted as a replica of a European university, must undergo a drastic curricular overhaul. To begin with, any Classics Department servicing courses on ancient Greece and Rome must be dismantled. Likewise, courses in European Literature, European History, European Religions, and European Languages must similarly be excised. To put it lightly, it is a monstrous, tragic waste of time and energy on the one hand and, on the other, an incalculably costly, ruinous self-abnegation, for an African mind to immerse itself over

endless years in European romanticized self-worship. Such courses have been the veritable pollutants of the African mind and must be uprooted. Following this imperative cleansing imperative, a new set of vital emancipation-driven programmes should be instituted.

Department of African History and Archaeology

This is a most important, indeed a foundational, programme because, in order to map out the future, one must clearly understand the past. The point has never been lost to Africa's relentless adversaries that any credible, tangible awakening from the long nightmare of racial prostration and degradation sorely needs the psychological leverage of surpassing, superlative, undeniable accomplishments of a period in the past before the fall. As John Henrik Clarke (1976:5-11) put it, 'White scholars, more than Blacks, have always understood the importance of controlling history and social thought. The best way to control a people is to control what they think about themselves.' And so, not surprisingly, the central thrust of European knowledge production, in and beyond their universities, has always been to bury and negate every evidence that proclaims that Africans ever accomplished anything worthwhile through history. In Fanon's graphic expatiation (1961:210), 'Colonialism is not satisfied merely with holding a people in its grasp and emptying the natives' brain of all form and content. By a kind of perverted logic, it turns to the past of the oppressed people and distorts, disfigures, and destroys it.'

The fact of the matter is that many white 'scholars' classified as historians, Clarke (1976) proclaimed authoritatively, 'are neither scholars nor historians' but rather 'clever propagandists writing rationalizations in support of white world domination'. They use every trick in the book, consistent with Napoleon's loose definition of Western 'Truth', quoted in Okafor (1991:252) as 'a set of myths upon which we all agree'. The arsenal of Western transgressions against African factuality runs the gamut from the outright banning of books, the theft and 'whitening' of Ancient African treasures, outright forgery, and blatant distortion. Thus, *Stolen Legacy,* a 1954

treatise by George G. M. James (2001) demonstrating that Africans laid the cultural and scientific foundations of the modern world, 'became one of the first African American books to be banned from the universities and colleges of America'. Indeed, it has been established categorically that Howard Carter, the archaeologist who 'discovered' Tutankhamun's tomb in 1922, helped himself to treasures before the vault was officially opened (Alberge, 2022).

Then there is the role of polychromies in European psychology, the 'tendency to equate whiteness with beauty, taste, and classical ideals, and to see colour as alien, sensual, and garish' (Talbot, 2018). Johann Wolfgang von Goethe minced no words in his 1810 work titled *Theory of* Colour (quoted in Popova, 2012) in designating colour 'a degree of darkness'. Inherent therein lie contrasting characterizations of 'People of Colour' against, one might deduce from logical inference, 'People of Pallor'. It did not matter one whit that European pigmentation was pink, and essentially pallid, not white; Europeans called themselves 'white', perhaps to imply, in spite of their sordid record of destruction and annihilation, that they are pure, unblemished, innocent and righteous, while all other people are sullied, impure and tarnished. This 'greige problem', this compulsive self-bleaching, this greigification syndrome, Kate Wagner (2023) notes, has become pervasive even in the American real estate-industrial complex to the point where it 'has become more and more difficult to find unique houses – houses with interiors that exhibit the true whimsy of people…In their place are empty, vast rooms painted gray…When there is furniture in these rooms, the furniture itself is white, gray, or greige. The rugs are white or extremely muted colours', placed inside rooms that are equally 'colourless'.

It comes as no surprise that, for centuries, European archaeologists and museum curators 'had been scrubbing away … traces of colour before presenting statues and architectural reliefs to the public' on the misconception, as Mark Abbe of the University of Georgia has observed, that the ancients disdained bright colour.

Aside from missing the wisdom in Aime Cesaire's dictum that 'It is no use painting the foot of the tree white; the strength of the bark cries out from beneath the paint', the unfounded notion that ancient sculpture was 'pure white' conjured up the corresponding notion that the people of the ancient world were 'pure white'. This befuddlement facilitated the stealing of ancient African treasures and bleaching them. It is in point that Manu Ampim has systematically documented what he calls 'two of the greatest forgeries in the history of ancient African archaeology' in respect of the statues of Prince Ra-Hotep and his wife Nofret in the Cairo Museum which 'are not authentic ancient Egyptian statues but were in fact created in the 19th century by the hands of modern conspirators'.

The compulsive self-aggrandizement of the European mind even plays into the world map in use today, the 16th century projection of European cartographer Geert de Kremen, better known as Mercator, which, as Sophie Morlin-Yron demonstrates, is widely misleading in that it distorts the relative size of the continents to the advantage of the West. Greenland, which looks about the same size as the whole of Africa on the Mercator, is a classic example: it is, in truth, no bigger than the Democratic Republic of the Congo. That European and North American countries are enlarged is no accident: 'This system provided more space for Western cartographers to mark towns, cities, roads etc. in their part of the world'. More than that, while it dwarfed entities in Africa deliberately, it made enlarged countries elsewhere seem unnaturally powerful and intimidating. It sums up quite well how maps and the rise of the Western nation-state system – and with that, empire and colonialism – are linked. The world maps that prevail today have been embedded in western imaginations since the British empire. They continue to prevail despite many challenges to their fairness and accuracy because they underpin the ongoing Anglo-Euro-American presumption that the world belongs to them, and pivots around these geo-cultural axes (Morlin-Yron, 2017).

The skull and jaw of the 'Piltdown Man', found in a gravel pit in England and announced to the world 1912, 'were a sensation

because the discovery upset prevailing theories about the antiquity of the modern human form'. The specimen 'confounded scientific evidence for years, throwing many paleontologists off the scent of what is now seen as the true course of human evolution' (Wilford, 1990). In particular, a key purpose of the fabrication, recognition of the importance of fossil discoveries in Africa beginning in the 1920s, was impeded because they seemed to contradict the reigning Piltdown 'evidence'. It was not until 1953 that Piltdown Man was exposed as a fraud – as nothing more than bones assembled and doctored to appear to be what they were not. Someone had joined a human cranium no more than a few hundred years old with an orangutan's jaw to create the impression that the large brain preceded and presumably dictated all future prehistoric human evolutionary steps (Wilford, 1990).

And behold, the list of distinguished scholars suspected of perpetrating the fraud included Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, noted French philosopher and paleontologist; Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, British writer and physician, and the famous creator of the character Sherlock Homes in 1887; Sir Arthur Keith, a British anatomist and anthropologist and a proponent of scientific racism; and Professor William J. Sollas of the University of Oxford.

The foregoing recital of customary European repudiation of any and every elevating intellectual truth and historical fact about African seminal achievements suggests that it makes absolutely no sense for African educational institutions and intellectuals to continue to entertain the outputs of such careerist charlatans. It was no less an authority than James H. Breasted (1929:219), the then President of the American Historical Society, who wrote in 1929 about 'the thousands of years' of 'the wilderness of savage Europe…untouched by civilization' in contradistinction from the 'earliest civilized world of Egypt.' It is, to put it mildly, a remarkable presumption for people from a continent which had limited historical existence and who, moreover, after beneficent tutelage from Egypt, turned into sworn enemies of the basic survival and

dignity of their erstwhile benefactors, to presume to be qualified to tell African people about their past.

It should be remembered that this very sensitive issue of who should interpret African history was openly contested in 1968 at the Eleventh Annual Convention of the African Studies Association in Los Angeles. This resulted in Black scholars breaking away and forming The African Heritage Studies Association (AHSA). It is remarkable that subsequently, 'scholars' of pallor continued to dominate African Studies programmes in most American universities and beyond.

It is time to end this outrage. It is time to dismiss and banish these pretended 'scholars' and factotums of Western imperialism (PREFACTOWIMPS). It is time to end the empty rituals of debates between African and European historians supposedly geared towards a definitive, consensus of the ancient history of African people. It is time for Africans to become their own authorities and to tell their own story. It is time for Africans to be the authoritative narrators of their own past. And this must be done in conjunction with the establishment of an inter-disciplinary *Journal of the African Nation* with an editorial board constituted by Black scholars only.

Among the key courses to be serviced in this key Department of African History and Archaeology are:

- Black history from ancient pre-eminence to enslavement and colonization;
- Identification of the historic enemies and destroyers of African people and the mapping out of appropriate strategies to contain and neutralize them;
- The colonial legacy of division and disintegration within African states.

Centre for Black Cultural Cleansing and Regeneration

Christianity, which has a large following among Africans, proclaims that God created man in His image. And yet anybody who cares to

survey African communities in today's world might be forgiven for thinking that Africans are made, or are striving to be made, in the image of Europeans. The thoughtful Marcus Garvey observed in his day that African physical features were by no means 'shameful marks of inferiority to be camouflaged and altered, …but rather symbols of beauty and grace'.

African men and women, God created us as His perfect creation. He made no mistake when He made us black with kinky hair. It was Divine Purpose for us to live in our natural habitat – the tropical zones the earth. Forget the white man's banter that He made us in the night and forgot to paint us white (Jacques-Garvey, 1968).

Of the breed of white banterers Garvey must have had in mind, Herman Hoetinik, the Dutch sociologist, pronounced dark skin a stigma that could be removed only through what he called 'homogenation', a stepped-up degree of miscegenation that would 'eliminate the Negro as a physical type' (Quoted in Harris,1982:376). Heedless of Garvey's wisdom, Africans have borne, and continue to bear, the heavy cost of 'unhealthy beauty ideals' reflecting white standards and involving 'treatments' like skin bleaching and chemical hair straightening that cost African Americans over $300 billion in 2019 alone, not to mention the psychological toll of depression, anxiety and eating disorders (Once, 2022; Russell, 2022).

Overall, Africans are so heavily encumbered with overarching foreign cultural traits that there is hardly any significant indigenous quality identifiable in the matrix of 'African Identity'. The University of the Black World must initiate, instigate, and propel psychological restoration entailing the creation of a new composite African language and script for the entire race – a project that implies a corresponding downgrading and effacement of alien or foreign-laden languages from African societies. It is well and good to have mastery of a language that is a marker of another race, providing that one possesses a well-developed language of one's own. The endeavours by Ngugi wa Thiong'o in pitching to equalize power relations between African and European languages, in seeking to

decolonize the literary landscape by switching to writing in his native Gikuyu instead of in English (Krishnan & Bethanabhotla, 2022) provides a worthwhile inspiration. So does the research possibilities ramped-up by Theophile Obenga (1996:262) in drawing 'all the consequences of the genetic and linguistic link of ancient Egyptian, Coptic, and modern African languages'.

To begin with, Pharaonic Egyptian and Coptic 'are well and truly black African'; more than that, a 'profound, formal, and grammatical link' exists between the Egyptian and black African: 'The numerous morphological, syntactic, phonetic and lexicological concordances that can be clearly established between Pharaonic Egyptian, Coptic, and all modern black African languages are of an historical genetic order, and it might be scientifically possible to reconstruct the common…ancestor of all these ancient and modern languages' (Obenga, 1996:268, 275, 281).

The scourge of 'imprisonment' and 'suffocation' in European languages is of the same order of blighted human honour as being hooked onto European names, as so many pitiful appendages of Europe. As a rule, a people who have existed as a community of humans with a modicum sense of their own identity must have names of their own drawn from their traditions, kinship networks, community legends, and their historical human experiences. It should not exceed the realm of possibility to assemble indigenous names of Africans across the continent, detail their meanings, and compile them into a registry of indigenous African names that members of the race everywhere can draw from.

Centre for Diaspora Studies

The African diaspora is the story of untold millions of Africans and their descendants gradually spreading over a 460-year period throughout the Western hemisphere and forming communities from Nova Scotia to Argentina, from the Atlantic to the Pacific. The historic, tragic dispersal of African people, and the symbiosis between Africans in the motherland and those in far-flung overseas

outposts, is an important element of African thought. Indeed, there is a special place in pan-Africanist thought that reverently and emphatically commits a liberated, integrated, and powerful African super-state 'to lend protection to the members of our race scattered all over the world' (Jacques-Garvey, 1977). By the same token, the idea of a return to Africa 'is a persistent one among Africans distressed abroad', as instanced in mutinies on ships, petitions for return, actual returns, and diaspora folklore abounding with legends and myths about a return after death. It is notable that even the ideologically bastardized Organization of African Unity (OAU) passed a resolution, right at its founding in 1963, expressing 'the deep concern aroused in all African peoples and governments by the measures of racial discrimination taken against communities of African origin living outside the continent and particularly in the United States' (Harris, 1982: 10-11, 377).

The underlying ideological principle is that all African peoples, wherever they may be, are one and belong to the African nation; that African destiny is indivisible; that Black people constitute an automatic collectivity defined by a 'mass of undifferentiated inferiors'; that no Black person 'shall be truly respected until the race as a whole has emancipated itself …from universal prejudice'. In a word, in Malcolm X's amplification:

> The problems are one, the destiny is the same, (even as) the origin is the same. Even the experiences are the same; (if) they (the brothers and sisters on the ancestral continent) catch hell, we (in the US) catch hell. And no matter how much independence they've got, on that land, on the mother continent, if we don't have it over here, when they come over here they are mistaken for one of us and they are disrespected too. So, in order (for them) to be respected, we must be respected.
>
> (Malcolm X, 1970:146)

Over the years, a plethora of American-based activist organizations exhibiting an appreciably high degree of pan-African consciousness have made their presence felt in significant ways. Thus the American Negro Leadership Conference on Africa (ANLCA) founded in 1962, tried to arrange for Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. to mediate between Biafra and Nigeria; the American Society for African Culture (AMSAC) participated actively in the First Festival of Negro arts in Dakar in 1966; the Congressional Black Caucus became a major agency in expressing a Black viewpoint on African issues; and an African Liberation Support Committee (ALSC) arose on a Black nationalist base mobilizing support for freedom fighters in Guinea-Bissau, Angola, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Namibia, and South Africa (Harris, 1982: 377, 378-379).

Alongside these endeavors, Black Studies Programmes came into being after 1968, following the assassination of Dr. Luther King, with a battle cry of 'Relevant Education'. As much as possible, and with varying degrees of commitment, they offered courses about Black people around the world; they initiated cooperative relations with African, Caribbean, and Latin American institutions interested in developing diaspora studies; and they developed distinctive publications such as *The Journal of Black Studies* (State University of New York at Buffalo), *Africana Studies* (University of Cincinnati), *Western Journal of Black Studies* (Washington State University at Pullman), and *Umoja* (University of Colorado, Boulder).

Against these positive developments must be set the broader thrust of the CIA strategy of delinking Africa from its diaspora, so as to strip African Americans of every vestige of African culture, the better to facilitate the process of making them into a uniquely total American product, that of slaves (Killens,1965: 53). As Haile Gerima noted bitterly (in Woolford, 1994: 100-102): 'Africa is still very censored. I think Blacks have always paid a penalty for discussing or thinking about Africa. Why is society always running for cover when Africans in this country want to make linkage with Africa…? I have always been amazed that whites panic when a black person tries to link with Africa'.

The project of delinking in American academia was spearheaded by the likes of the Department of Afro-American Studies of Harvard University. As Harvard's Dean of Faculty, Henry Rosovsky, admitted in 1981, from its outset in 1969 the department had never had its direction 'decided on academic grounds. It was a political decision' (Harvard Magazine, 1981). A key element was the insistence that the new department concern itself almost exclusively with the study and teaching of the 'Afro-American experience from the days of slavery on', an injunction that implied an interdiction on any engagements with pre-slavery African roots, or post-slavery African connections.

And so, thereafter, while Harvard had, and continued to have, departments that deal with the total culture of a single specific area or people, examples being the departments of East Asian Languages and Civilizations, and Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, Black students were pushed to accept the status of a people without roots, whose worthwhile experience did not extend beyond the period of slavery and colonialism, going back only four hundred years (Agyeman, 1997). Appropriately, in the department of History, there are topics like 'Alcohol in Sub-Saharan Africa, 1850 to the Present'.

The University of Zululand is constituted as a university of the Black world, operating in an environment that sidesteps the racist-imperialist political constraints elsewhere. It could structure and inaugurate the most powerful intellectual pan-Africanist centre to link Africa and its diaspora in institutionally collaborative teaching, researching, and publishing endeavours involving cross-cutting visits of professors and students and racial family tours across the globe, to propel the Black race forward toward universal emancipation and valourization.

Armed with a vibrant University of Zululand Press and an assembly of first-rate African minds committed to racial emancipation – an active mental soldiery primed to counter-argue and trample the banal stupidities about Africa from the West that pass

for scholarship – this centre would end the customary voicelessness, invisibility and belittlement of African intellectuals on matters that vitally affect Africa and its people. The disastrous impact of AIDS on African people, a monstrous tragedy that killed over 20 million Africans, and the criminally trivial European last word of dismissal of it, is a case in point.

According to Edward Hooper in his carefully researched book titled *The River* (Hooper, 1999), a University of Pennsylvania scientist, Hilary Kaprowski, in a race to create an oral polio vaccine, manufactured and distributed the CHAT vaccine in the 1950s in the Belgian Congo. This vaccine, which was created using live tissue cultures generated from chimpanzee cells, carried the SIV virus that initiated the AIDS pandemic. Millions of Africans were injected with the vaccine and the virus on the orders of the Belgian colonial authorities. Following this, the Belgian Congo and surrounding areas produced some of the first known cases of AIDS. The plausibility of Hooper's theory caused a great stir in the scientific community and pushed the Royal Society in London to debate it in September 2000. In the end, predictably, the Society bowed to pressure from opponents of the theory and ended up suppressing it (*The Guardian*, 2000).

Simultaneous developments in the United States sustained the tragic AIDS chronicles. In June 1969, the House Republican Research Committee on Earth Resources and Population, chaired by George Bush, cited an urgent need for population control, arguing that there were 'too many nonwhite babies in the world'. According to the Church Commission hearings, Henry Kissinger ordered the stockpiling of biological weapons, including immune-system-destroying viruses functionally identically to HIV, and the deployment of systems necessary to administer these viruses to large populations. From then on, USAID vaccination teams working within twenty Central West African countries transmitted the AIDS virus to more than twenty million people through the late 1970s on the pretext of giving shots against cholera. 'The spread of AIDS in

Africa', Leonard Horowitz (1996:170,175-258) has proclaimed, 'could be traced to countries where the multi-component vaccine trials took place'.

Professor Sachs of Columbia University (2005:200) dismisses this gruesome chronicle of the destruction of 20 million African lives with a brilliant, simple counterargument: 'The simplest answer, widely believed, is that in Africa there is more sexual activity outside of long-term stable relationships…The only certainty is that HIV/AIDS is an unmitigated tragedy and a developmental disaster throughout Africa, especially in the hardest hit regions of Eastern and Southern Africa'.

Is this the last word on AIDS, a scourge mercilessly inflicted by Africa's enemies that killed off uncountable millions of African people? Astonishingly, to date, there has not been any center of research and leaning anywhere in the Black world where this matter has been taken up for sustained, thorough investigation by way a conference of African experts.

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ON AFRICAN THOUGHT

MOGOMME ALPHEUS MASOGA

The question of who thinks and who does not think has preoccupied modern subjects, albeit for different interests, reasons, and purposes. These modern subjects have conceived of the idea of 'thinking', particularly the question of who thinks and who does not think, depending on their different social and epistemic positionalities within the power structure of global coloniality. Thus, the genesis of the idea of thinking subjects versus those who are viewed as not thinking is traceable to the advent of coloniality as a global power structure that defines, evaluates, negates, and affirms the thinking capacities of modern subjects. In other words, the debate about thinking is in tandem with the development of racism as a global phenomenon. In this regard, the idea of being 'intelligent' and 'thoughtful' became associated with being 'white' and 'Western' while that of being 'thoughtless' and 'dull' came to be associated with being 'black' and 'non-Western'. This is in line with Edward Said's (1978) influential theorization of Orientalism which provides a compelling account of the binary logic underpinning Euro-modernist constructions of self and other. This is how and why up to today, though 'scientific racism' has failed to prove a correlation between being 'white' and 'black' and the level of someone's intelligence (measured with the notion of the intelligence quotient [Q]), whiteness remains associated with rationality and the ability to think while being black is associated with irrationality and deficits in terms of thinking and cognition in general. As the decolonial scholar, Ramon Grosfoguel (2007:2014) has put it:

> We went from the sixteenth century characterization of people 'without writing' to eighteenth and nineteenth century characterization of 'people without history' to the twentieth

> century characterization of 'people without development' and more recently, to early twenty first century [characterization] of 'people without democracy'.

This pattern of characterizing non-Western subjects in terms of a presumed deficiencies of fundamental features of humanity is a strategy that has been used by colonialists to destroy the once-flourishing civilizations of others only to replace them with European modernism. As Aime Cesaire, has eloquently argued in his *Discourse on Colonialism*, the effect of colonialism on the colonized subject is to 'de-civilize' and 'thingify' them; processes that began as far back as the trans-Atlantic slavery during which mostly black people and other non- Western subjects were reduced to dispensable objects and commodities in the then emerging racialized global economic system.

The idea of African thought is therefore not only useful in the attempt to re-assert ourselves as 'thinking' subjects, but ultimately serves the determination to recover our lost humanity and ontological density as people with history, with civilizations and cultures. It is an idea that serves Chinua Achebe's (1985) desire to educate his African readers that 'their past – with all its imperfections – was not one long night of savagery from which the first Europeans acting on God's behalf delivered them'.

But before delving deeper into the nitty-gritty of the meaning of African thought, it is necessary to have a clear understanding of how we came to be where are today. In fact, it has always been White men of heterosexual orientation from a few European countries (Germany, Britain, France, Spain, Portugal, Italy and Netherlands) who have been at the forefront of doubting the thinking abilities of the peoples of the non-Western world, people of colour, black people, women and queer subjects. As a result, these groups were compelled, which compels these groups of people to respond with proof that they can actually think. The Western claim to a monopoly of thinking has elicited responses from people whose thinking

abilities were and are still subjected to radical doubt. Some of these responses have appeared in the form of books such as Kishore Mahbubani's (1998) *Can Asians Think?* and Hamid Dabashi's (2015) *Can Non-Europeans Think?* In the latter, Walter Mignolo wrote a foreword entitled 'Yes, We Can' to signify that the gift of thinking is not the sole prerogative of Western subjects. Perhaps, the question that needs our urgent attention is whether this radical doubt about the thinking abilities of others is an intrinsic attribute of being human or whether it is just a historically constituted phenomenon. Evidence points to the fact that the question of casting radical doubt on the thinking ability of others is more of a historical development than a natural phenomenon.

The words 'African' and 'thinking' have always been presented in modern/colonial historiography as mutually incompatible, leading to Achilles Mbembe's (2015:1) observation that: 'Speaking rationally about Africa is not something that has ever come naturally. [This because] Africa is never seen as possessing things and attributes [that are] properly part of "human nature". This is in addition to the long-standing portrayal of Africa as a "dark continent" and, in some instances, an "empty land" that belongs to nobody. It was the "empty land" thesis that was used by European colonizers to dispossess African people of their lands and other valuable resources because being African was equated with "nothingness"'.

The most unfortunate part of this portrayal of Africans and other non-Western subjects as incapable of engaging in and/or possessing thoughtful behaviour, is that the discourse was accompanied by a series of colonial activities that were not only capable of 'emptying' their minds of previous memories but also implanting foreign ways of thinking, knowing and remembering. The end goal of such processes was to achieve epistemic dislocation that made the colonized actively participate in their own colonization. This is why Steve Biko observed that 'the most potent weapon in the hands of the colonizer is the mind of the colonized'. Today, Africans are frantically in search of epistemic freedom after realizing that

political freedom without the freedom to think leads to what Frantz Fanon described as 'repetition without change'.

Kwame Nkrumah's proposition to Africans to '[s]eek … first the political kingdom and all else shall be added unto you' appears to be undermined by the fact that political freedom without epistemic freedom is hollow and leads to serious political and economic own goals. The issue here is the sequence of 'freedoms' which Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018) problematizes as follows:

> In Africa, decolonization has generally been understood to have begun with 'political decolonization' predicated on seeking the 'political kingdom first.' However, the current struggles for epistemic freedom have provoked a need for rethinking of the decolonial trajectories… . In the co-constitution of political, economic, cultural and epistemological decolonization, epistemic freedom should form the base because it deals with the fundamental issues of critical consciousness building, which are essential pre-requisites for both political and economic freedom.

Ndlovu-Gatsheni's articulation indicates that Africa is in a mess today because of the lack of epistemic freedom. This must not come as a surprise because the purpose of colonial education was mainly to produce consenting subjects for the project of colonization. It was designed to tame Africans of what Ngugi wa Thiong'o described of as their 'original rudeness'. The same can be said with regard to the imposition of Western religion. It was designed to produce a psychological orientation of African subjects in such a way that they order for them to accept colonial domination.

But when exactly did the question of thinking begin to be a problematic question for the modern world? There are many versions of the above question but the most convincing is that put forward by decolonial scholars who each place it squarely on European usurpation of world history, a process that began inside Europe

(southern Europe to be specific) and later extended to other parts of the world. This is a history that is predominantly characterized as the history of the dehumanization of the world's population on a grand scale, beginning with the dehumanization of women in Europe in the period that the decolonial philosopher, Ramon Grosfoguel (2013) described as the 'four genocides/epistemicides of the long durée of the 16th century'. Thus, apart from the genocide/epistemicide against women in Europe in the 16th century in which women's bodies and their knowledge came under attack during witch hunts, there was a more or less similar process of killing bodies and knowledges in southern Spain (the Iberian Peninsula) where the Catholic monarchy from the north attacked and defeated the Granada Sultanate. With these two genocides/epistemicides alone, cultural racism in the form of Islamophobia and patriarchy were erected as systems of oppression that were to question 'others' on the basis of race, religion and gender until this day.

These forms of oppressing the other by radically doubting their humanity was extended to the peoples of the non-Western world in the 16th century via the 'voyages of discovery' of figures such as Christopher Columbus in the Americas (or New World) and Jan van Riebeek in the southern tip of Africa. After Christopher Columbus arrived in the Americas in October 1492, the indigenous people whom the European classified as Red Indians were subjected to such questions as whether they have a soul. But as Dussel puts it, the question of the soul was actually a question of the mind. It was a question that expressed doubt over their ability to think and whether they are fully human in the first place. In Africa, like in the Americas, the idea of subhuman soulless people without meaningful social behaviours inaugurated a system of enslavement in which black people were forcefully transported to work as free labour in plantations. While many Africans were kidnapped and traded as commodities in West Africa, some were being enslaved in what became known as the Cape Colony in South Africa. At the same time Indians were suffering a similar fate, making up a global

system of coloniality that was to oppress the majority of the world's population for more than five hundred years.

What, indeed, is significant about the above four genocides/epistemicides of the long-sixteenth century is that apart from questioning the thinking abilities of the oppressed subjects on the basis of several dehumanizing hierarchies of power such as the racial, gender, religious, class, sex, ethnic, epistemic, linguistic, spiritual and aesthetic hierarchy, among many others, they nonetheless boosted the egos of European male heterosexual subjects to such an extent that they overtly proclaimed their monopoly over thinking. The climax of this egocentric arrogance was reached when the father of modern Western philosophy, Rene Descartes, proclaimed *cogito ergo sum* (I think, therefore, I am) in the 17th Century, a development that followed in the footsteps of an *ego conquiro* (I conquer, therefore, I am) of the 16th Century.

The equating of violence with thinking has since been the modus operandi of the colonial system leading to genocides, epistemicides, linguicide and many other forms of violence including epistemic extractivism in which ideas generated by people on the dominated side of the colonial power difference are practically appropriated to serve the interests of those on the dominant side and have projected their side as the only authentic thinkers. This has also led to the proliferation of hegemonic Western theories masquerading as universal theories by means of applying them trans-historically across different spatio-historical temporalities.

What Descartes inaugurated is today is known as Cartesian thinking; a form of thinking that has elicited a number of anti-Cartesian meditations from both the West and non-Western world, some of which are decolonial in nature. Cartesian thinking is all about the body-mind compound in which Descartes concluded that the body is not important and dependable in matters of thought. This has since been disputed by many critical thinkers including Frantz Fanon (1952). Fanon proclaimed that: 'Oh, my body makes me always someone who questions'. Fanon was literally turning

Descartes on his head because his expression meant that bodies and indeed, feelings, think. He meant that knowledge production is inclusive of 'body politics'. This is why we have a sexist knowledge system which is a result of the bodies that produce it. We have a racist knowledge system produced by white bodies.

The idea of African thought in this regard is the struggle against the ghost of Rene Descartes trying to sell to us the myths of objectivity, neutrality and universality. African thought in this regard is a struggle to insert other bodies such as the bodies of indigenous Africans, black people, women, queer people, and people of colour into the equation of knowledge production and the politics of shaping the future of the world. The question of body politics in knowledge production that has been raised by critical scholars to express their disenchantment with the project of modernity/coloniality and their demand to be recognized as authentic knowledge producers, is in tandem with the question of geopolitics of knowledge because these bodies exist in spaces that are either physical or social in the making.

The varying impacts of colonialism across space and time elicited different reactions and the development of grammars of resistance to it. Thus, it needs to be noted that with regard to Africa, though the colonial encounter was characterized by epistemicides (i.e., killing knowledges of the colonized subjects), the colonial system did not succeed in entirely decimating 'other' knowledges. In his description of how the impact of direct colonial domination on epistemologies of the colonized varied from place to place and time to time, Anibal Quijano (2007:169-170) stated that:

> The forms and effects of cultural coloniality have been different as regards to times and cases. In Latin America, the cultural repression and colonization of the imaginary were accompanied by a massive and gigantic extermination of the natives, mainly their use as expendable force, in addition to the violence of the conquest and diseases brought by Europeans.

> The cultural repression and massive genocide together turned the previous high cultures of America into illiterate, peasant subcultures condemned to orality; that is, deprived of their own pattern of formalized, objectivized, intellectual, and plastic or visual expression.

Quijano's position is that Latin America became the most extreme case of cultural colonization by Europe. Thus, he argues that Latin America cannot be compared with Asia, the Middle East and Africa because:

> In Asia and in the Middle East high cultures could never be destroyed with such intensity and profundity. But they were nevertheless placed in subordinate relation not only in the European view but also in the eyes of their own bearers. In Africa, cultural destruction was certainly much more intense than in Asia, but less than in America. Nor did the Europeans there succeed in complete destruction of the patterns of expression, in particular of objectification and of visual formalization. What the Europeans did was to deprive Africans of legitimacy and recognition in the global cultural order dominated by European patterns.
>
> (Quijano 2007: 170)

What emerges from Quijano's analysis of the impact of colonialism across the the Third World, is that in Africa the process of colonial domination did not totally annihilate and exterminate indigenous African ways of thinking, knowing and patterns of expression, but merely subalternized and inferiorized them in the global cultural order. Quijano's analysis of the effect of colonial domination on African culture(s) and knowledge systems resonate with Odora Hoppers and Richards (2011:10) when they argue that:

> Two centuries of politicised and scienticized denial of the existence of the metaphysics of indigenous people has not eradicated

> their knowledge systems, their rituals, and their practices… at least not completely. Whenever we look deeply at African society, or indeed most indigenous societies, the empirical fact that stares back at us is a reality of life lived differently, lives constituted around very different metaphysics of economics, of law, of science, of healing, of marriage, of joy, of dying, and of co-existence.

What this means is that even though Africa suffered what Ngugi wa Thiong'o (2009) described as 'dismemberment' because of colonial domination, those who remained on the continent, unlike those who were kidnapped and transported to the Americas as slaves, remained with resources of remembrance. Thus, in his articulation of what he terms the 'linguistic logic of conquest,' Thiong'o (2009:17) argues that while 'linguicide' was committed in the case of the diaspora, 'linguifam' took place within the continent. The difference between the acts of linguicide and linguifam is that the former refers to language liquidation which totally denied the slave a means of communication and site of remembrance; and the latter refers to a language famine which is a form of linguistic deprivation and starvation but not liquidation. What this means is that the peoples of Africa remain with another source of social memory and another civilization.

These are some of the facts that we cannot ignore, especially if we want to understand the rationale behind the different grammars of resistance that are used by Africans in their various locations and times within and outside the continent of Africa. Thus, within Africa alone, the colonial system used the languages of association and indirect rule in some regions; yet in some, it used the language of assimilation and direct rule, all which makes the languages of resistance vary across space and time.

The debate about the nature of the impact of colonialism is long standing leading thinkers like Cesaire (1972:32) to ask the question: 'what, fundamentally, is colonialism'. It pitted scholars such as Ali

Mazrui (1996:12-13) of the 'epochal school' of colonialism against those of the 'episodic school' such as Ade Ajayi (1969:13) who argued that colonialism was but a mere 'episode in African history'. Mazrui (1996:12-13) challenged the episodic school when he argued that colonialism represented a 'revolution of epic proportions' in that '[w]hat Africa knows about itself, what different parts of Africa know about each other, have been profoundly influenced by the West'. Many others came to uphold the view of the 'invention of tradition' while others subscribe to the resilience of indigenous traditions. These dynamics need to be balanced in order to avoid the pitfalls of fundamentals in the development of epistemic projects for decolonization.

With regard to the above, the idea of African thought must be imagined in such a way that it accommodates and promotes a series of 'grammars of change', which critical scholars have developed to express their disenchantment with colonial modernity and their desire for change at different times and locations. These forms of languages and languaging range from the language of decolonization/decoloniality, decolonial feminism and decolonial Marxism. These are all necessary for planetary thinking about the project of decolonization at large, the languages of indigenization, Africanization, African feminism, Afro-sensing, Africology, pan-Africanism and Afrocentricity that are also useful for the specific condition of the African subject. This cocktail of grammars of change is important for the development of what de Soussa Santos referred to as the 'pluversity', and an ecology of knowledges that are complementary rather than oppositional.

The idea of African thought must be predicated on recovering and re-membering the dismembered, peripherized, subalternized, muted and hidden indigenous knowledges and ways of knowing that are scattered all over the continent. This is based on an understanding that there are important residuals of resilient knowledges produced by indigenous people that are deliberately sidelined. This recovering of 'other' knowledges located in once-flourishing

African civilizations like the Nguni and Sotho civilization in southern Africa are important for developing alternative theories to Eurocentric world views.

The idea of African thought, unlike that of African Studies, must be predicated on the principle of promoting emic expressions of the making of African identities and cosmologies, rather than the etic readings predominant in many of the discourses of African Studies which are conducted without Africans. African thought must be premised on rehumanizing dehumanized African subjects by producing knowledge with them and from their perspectives rather than about them, as though they are passive objects of research. At the same time, it must be premised on decentring the Western archive and cocentering the African archive in knowledge production. This also entails the deliberate privileging of African intellectuals and scholarly works produced by Africans, as well as reversing the politics of dominant recognition found in the citations of Western scholars to the detriment of those of Africa and the Global South.

Summary and Conclusion

In general, African thought in the university context must strive to reconstitute and reconfigure the university as a successor institution to long-standing black radical intellectual traditions. This means that African thought must not only look back to revive the continent's best ideas, but also look ahead to both pre-empt and respond to new forms of coloniality that have emerged since the late 1960s and which may emerge in the years to come. This informs the following observation contained in the concept note of the 2023 annual conference of the Lagos Studies Association (2022): 'As it is, what needs to be decolonized has increased as new bodies of knowledge and the real consequences of imperial domination in the everyday life of Africans emerge and are transformed from their familiar state'.

According to Cedric Robinson, the black radical tradition is a liberatory project marked by distinctly African modes of resistance

and revolution that developed out of the conditions of colonialism and enslavement. The idea of African thought must give prominence to the right of Africans and oppressed people everywhere to resist colonialism, racism and slavery. But for this to happen, the idea of African thought must be based on genuine cognitive commitment to the cause of African people and peoples of the global South in general. It must be driven by the zeal to unmask the hidden indigenous epistemologies and ontologies as opposed to many of the African studies programmes, especially in the West, whose commitment to the cognitive empire has rendered researching Africa an 'Africanist enterprise'.

Finally, the idea of African thought must be transdisciplinary, post-disciplinary, inter- and multi-disciplinary in nature so as to avoid the pitfalls of what Lewis R. Gordon described as 'disciplinary decadence', that is a commitment to the cause of disciplines at the expense of the cause of increasing the life chances of the marginalized African subjects. In this regard, the idea of African thought is part of what decolonial scholars have likened to 'shifting the geography and biography of reason' to enable marginalized subjects speak from their various positions of epistemic subalternity whether class, race, gender, ethnicity, caste or religious affiliation.

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SOCIOLINGUISTICS AND SOUTHERN EPISTEMOLOGIES

SINFREE MAKONI AND CRISTINE SEVERO

Introduction

The objective of this chapter is to frame language studies in Africa and their diasporas through the lens of *Theory from the South* (Comaroff & Comaroff 2012) and *Southern Theory* (Connell 2007; 2018), drawing on research by Connell (2021), Santos and Meneses (2020), Lewis Gordon (2021), and Jane Gordon (2014) as analytical frameworks and extending them to language studies. Even though there is no single theory of the South, all the theories seek to increase the impact of the experiences of people from the South on the formulation of linguistic theory. The theories are a product of the impact of subjugated groups on the formulation of linguistic theory.

In addition to the Global South providing raw materials, it should also supply insights which are relevant to the rest of the world through the deployment of analytical heuristics such as *inventions, accommodations,* and *hybrids*. For Santos and Meneses (2020), the ideal subjects for providing insights into theories of the South are those who are indigenous, peasants, and landless (from different regions of the world), such as the Brazilian *quilombolas* (Severo & Makoni 2021). Mignolo (2011: 273) identifies the notion of 'border thinking' to describe thinking and doing originating from the South that deliberately confronts Western ways of thinking, Eurocentrism, capitalism, and communism. Connell (2019), informed by her gender studies, regards these moments as 'ontoformative', meaning that they produce new structures, realities, and agencies that differentiate the Southern landscape from the Euro-American one. Here, certain groups are brought to the forefront by different authors: the landless by Santos (2009), and the indigenous by Connell (2007).

Despite their differences, *Theory from the South* (Comaroff & Comaroff 2012) and *Epistemologies of the South* (Santos & Meneses 2020) presuppose political commitment: 'Political commitment requires acting without knowing the outcome and acting for those whom one will never know' (Gordon, 2021:29). In this chapter, we argue for Southern orientations towards linguistics because 'there is always something to learn from different ways of learning, knowing, expressing and living' (Gordon 2021:1). Having labelled linguistics as being hubristically Eurocentric, we propose to rectify the weaknesses in linguistics because of its Eurocentrism by proposing 'a conceptual vocabulary' and 'developing a political grammar' of language studies from the Global South. The 'conceptual vocabulary' and 'political grammar' will be founded on at least three principles: (i) innovation, (ii) animation and (iii) transgression (Nair & de Souza 2020).

In this monograph, we also pay special attention to 'indigenous knowledge formations and alternative universalisms' (Connell, 2019:92), thereby challenging the Eurocentrism and white, male, heteronormative foundations which dominate the field of language studies. Racism and sexism are cultural ideologies which guided the Eurocentric construction of notions used in linguistic analysis such as the idea of language 'families' including Bantu languages: 'The construction of Bantu linguistics is the product of an interdisciplinary coalition between theology, linguistics, and physiology involving outright fantasy and fiction' (Abdelhay et al., forthcoming).

To develop Southern Epistemologies, we need to shift the 'geography of reason' (Gordon 2021). Shifting the geography of reason provides a framework for the linguistics of the *Epistemologies of the South* (Santos & Meneses 2020). For example, one of the challenges which requires 'a shift in the geography of reason' in African sociolinguistics is the trope that it has too many languages. According to Prah (1995), viewing language from a perspective which is incompatible with Global Southern perspectives is reflected in the

trope that Africa has 'too many languages'. Such a perspective is incompatible with Southern Epistemologies because what are called 'languages' in Africa are, from Prah's (1995) perspective, 'variants' of what he refers to as 'core languages/ clusters' which can share the same spelling system. The 'variants' or 'clusters' can be taught using unified or harmonized orthographies. If these 'core' languages use a harmonized spelling, then it will be feasible to have institutions which can recommend textbooks that are written in one variety but can be read by people who use a different variety. In fact, there are not so many languages in Africa as people make out, but there are different labels for the same language.

The inaccuracy of the trope of many African languages can be easily illustrated using the example of *Pulaar* which, according to Prah (1995), has the largest linguistic-geographical spread in Africa. It is spoken in slightly different varieties across 17 different countries. From a Global Southern perspective, the notion of 'clusters' will be more relevant than the notion of discrete languages which conceals the structurally and lexically similarity across languages. Another issue arising when viewing language from the Global South is what interactional analysis looks like if conversational axioms are grounded in African ways of conversing which are founded on at least the following axioms: (i) opaqueness, (ii) obscurity, (iii) ambiguity, (iv) long-windedness, and (v) circuitousness (Ameka & Terkourafi 2019).

If data about pragmatics had been gathered from the Global South, we could feasibly have richer and better models for handling multimodality which pays adequate attention to both visual and auditory models of language use, and thus have avoided the sociolinguistic error of treating greetings as meaningless or only useful for phatic communication (Ameka & Terkourafi 2019: 713).

There are three specific questions that we seek to address:

- What does a sociolinguistics from the Global South look like?
- What does a sociolinguistics from the Global South look like

when we seriously take the complexity and heterogeneity of the city into account?

- How can we go beyond sociolinguistics, which is human centered in the Global South, by challenging the human/nonhuman distinction which is one of the devastating consequences of modernity?

1.What does a sociolinguistics from the Global South look like?

How does water shape our conceptual images of language in the Global South? It is important to look at water because how we think of water has an impact on how we shape and treat it, and, as we argue in this monograph, frame language. It is relevant to frame language using water because the planet is largely composed of water and every one of us is approximately 80% water, so water is not out there, it is in us (Neimanis 2017). We argue that waterscape epistemology, or 'wet epistemology', and 'liquid materiality' (Peters & Steinberg 2019) mark a dramatic shift from perceiving language as a 'single rootedness of a monolingual native speaker to the mobile figure of the multilingual migrant' (Guildin 2020). Wet epistemology, however, captures the paradoxical relationship between water and solidity. 'Water always has some form of soil, some form of land, and land is permeated by water' (Makoni & Masters 2021). Following research by Steinberg & Peters (2015) and Peters & Steinberg (2019), we will treat the sea not as a backdrop against which we frame language, and we will also investigate the impact of the 'seaness of the sea' (Hofmeyer 2021) on our framing of language. The ocean, we speculate, provides a rich context for a reconceptualizing of space, time, and movement, all of which have a bearing on how we analyse language.

In this chapter, we maintain that critical perspectives can be gained by taking the ocean's liquidity to heart. However, we also question the premise of this vision. For the ocean is not only simply liquid; it is also solid (ice) and air (mist). It generates winds, which

transport smells, and these may emote the oceanic miles inland. Although earlier attention to the ocean's liquidity was a necessary antidote to surficial ontology, in this monograph, we explore what emerges if, instead, we were to approach the ocean as offering more than 'wet ontology', wherein its fluid nature is continually produced and dissipated (Peters & Steinberg 2019). Wet ontology affects how we frame language, but, as Brown & Humberstone (2015:1) remark, 'diverse approaches to writing about or of the sea shape the way we engage with the sea and our relationship with the sea'. In other words, wet ontology – in writing in the Global South – has an impact on our daily engagement with 'seanesses' or 'oceanesses' (Neimanis 2017).

2. Another important issue which we will seek to address from Southern Epistemologies emerges when we seriously take the complexity and heterogeneity of the city into account in Southern Epistemologies.

Southern theorists should try to view language and communication through the prisms of assorted cables and water pipes stuck to houses in urban and peri-urban contexts. Cables render it feasible to alter perspective. They create a type of coherence which resonates with rhizomatic discourses. Cables have an implication on how language learning may be framed. Most of the cables in urban and peri-urban centers do not have readily discernible beginnings or ends, just middles—this has implications on applied issues such as language learning. Another aspect which might also help in illuminating the nature of language and which is absent from research in urban language variety and African literature relates to tap water and boreholes (Udah 2021).

3. How can we go beyond sociolinguistics, which is human centered in the Global South, by challenging the human/ nonhuman distinction which is one of the devastating consequences of modernity?

In this chapter we argue that theory is not simply produced on campuses or in airports or by people who are designated as part of the theory-making class (Comaroff 2022). We seek to illustrate that the theory from the South comes up from the experience of ordinary people and their concepts. The experiences of ordinary people are appropriated, dignified, branded, and circulated as originally produced by elite classes. So much of the social and political theory from research into informality and popular culture in poststructuralism and deinstitutionalized practices, originates from ordinary people. There is a tremendous amount of cannibalism and upgrading of these different approaches. The process of viewing language practices from the Global South is therefore a process of 'decannibalization'. We seek to challenge the idea that the Global South is simply the workshop of the world, and the Global North is the theory-making and capital-owning center.

We furthermore challenge the assumption that those who are designated as being White think and research, and those who are designated as Black or Brown must be taught or rely on the experience of the white people. If interpreters and theorists are white, this leads us to believe that theorization is epistemologically white. Another way of framing or reframing contributions from the Global South is by rethinking what we regard as academic or scholarly contributions. For example, Marcus Garvey's wife played a key role in mobilizing and creating a consciousness about pan-Africanism; but, according to Shilliam (2022), she left only one written text. However, her contributions can be regarded as scholarly even in the absence of written texts. Theory from the South should not be restricted to the existence of written texts only, otherwise that will constitute viewing Southern theory through the lens of Northern theory and thereby undercutting the objectives of the former.

Our other objective, amongst others, is to tell the story of sociolinguistics and language studies from the Global South, particularly its 'undersides' (Comaroff & Comaroff 2012:6). We will argue that the Global South can be seen as a source of important theory capable of explaining significant political and sociolinguistic

events globally, including in the Global North (Santos & Meneses 2020). Following Jeater (2022), we do not treat the Global South as a geographical term only, or even as a simple geopolitical idea or notion, but as an epistemological orientation.

Theory from a Global North perspective is treated as universal. It is largely generated at the apex of the global system, though relying on data and input from the rest of the globe. Once the theory is formed, it is expected to trickle down. It is assumed that scholars from the Global South can participate in theory formation if they migrate to the apex or learn its metalanguage and contribute from a distance. The difficulties with this model are self-evident. It discards much of the actual wealth of knowledge formation. It also forces Southern experience into Northern analytical frameworks and legitimizes sharp inequalities within the world's intellectual workforce and knowledge production and circulation (Connell 2021).

Contrary to universal theory from the Global North, one of the models from the Global South which we advocate is the 'mosaic epistemology.' In a mosaic epistemology, separate and distinct knowledge systems are situated next to each other, like tiles in a mosaic, and each is founded on both a specific culture and historical experiences. A mosaic epistemology, despite its weaknesses, provides a viable alternative to Northern hegemony and global inequality in knowledge production. However, a mosaic approach also must address major challenges (Bakare-Yusuf 2004; Bennett 2008) because cultures and societies are dynamic, not fixed in one position. It is important to bear in mind that even precolonial societies were not silos, but invariably interacted with each other over long periods of time, absorbed external influences, and demonstrated substantial internal diversity (Connell 2021). In other words, traditional societies were 'creolized'. We argue that traditional societies were creolized, but this should not be construed to mean that prior stages were not creolized since we do not presume an initial African purity. The human being is the example par excellence of metastability (Comaroff 2022).

Because traditional societies were creolized, the second epistemology we therefore propose is more dynamically 'interactive epistemology', in which horizontal relations and interactions emerge, producing what Connell (2019) aptly refers to as 'solidarity-based epistemologies'. These are founded on mutual learning on a global scale in which epistemologies enter into mutually respectful and beneficial dialogues. A solidarity-based epistemology is predicated on Bulbeck (1998), Bakare-Yusuf's (2004) 'braiding feminisms', and Bhambra's (2021) 'connected sociologies'. The unpredictable interweaving of ideas and experiences around a majority becomes an asset and not a disadvantage, as (Connell 2021:11) argues:

> We are using Southern Theories, Epistemologies of the South, shifting the geography of reason, and creolization to subject linguistics to an ideological critique. The idea of doing so may cause discomfort to professionals who see linguistics as a science and therefore above ideology. Linguists have, in fact, overall been strikingly reluctant to direct an ideological critique against their own discipline, as anthropologists have recently done. The pretensions of linguistics as a science act as a powerful disincentive to any effort to contemplate the epistemic status and politics of linguistics as a discipline.
>
> (Reimer 2018).

Framing language studies from Southern theory or epistemologies of the South is desirable but also demanding because of 'the diversity at the conceptual, theoretical, and methodological levels, and not just in the treatment of communicative semiotic activity' (Joseph 2021). The diversities in Southern theory or epistemologies of the South are apparent by the degree to which some brands of the former embrace posthumanism's extension of agency to objects while others do not. Even if epistemologies of the South involve indigenous knowledge formations, it is important to bear in mind that no knowledge is complete, and it is unlikely we will ever

reach a status of complete definitive knowledge. On the contrary, engaging in intercultural translation renders it feasible to become aware of the incompleteness, partiality, and contingent nature of our knowledges (Santos 2018). Epistemologies of the South demand that we call for new methodologies and adopt new language ontologies. In this monograph, we will draw on the problematization of anthropocentrism and on ontologies, from both water and land, which include using notions of assemblages and *quilombism* (Severo & Makoni 2021).

Epistemologies of the South and Southern theory are not 'anti-science.' They constitute other ways/ 'waves' (Ingersoll 2016) of knowing and are made up of knowledges created 'during struggle' as opposed to knowledges created either before or after the struggle (Santos 2018; Lee & Makoni 2022). Knowledges born before the struggle have been largely influenced by Marxism which, like other critical approaches, has not been an effective source of social change in the Global South. Knowledges born after the struggle have been focused on the knowledges of the victorious and thus typically exclude knowledges of other participants, particularly the vanquished. Epistemologies of the South demand 'deep listening'. This means sharing, helping, assisting, or, as Commandant Marcos of the Zapatistas used to say, we have to move behind movements and assist those who move most slowly, and encourage those about to give up the struggle to continue (Santos 2018).

The point of departure of the politics of epistemologies of the South is a characterization of modern reason. Following Santos (2007), it is a form of 'abyssal thinking' which proposes radical distinctions between knowledges generated and developed in the Global North and Global South. Epistemologies of the South are preoccupied with the production and circulation of knowledges. For those of us thinking from the perspective of epistemologies of the South, one of the problems which sociolinguistics of the Global South must address is how to advance the quest for global justice and 'cognitive justice' in times of neoliberal globalization and

neo-colonialism, reinforced by capitalism and patriarchy. Political resistance, language activism and the promotion of language rights therefore need to be predicated upon epistemological resistance, which they rarely are because they are typically understood as purely linguistic activities.

Methodologically, we characterize scholarship from the Global South on language as 'transdisciplinary,' more so than 'interdisciplinary', because in the latter, disciplines work through each other. Yet, although such a route is promising, it is still susceptible to 'disciplinary decadence' (Gordon 2006) because it does not bring reality into focus. In contemporary linguistic scholarship, the current celebrated concept of 'interdisciplinarity' originated in the colonial discourses, which emerged to rationalize existing racial inequality as part of the natural order of things, or geopolitically to unite the human races within the framework of Western civilization and Christianity. Both intellectual orientations consequently justified slavery and colonialism; and a one-to-one mapping between the linguistic structure of a language, thought, and race was forged as a strategy of containing African diversity through Western discourse of language (Abdelhay et al., forthcoming).

We methodologically argue for 'transdisciplinarity' because it is based on 'a teleological suspension of disciplinarity' (Gordon 2006:100), by which he means a willingness and ability to go beyond disciplines in the production of knowledges. In this monograph, a 'teleological suspension of disciplinarity' entails moving beyond linguistics or sociolinguistics. The 'beyond' in Epistemologies of the South, as Lewis Gordon observes, is, however, paradoxical. In some instances, it revitalizes an existing discipline; in others, it creates a new one. For example, 'a teleological suspension' of philosophy generates a new philosophy in some instances, while in others it may create new social thought that may not be philosophical at all. A 'teleological suspension of linguistics' is relevant to this monograph because it constitutes 'epistemic decolonial acts' (Gordon 2006:100) and entails a creation and revitalization of linguistics relevant to contemporary Global South contexts.

There is a global hierarchy of knowledge production, with the colonial and Global South's objective being to supply 'raw' data and the Global North's objective to generate theories: a phenomenon which Hountondji (1997; 2002) refers to as 'extraversion'. Extraversion, according to Hountondji (1997), is oriented to accepting authorities outside one's own country, even when dealing with issues concerning one's own country. Hountondji (1997; 2002) is critical of indigenous knowledge and proposes the notion of endogenous knowledge as a strategy of moving beyond European knowledge. That some of the recent scholarship is not only critical of the Global North scholarship, but also questions colonial/Western and native/indigenous scholars who advocate them. We need to develop methodologies in Southern Epistemologies which are not 'extractivist'. Extractivist approaches view people as objects that provide information and not knowledge. Interviews are forms of data digging.

Towards a Definition of Extraversion

Slippages frequently occur when academic institutions in ex-colonies are dependent on books, journals, and other archival material from the metropolis, and contribute to an extraversion manifested by an uncritical application of research specializations, topics, and questions in ex-colonial academic spaces. Research in ex-colonies is organized in a special local way. There is a dearth of knowledge of the bigger philosophical issues that is a prerequisite to developing nuanced understanding of research questions. Such localization is related to the imposition of knowledge systems by both colonial and Western countries, and it ultimately contributes to the creation of an academic circuit. The intellectual orientation adopted by Hountondji (1997) compels us to assess how knowledge systems are interwoven in colonial and ex-colonial countries, and in turn how they influenced production and reproduction of social sciences disciplines (Patel 2014).

In an illuminating way, Hountondji (1997:2) draws parallels between factories/laboratories and acknowledged theories from Africa.

Due to the absence of factories/laboratories, those who live in ex-colonies are relegated to being producers and exporters of raw materials (either natural resources or research data) and importers of manufactured goods and grand theories, creating what Alatas (2006) aptly describes as the 'captive mind'. A captive mind is not unique to Africa, as it is found in many ex-colonial regions of the globe. One of the adverse consequences of extraversion is that many Southern theorists end up internalizing their role as peripheral or provincial, and accepting that their contributions will only be relevant to local contexts. Most contemporary social sciences, as practiced in most ex-colonial countries, are extractivist (cognitive extraversion) which resembles the extraction of natural resources. Extraversion is a violent intellectual process, as the metaphor implies.

The generation of 'non-extractive methodologies' is a very complex and difficult process because of the dominant position of 'cognitive extraction', epistemological, politically and educationally globally. If Southern epistemologies are to be valid, then we must develop non-extractive methodologies in the Global South. One of the defining features of extraversion is the application of Western theories in non-Western contexts; for example, an uncritical application of critical discourse analysis (CDA) to Africa. Ameka & Terkourafi (2019) cite a study of pragmatics in which theories of (i) conversational analysis, (ii) inferences of meaning in interaction, (iii) speech acts, and (iv) politeness theories are applied to non-Western contexts. In extraversion, the objective is to test, confirm, or disconfirm such theories and not to generate alternative theories. The extraversion can be extended not only to 'testing' of theories but also to issues about ethics. There are rarely instances of research ethics utilized in non-Western contexts informed by how ethics are understood in the Global South, so both the theoretical frameworks and the notions of ethics originate from outside the Global South but the research is carried out in the Global South (Ameka & Terkourafi 2019).

Generally, in Western-dominated ethics, it is mandatory that research participants be anonymized before the data are made public.

Anonymization takes several forms, such as using pseudonyms, removing participants' names and then using tags to identify them, distorting their voices, and blurring their images in videos. Such solutions are largely guided by Western ideas of ethics, which place a premium on autonomy and privacy – Western notions *par excellence*. Paradoxically, and as Ameka & Terkourafi (2019) rightly point out, however, in some communities, research participants are happy – and indeed expect – to be fully identified, contrary to the Global North's notions of anonymity. However, ethical requirements imposed by external legal regimes on the Global South militate against such identification (Ameka & Terkourafi 2019:79). Another research strand which is grounded in extractivist approaches is that of language rights. In language and human rights research, the tendency is to apply preformulated notions about rights to 'minority contexts' without paying adequate attention to how ideas about rights may be framed and understood in these minority contexts.

Relationship between Knowledge Production and Imperialism

There is a close relationship between knowledge production and the history of imperialism, which can be traced over more than 500 years.

Even the terms in which we name the world bear the traces of colonial and neocolonial relationships. The concept of 'Latin America', which emerged in the 19th century, expressed a French interpretation of the culture of creole (Spanish- and Portuguese-descended elites) (Mignolo 2011a). The name of 'Australia' is equally disturbing. The name of the country was given by a British naval officer on an expedition to gather geographical data; the word expressed the feeling that the speaker was as far away from home as it is possible to get. 'Africa' was originally the name of a province of the Roman Empire 2 000 years ago. The name was then applied to a larger region in the medial three-fold mapping of the world around Mediterranean Europe, Asia, and Africa. It was later made the name

of the whole continent during the era of trade routes, the slave trade, and colonial conquest (Connell 2019).

Closer to linguistics, even the names of some of the languages and language families were created by outsiders and not by the speakers of those languages themselves. For example, Bleek invented the term 'Bantu' to denote what he defined as 'prefix-pronominal languages' (compared with 'suffix-pronominal languages' which included the Hamitic and Indo-European languages) (Abdelhay et al., forthcoming). The continued and uncritical use of such terms without an awareness of their conceptual and political history results in African scholarship continuing to perceive itself through foreign lenses and prisms, even when it is advocating and promoting so-called indigenous languages. Jeater (1993) extends this argument further when she comments, drawing on lexical analysis, that even when translated into African languages, terms such as 'justice' and 'marriage' are embedded in Western ideological traditions, reflecting the complexity of the term 'indigeneity.' Indigeneity is complex because one becomes conscious of indigeneity when one has partially lost it (Comaroff 2021) or one is in the process of losing it.

Despite the overwhelming influence of colonialism in the Global South, local knowledges were never completely overwhelmed by pressures of colonialism. In other words, epistemic violence was never complete. The survival of indigenous knowledges has given rise in academic circles to controversies between this knowledge and Western knowledge formations. The Global South has its own ways of knowing, being, and communicating, and one of the primary objectives of this chapter is to construct the 'pluriverse' (Reitner 2018) and 'interversal knowledges' within linguistics. From a perspective of Afrocentricity, as articulated by Molefi (1998), colonialism was also a relatively short, anomalous event lasting, at most, 150 years in Southern Africa in the long history of Africa – although this is not to deny its devastating effects.

Southern Knowledges in the Global Arena

But what is the Global South? It is a locality within a force field of relations: historical, structural, cultural, and linguistic. These relations are, as Comaroff (2022) articulates it, 'recursive'. They are always recursive because, for instance, if you look at Europe, it has its centres and its peripheries, and so does the US, so does Cape Town, so does the South; from that point of view, the Global South is simultaneously both positional and recursive. The South is in a 'dialectical relationship with its other, and to use a linguistic term it's kind of deictic' (Comaroff 2022:73), and it is constantly being recreated, creolized, and dialectically remaking itself. And there are Global Souths in the Global Norths (and conversely there are Global Norths in the Global Souths): this relationship is constantly replayed in many parts of the globe.

There is a dominant way in which the world's story is narrated from the Global North's perspective, and which is pertinent to our argument that we are seeking to reverse in this monograph. The story is narrated from the perspective of power. It is largely one which seeks to capture the influence of the Global North on the Global South, but in reality, the relationship has always been a two-way street. While the Global South has been configured in many ways by the Global North, it has powerfully shaped the Global North as well, and in this chapter, we seek to illustrate the impact of the Global South on Global North language scholarship.

The impact of the Global South on the Global North is, however, rarely acknowledged by academia of the latter. The impact is often, as Comaroff (2022) puts it, 'appropriated, cannibalized and commodified' by the Global North. Consequently, the Global South is presented as always having to play catch-up and being situated on the periphery. We argue that, particularly in language research, the impact of the Global South on the Global North is underestimated because African insights are patented as European products.

The colonial world is creolized, and there is always, to a certain degree, a give-and-take in relationships of production and

dissemination. The two mutually influence and are entangled with each other. For example, people who come as missionaries, colonizers, and developers of Africa, are influenced by the ideology that they have an exclusive monopoly of the truth – the solid, universal truth – and they are arbiters of the ultimate unassailable truth. They disregard the degree to which they are influenced by those that they are trying to control; there is a lack of consciousness that what they are bringing is, in fact, not God's truth but one in a series of options, possibilities, and potentialities.

Even though the Global South is seen as the periphery, its impact and the indebtedness of the Global North to it are frequently disavowed and concealed. For example, Comaroff (2022) points out how British education was influenced and shaped by Indian colonial education. The South has also led the way in the efflorescence of 'ethnoprise,' which is more widely referred to as ethnicity (Comaroff & Comaroff 2009). The incorporation of identity and commodification of culture as intellectual property constitutes an appeal to natural copyright of indigenous knowledges (Comaroff & Comaroff 2012: 18).

Gordon (2021) documents how the expertise of African slaves taken violently from the continent shaped and transformed the Americas. According to Connell (2019), the first wave of data collectors from Europe depended on local expertise, informants who worked as guides, and translators etc. However, the expertise from the Global South was rarely acknowledged in the Global North. Expertise and knowledge in the Global North have never 'lived alone' – there has always been an 'ecology of knowledge' (Santos & Meneses 2019) in which the Global North, the imperial centre, was influenced by the periphery. Abiola Irele describes the indebtedness of the Global North to the Global South, as summarized in Taiwo (2019). The North is dependent upon the South even though it publicly disavows that dependence. The North cannot function without the resources and labour from the South, and language scholarship is part of that labour. This image of dependence is disavowed because of the North's ideal self-image of independence.

Heugh & Stroud (2020:216) shift the focus and adopt a much more language-oriented perspective when they 'lay bare some of the historically invisible circuits of intellectual exchange flowing from the geopolitical South to the geopolitical North around multilingualism'. They cite two notions about language which they allege have their origins ostensibly from the Global South: 'functional multilingualism' and 'linguistic citizenship'. According to Heugh, Stroud, Taylor-Leech and de Costa (2021), discussions about multilingualism have their origins in Africa even though they are 'patented as European products'. Heugh & Stroud (2020) therefore propose that the famous 'multilingual turn' in contemporary scholarship has its roots in African scholarship in the Global South; this will therefore be an example of scholarship from the Global South acting as a driver for international scholarship, rather than the converse. Furthermore, multilingualism, according to Stroud & Heugh (2020) and Pennycook & Makoni (2020), presents differently in the Global South than it does in northern contexts. In the Global South, it manifests itself in terms of plural multilingualisms.

Heller & McWhinney (2017) elaborate on how the contribution of scholarship from outside the American empire is occluded from view and presented as if it was a product of field work. They write:

> There are ways in which work that's happening within other traditions is picked up. There are those traditions that are ignored. And their parts of it that are ventriloquized and not properly cited. You take it up and the work is taken to be the work of scholars from the empire, in fact, the work happened elsewhere. For us, one example would be the tradition of phonetics. The history that is written as an innovation, a scientific innovation that started in Britain in the 19th century. But that work was elaborated in complex and rich conversation with traditions for analyzing language in India at the time and they were part of that colonial conversation. Some of these conversations were obscured. The long contributions

> of the Sanskrit tradition were obscured. We've argued, too, several American sociolinguists, who are part of these big development schemes, are sent to a range of sites in the world, and again India is one of them. John Gumperz, William Bright, several people who are often associated with the American sociolinguistic tradition and have powerful positions in that tradition, did work in India. Sometimes what happens is that the scholarly traditions are erased in the way these stories are retold such that they seem inspired by their fieldwork rather than by exchanges with scholars and scholarly traditions. Gumperz would say it was the sociolinguistic traditions, not just the communities that he encountered, that inspired him. But that work of erasure and reframing as partly what we are trying to show. And we are trying to show that the way that certain kinds of traditions that are articulated in some of the areas colonized by the US through work on creoles that is coming out of Hawaii and the pidgins and creoles coming out of the Caribbean are critical, they are very important sites. They are key sites for thinking about decolonial work, antiracism work, they are very important sites and for challenging existing traditions (for example, the notion of a linguistic family tree and thus what a family means.

For those who live there, the Global South is therefore a place, a location, a type of politics, and a type of scholarship where old empires have become new frontiers. It is therefore necessary to be aware of this double-sided story which includes an awareness by the Global South of its own vision, a heightened consciousness of the vision of the Global North on the Global South. Scholars in the Global South, because of their global position in the margins, are aware of their visions of the Global North; they are also acutely aware of how they are viewed by scholars in the North, and of the ideal images which the Northern scholars entertain of themselves. Scholars in the Global South know more about scholars in the Global North than vice versa.

Southern Theory from Connell's (2019) Perspective

Southern theory, according to Connell (2019), is an expansive field which we extend to sociolinguistics and language studies in Africa and its diasporas. Connell (2019:92) identifies the following as some of the key texts which underpin Southern theory:

- Huaman Poma's astonishing *Nueva Coronica* published around 1615. It narrates the story of the Inca empire and documents in meticulous detail Spanish colonial cruelty and brutality (cited in Connell 2019).
- Publications by indigenous scholars such as Mqhayi (1875–1914) and James Connolly (1868–1916).
- Bina Agarwal's *A Field of One's Own on Gender and Land in Postcolonial South Asia* and Mbembe's (2017) *A Critique of Black Reason* are two famous examples of scholarship in Southern theory.
- Kartini's critique of the subordination of women in Java and colonial China around the turn of the 20th century.
- Plaatje's (1916 (2009)) *Native Life in South Africa*.

Frantz Fanon's (1963) *The Wretched of the Earth* and (1966) *Black Skin, White Masks* are two influential books from the Global South that are well known in the Global North. Fanon, a psychiatrist and revolutionary from Martinique, published widely on Black self-hood and its potential for reconstruction and transformation. He was critical of the universal validity of psychoanalysis and sceptical of the 'universal pretensions of the humanities and social sciences' (Stroud & Mpendukana 2022). While his two best-known works, *The Wretched of the Earth* and *Black Skin, White Masks* have been studied extensively, focusing on issues about Black subjectivities, they have rarely been studied from the perspective of language ontologies, as Stroud and Mpendukana (2022) have noted.

Extraversion and Contesting Northern Hegemony (Cornell 2019)

Narrating the story of language studies from the Global South is necessary to mitigate the effects of Spivak's (1988; 2014) 'epistemic violence'. This is because one of the defining features of the Global South is that it is a place where colonial epistemic violence is executed and narrated. Epistemic violence occurs when people are either silenced or not heard because of colonial histories, European expansion, the Enlightenment, the Renaissance and neoliberalisms. Epistemologies and scholarship from, and in, the Global South are mediated when people have their experiences represented back to them by other people more frequently than by themselves, typically by people from the Northern academy, from a European or North American background. Epistemic violence becomes racialized when Whites represent Black experiences, or when Black experience resides largely in White hands as part of White expertise over Blacks.

Even though we are arguing for the relevance of theory from the Global South to scholarship in the Global North, we are aware of the 'importance of moving beyond the north-south binaries' (Comaroff & Comaroff, 2012:3). Framing the Global North and Global South as binaries is, however, conceptually unfortunate because it reflects the 'narcissistic tendencies' (Jeater 2022) of intellectuals and activists of the Global North, which ignores the role played by other hegemonic powers who have been at work in Africa for well over seven decades; for example, India and China. This 'narcissistic obsession' is blind to the complexity of the rest of the world. Powerful Southern actors such as China and India have had an impact on the dynamics in the Global South, particularly in higher education, and the Confucian Institutes are sites of one of the world's biggest experiments in language policy, planning, learning, and teaching that has been occluded from view because of the orientation towards English, French, Portuguese, and African languages.

The imperialist impact of other global powers such as India and China is concealed and camouflaged through the deployment

of more palatable 'aid' discourses reinforced through the astute use of short- and long-term training courses. The Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) was founded in 1950. It has emphasised human resource development and capacity development. According to King (2021), there were African students studying in India as far back as the 1940s and 1950s. Their presence in India was motivated by Nehru's idealistic beliefs of the relevance of mutual learning encapsulated in the following quotation from his speech at Ghana's independence in 1957: 'We shall welcome here more students from Africa who will learn something about India, but who, more specially, will teach us something about their own country' (Nehru 1957 cited in King 2021). Currently, India offers 3 300 long-term awards and 13 000 short-term awards worldwide in 300 courses across India; 11 000 are in civil subjects and 2 000 are for defence training. Many of India's students worldwide are self-funding. The one-sided nature of the relationship between India and Africa in the educational arena is apparent in that there are very few students from India in African higher education, despite the two-way relationship which Nehru envisioned in his speech at Ghana's Independence in 1957.

The earliest African students to China came from Egypt in 1956, which coincided with the establishment of diplomatic relations with Egypt. According to King (2021), there were 24 students from Africa in China in the 1950s and early 1960s before the onset of the cultural revolution between 1966 and 1976. According to King (2021), China has offered as many as 50 000 long-term scholarships to Africans in the current triennium, 2018–2021. There are also many more self-funding African students in China than funded ones. For the Chinese government, Confucian Institutes in Africa are the main instruments used in shaping the role of China in the Global South, and globally, in one of the biggest language projects in the world, which is the learning and teaching of Chinese (Makoni et al. 2007). There are currently 62 Confucius Institutes in Africa.

The discourses emanating from China and India are framed as: empathy-based, drawing on shared identity; people-to-people, being mutually beneficial and entailing reciprocity and learning from each other; and highlighting solidarity with other developing countries (King 2021). Following Comaroff (2022:114), we subvert the hierarchical arrangements of the intellectual world, irrespective of whether it is India, China, or Euro-America and Africa, and we are adamant that it is 'the Global South [that] affords privileged insights into the workings of the world at large' and not vice versa. Consequently, to a large extent our theory-making ought to be coming from the Global South. Scholarship and language practices in the Global South prefigure and provide a precursor to the nature and dynamics of the Global North. Research into the Global South is relevant to the Global North because:

> contrary to received Euromodernism narratives of the past two centuries, with the Global South tracking behind the curve of the Universal history, always in deficit, always playing catch up, there is good reason to think the opposite, given the unpredictable, under-determined dialects of capitalism and modernity in the here and now, it is the first to feel the effects of the world-historical forces in which new assemblages of capitalist labour are taking shape.
>
> (Comaroff & Comaroff 2012:2)

To the extent that the Global South is treated as a driver of scholarship, this runs contrary to the way the Global South is viewed from a Western perspective, which treats it 'as an outside that requires translation, mutation, conversion, catch up' (Comaroff & Comaroff 2012:2). According to Jane Gordon (2022), the Global South is undergirded by notions of global Blackness or Africana philosophy. The Global South overlaps with patterns of precarity and vulnerability, and geographically with sites where garbage is dumped. Sites in the Global South have much in common, even though they have divergent histories.

There is a kind of 'double consciousness' which is a product and outcome of being part of the Global South and an awareness of being part of the world. According to Gordon (2022), this has implications on issues about self-perception. Gordon (2022) argues that Blacks know Whites more than Whites know themselves. This is because Whites are likely to know themselves only through self- idealized images of themselves, while Blacks know the differences between White idealized images of themselves and their real behaviour.

Boaventura de Sousa Santos and the Global South

If the main theme running through Comaroff and Comaroff's (2012) notion of the Global South is the nature of its relationship with the Global North, or the relationships within different Global Souths, Santos frames the Global South in terms of political activism and social struggles. Santos and Meneses (2020) define the Global South as:

> [a] wide field of experiments in fighting for a better world, a world that is respectful of dignity and humanity in its diversity. Everywhere, from Asia to Europe, from the Americas to Africa, from Australia to the Caribbean, a heterogeneous mass of subaltern groups—peasants and landless peoples, informal workers, people who live in favelas, in peripheries and on the streets, environmentalist groups, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender/Transexual and Intersexed (LGBTI) and marginalized youths—organize into associations and social movements aiming to challenge the social exclusion to which the capitalist, colonial, and patriarchal system has been subjecting them for centuries.

According Santos and Meneses (2020), viewing the world from a perspective which cherishes its diversity is one of the critically important issues in the epistemologies of the South. These epistemologies are grounded in the experiences of groups frequently

excluded by the forces of colonialism, capitalism, and patriarchy. By incorporating the experiences of previously socially excluded groups, epistemologies of the South accentuate 'cognitive diversity' through 'ecologies of knowledges, inter-cultural and inter-political translation, and artisanship of practices' (Santos & Meneses 2020).

For Santos, the Global South is a product of struggles, irrespective of whether they occur in the Global North or Global South. Historically, according to Santos, this is the opportune moment for the epistemologies of the South, because it is the time for a return of *The Wretched of the Earth* (Fanon 1961) or what Lewis Gordon (2021) calls the *Damned of the Earth*. The wretched of the earth are, however, not passive victims; they are active agents who have an impact on epistemology by using their learning in radically new ways (Santos 2018). 'By occupying epistemology, oppressed social groups—those who do not count as human and whose knowledges are not valid in the face of the hegemony of Western modern thinking—claim their humanity by representing the world as their own and in their own terms' (Santos & Meneses 2019). The Global South is a category inherited from Third World struggles. It echoes political, ontological, and epistemological aspirations whose knowledges are validated by the success of struggles (Santos & Meneses 2020).

Thinking from the South demands that we engage in a form of epistemic and political decolonization (see Chapter Three). Epistemic decolonization, following wa Thiong'o, entails shifting the centre, abandoning a view of relations between languages as hierarchical and, according to Mamdani (2021), requires creating a new form of political imagination. Central to Santos' thinking about *Epistemologies of the South* is the notion of 'abyssal thinking,' which he defines thus:

> A system of visible and invisible distinctions, where the invisible ones are the foundations of the visible ones. The invisible distinctions are established through radical lines that divide

> social reality into two realms, the realm of this side of the line, the metropolis, and the realm of the other side of this line, the colonized space.
>
> (Santos 2007: 45)

The 'abyssal line' frames individuals from the Global South as objects who do not have the full characteristics of being human. More importantly, even though their knowledge contributed towards a creation of the Global North, their contribution can be disowned, disregarded, and not fully acknowledged so they cannot be given credit for their social and linguistic knowledge. Epistemologies of the South render it possible to acknowledge laypeople's knowledge as comparable in epistemological legitimacy to that of either professionals or educated elites of the Global North. The acknowledgment of laypeople's experiences as sources and sites of theorization in epistemologies renders it intellectually feasible to align epistemologies of the South with some of the bedrock concepts of integrational linguistics in which laypeople's experiences constitute one of the critical ideas (Makoni et al., 2021; Makoni & Pable forthcoming; Makoni et al., 2022).

For Santos, the critical issue is the possibility of human rights becoming a new language of emancipation and progressive politics, able to give impulse to counter-hegemonic struggles. The capacity for emancipation is possible if human rights are reimagined through an intercultural dialogue between Western and non-Western conceptions of rights. According to May (2012), the tendency has been to advocate the application of (language) rights to diverse contexts, particularly minority contexts. Following Santos, we argue not for the application of language rights across the globe, but for the establishment of an intercultural dialogue between Western and non-Western conceptions of rights. This is a different approach even from that of linguistic citizenship advocated by Stroud and Heugh (2004), in which there is no space for how rights are conceptualized in local contexts.

Adopting the Global South as a locus of enunciation renders it possible to view the world differently from the way it is constructed from the position of the Global North. The Epistemologies of the South are historically grounded in the sense that they are born from history, although not from the 'universal history' as articulated in the Global North, but from the 'history of modern imperialism and anti-colonial resistance'. If, for Comaroff and Comaroff (2012), the concept of the South entails a dialectal relationship, it stands for the suffering of societies and communities that have been victims of the violence and devastation unleashed by global capitalism, colonialism, and patriarchy. The devastation has epistemological consequences and has resulted in five centuries of 'epistemicide.'

Santos (2006) argues that critical theory, Marxism, and the Frankfurt School are in a state of crisis. Social groups such as peasants, indigenous peoples who live in jungles and speak vernacular languages, women, and the unemployed, who continue to fight against colonial legacies, neoliberalism, capitalism, and patriarchy, are invisible and cannot be easily accommodated in Eurocentric theory. They also tend to imagine society using categories which are incommensurable with Western categories in Eurocentric philosophy.

To avoid the continuation of epistemicide, 'abyssal thinking' has to be destabilized and resisted, and a 'post-abyssal' way of thinking needs to be constructed. Also, we have to explore the relevance of post-abyssal thinking for language studies from the Global South. The processes of creating conditions for a post-abyssal thinking to emerge are complicated. They should at the very minimum deprive Western theory of its abyssal characteristics, its claims to universality, and its monopoly on and over truth. It is necessary to embark upon a major decentring effort carried out in collaboration with scholars and political activists. Such an abandonment of the position of the centre in knowledge production encourages those thinking from the Western locus of enunciation to try to locate

their epistemological perspectives on both the histories and social experiences on the other side of the line.

A second approach must be a search for and a revival of ancestral knowledges, and other alternative ways of living together and communicating, with non-western knowledges validated as centres and carriers of truth. Methodologically, epistemologies of the South and post-abyssal thinking, according to Santos (2007), should entail moving away from and dispensing with extractivist methodological approaches in which, as we pointed out earlier, humans are regarded as objects. The objective of post-abyssal thinking and non-extractivist approaches should be to introduce Black subjectivity into language studies from the Global South.

'Sociologies of Absences'

> The real turning point for us to develop, in Epistemologies of the South, is what I call the sociology of absences, which is strange, because the idea of a sociology of something that does not exist is quite odd. The point is that whatever does not exist in our society is often actively produced as non-existent and we have to look into that reality. Looking at this reality you can see the sociology of absences allows us to expand the relevant experiences of the world.
>
> (Santos 2001:185)

Capturing this reality, however, is not enough. It is necessary to adopt a second conceptual and rhetorical move, which Santos (2001) characterizes as a 'sociology of emergence'. In a sociology of emergence, we symbolically amplify a different way of understanding, transforming, and changing society. The sociology of emergence is necessary to stimulate the development of linguistic and social analysis, and thereby avoid exhaustion and preempting political paralysis.

Shifting the Geography of Reason in Sociolinguistics and Language Studies

Another defining feature of the epistemologies of the South that we are seeking to develop in this monograph is 'Shifting the geography of reason', which is the motto of the Caribbean Philosophical Association (Gordon 2021). This was also the theme of the first international conference of the Caribbean Philosophical Association, held in the Accra Hotel in Barbados in 2004. The need to shift the geography of reason arose because of the rejection of the Eurocentrism of Black and Africana philosophy in American academia, which construed everything coming from Africa as non-intellectual and non-academic and therefore not useful as a source of knowledge. If we are to treat what has come from Africa and its diaspora, and Africa and Black philosophy, as academic and scholarly, we need to shift the geography of reason because this will thereby create conditions which liberate us from both epistemic colonization and dependency.

The shift in the geography of reason is a collective exercise and not an individual one. It is important to think differently and creatively – the power of such imagination does not amount to much if one thinks alone and without combining thought with action. Unlike gods who have the capacity to bring about change in the world with a single thought, human beings are social and need each other for social and political transformations to be effected. This requires carefully reflecting on the conditions that render it difficult to bring about change. Commencing with shifting, which could be interpreted as creating and forging novel relations through different orientations, the project is to create potential for change, or bring about a revolution – a process which is feared by those who hang onto unproductive pasts (Gordon 2021).

A shift in the geography of reason also constitutes a robust critique of critical theory in a manner which echoes Santos' (2006) objection to critical theory. However, Gordon, in his shift of reason, calls for a shift in the geography of reason because of the 'Whiteness'

of critical theory. The first critical theory already reveals its dangers. Contemporary critical theory which for the most part consists of post-structuralism, is Eurocentric, which explains the general whiteness of its audience and practitioners, although some token colourism pops up here and there among its proponents. This is not to deny that there have been Black forms of critical theory committed to Black and African Studies. The work of Lucius T. Outlaw and Reiland Rabaka are clear examples, according to Gordon (2021).

One way to frame shifting the geography of reason is to think of it as a multi-layered notion with at least six dimensions, which we detail below:

1. A shift in the geography of reason entails a shift from a 'closed to an open, relational commitment' (Gordon 2021:128).
2. A shift in the geography of reason 'requires thinking anew and creatively' (Gordon 2021:130).
3. 'Shifting the geography of reason requires understanding that power should not be reduced to a single element but instead should be explored in its creative potential' (Gordon 2021: 130).
4. Shifting the geography of reason also requires shifting the geography of knowledge production. 'A shift does not mean abandonment' (Gordon 2021:132).
5. 'It is possible that the shift in the geography of reasoning can be also appropriated by these populist, nationalist, and imperial revivalist forces' (Gordon 2021:134).
6. 'Shifting the geography of reason is a task which creates healthy possibilities' (Gordon 2021:134).

Issues about Method

According to Gordon (2021), it is important to know that modes of producing knowledge can be enlisted in the service of colonization. Frantz Fanon, in *Black Skin, White Masks*, reflected that methods have ways of devouring and destroying themselves. If methods can be colonized, then the best approach methodologically when

developing language studies using epistemologies of the South is a suspension of methodology, as Gordon (2021) puts it. There is always more to reality than the analytical frameworks imply (Gordon 2021), and the failure to appreciate reality sometimes takes the form of recoiling and running away from it. An inward path of discipline breeds solitude, which leads to what Gordon (2021) refers to as 'disciplinary decadence'. The main concern in a discipline beset by decadence is a preoccupation and fixation with the appropriation and administration of its own regulations and protocol, or, as Fanon (1961) refers to it, 'self-devouring methods'. Becoming 'right' constitutes applying the method correctly. One of the objectives of epistemologies of the South is to avoid disciplinary decadence.

Global South, global Blackness, creolization, and issues about race orientations by Gordon (2022) adopt a more racially-oriented approach towards her definition of the Global South. For her, the Global South is both very 'deliberately and carefully conceived', but unfortunately 'under theorized' (Gordon 2022). It overlaps with 'global Blackness,' or with notions of Africana or African diasporas. On the one hand, it captures similarities in being black in the Americas, in Africa, and among Afro-descendants in South America, indigenous Australians, or Asian American women, all of whom may adopt the term 'Black' to describe their own political predicaments and advance their political diagnoses.

The Global South, according to Gordon (2022), identifies hierarchical global relations and divisions of labour that are shaped in critical ways by different versions of imperialism, colonialism, and settler colonialism. Consequently, the Global South shapes patterns of 'vulnerability and disposability', and as locations where garbage – both intellectual and material – and other forms of pollution are dumped with impunity (Gordon 2022). These are places which are prone to being adversely affected by climate change.

The Global South is not a designation used by powerful institutions situated in the Global North, such as the World Bank. 'The Global South is an invocation to create continuities with and to give

continued life to earlier concrete instances of struggles' (Gordon 2022). The politics of the Global South has to be progressive. It creates forms of solidarity that need to be created, nurtured, sustained, and developed. The relationships are emergent and open-ended. The entire reason for calling it a Global South is to paradoxically call it a center from which to view the world.

Everything which emerges in the Global South is creolized because it is about forging different kinds of relationships out of colonial legacies. The Global North and Global South should not be treated as symmetrical, as they describe radically different conceptions and visions of the world. Also, it is not just Anglophone as all major European figures must be studied through the lenses of racial and colonized experiences. Global Southern thought is always richer than Global Northern thought because it is always creolized. The notion of Global Blackness suggests that the term 'Blackness' represents a spectrum which has certain features in common across the world and across diasporas. Blackness represents a spectrum of visions because there are differences in these contexts in which Blacks find themselves in. For example, the way Blackness is experienced, felt, and thought of in Africa may be different from the way it is experienced and narrated in Asia, South America, and the United States (Gordon 2022).

Creolization

One of the primary objectives of critical scholarship that falls under the rubric of Global South research is concerned with the creation of Global South subjectivity through the study of power and racialization within global capitalism and neoliberalism. This transcends the nation-state as the unit of comparative analysis among subaltern groups across linguistic, racial, and ethnic lines. Creolization, according to Gordon (2022), is one of the ways in which the Global South subjectivity is forged, created, and sustained. Jane Gordon argues that creolization as an analytical approach is a more effective way of encapsulating the heterogeneity and diversity of

political life contributing towards the creation of subjectivities, which is a defining feature of the Global South. Using creolization as an analytical framework, she analyses the mixtures which emerged in the plantation societies of the Caribbean, when people who were strangers found themselves having to reimagine together what home means and produce new protocols of what living together means. Gordon (2014) is interested in exploring how this analysis can be carried out in ways which do not necessarily reinforce inequalities, by using creolization. An example of creolization of political analysis is the juxtaposition of the Swiss thinker Rousseau with the Algerian revolutionary Frantz Fanon.

Creolization can be construed as rendering a form to be local and drawing people and influences together that are unprecedented. Many creoles were not considered languages; they were construed as bastardized languages for the purposes of trade and were not expected to be able to communicate important ideas. When creole studies emerged, there was consternation because West African people were not expected to be capable of influencing the French language. Spaniards moving to Latin America were not expected to have brown babies – i.e., what made creolization different was who was being mixed with whom, and the mixing was also seen as illicit and included blending with people who were considered to occupy a lower rung of humanity. What was also disconcerting was the observation that the creolization process was occurring in other languages too; so creoles were, to some extent, not exceptional; they reflected a normal process of change in language.

In creolizing contexts, language contact is best thought about in terms of how people actually negotiate meaning across different cultural barriers. English is creolized but in different ways across the world. Also, there are many indigenous people who detest the notion of creolization, in the US, for example, because they construe it as an argument for further assimilation – a process which has not worked well for them. All indigenous people who have been able to survive are creolized. It is not necessary to claim to be 'untouched' to be indigenous.

Creolization: Reading Fanon through Linguistic Citizenship

Although Stroud and Mpendukana (forthcoming) do not use the term 'creolization,' the methodological strategy which they adopt (using the analytical framework of linguistic citizenship to read and understand the coloniality of language in Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* and *Black Skin, White Masks*) is analogous to how Jane Gordon (2014) uses Fanon to frame Rousseau and refers to as creolization of political thought. Stroud and Mpendukana's (forthcoming) ultimate objective is to deconstruct how language is understood by Fanon as part of decolonizing linguistics. Their ultimate objective is to find new ontologies of language so as to reimagine and reconceptualize alternative ways in which humanity can be reimagined, a move which becomes necessary as we seek to move beyond a linguistics which revolves around the human.

Stroud and Mupendukana's (forthcoming) reading of Fanon through linguistic citizenship gives relief to his (novel) ontology of language which constitutes a philosophy of politics and language pertinent to decolonial (socio)linguistics. Stroud and Mupenduka (forthcoming) use linguistic citizenship as an analytical framework because it pays attention to marginal and plural voices. The 'perfomativity of LC (Linguistic Citizenship) helps with the buildings of collectivities and the forging of new relationalities often in the interstices, margins and cracks, fissures and flows, which make up rhizomatic underbellies of societal structures and institution'.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have argued for the relevance of Southern epistemologies and Southern theories, because racial and biological discourses have shaped and continue to have an insidious influence on how African languages are imagined, characterized, studied, and promoted. It is necessary to develop Southern epistemologies and Southern theories because, for example, the conceptual cultural history of Bantu linguistics was informed by a heteronormative

ideology reinforced with a racial theory of language. Bantu linguistics emerged in the context of colonial empire as a result of interdisciplinary coalition between philology, theology and natural sciences. Contemporary phenomena captured by terms such raciolinguistics and colourism originated in Western colonial thinking about language and thereby reinforce Global North–South asymmetries in knowledge production. Linguistics in Africa is complicit in perpetuating the racialization of language if it does not confront the racialized discourses at the centre of some of its powerful metaphors using Southern epistemologies and Southern theories about language. What is required is to develop other epistemologies which are aware of the impacts of the Global North and race on the intellectual and conceptual history of African linguistics.

There are at least four implications of viewing language through Southern epistemologies and Southern theory (Pennycook & Makoni 2020). The first questions how multilingualism is viewed in the Global North and Global South. The second entails looking at language in new contexts. The third involves criticizing the idea of language use as instantiations of preassembled entities, and instead arguing that language is a product of, and the outcome of, communicative practices. Languages are ontologically second-order constructs. The final argument we make is that pluralization of the multi in language may not be the most radical way of capturing diversity, and that pluralization should be that of language ontology and not of languages (Heurich & Hauck 2018). Finally, we argue that the knowledge offered by the epistemologies of the South are much deeper in the context of social transformation than that which originates from formal academic institutions (Escobar 2015).

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AUDIENCE'S VOICES ON AFRICAN THOUGHT

MORGAN NDLOVU AND AGHOGHO AKPOME

Introduction

Conferences have always served as platforms for contesting, testing, legitimizing, re-affirming and negotiating ideas in academia. At the centre of the idea of an academic conference and the process of conferencing, is knowledge production, a phenomenon that is an inherent part of being human. All human beings can contribute to knowledge production which is a history-making process, since knowledge and reality reproduce one another synchronically and diachronically. In this chapter, as we engage with the core issues of the University of Zululand's Inaugural Conference on African Thought, we also highlight the significance of the voices of the audience in the knowledge production process in the specific context of conferencing, which is largely ignored. Indeed, conference proceedings, as products of knowledge, feature only the voices of presenters to the total exclusion of the voices of listeners. In the pages to follow, we demonstrate that audience voices can make significant contributions to the idea of institutionalizing African thought within the university.

The Idea of an Inaugural African Thought Conference at UNIZULU

The conference was the brainchild of the Vice-Chancellor (VC) and Principal of the University of Zululand, Professor Xoliswa Mtose. Though the conference took place in the month of November 2022 and lasted for only three days, it was a product of the VC's long-standing concern about the identity and the place of UNIZULU within the broader struggle for social, cultural and economic relevance that confronts many universities in Africa today. Like others on the continent, UNIZULU has been confronted by the

perennial question of whether it is an African university or just another Westernized university located on the African continent. This poignant question meant that even though UNIZULU is widely viewed as a 'black' institution in South Africa, the institution could not avoid dealing with the daunting question of decolonization and Africanization. Indeed, the Inaugural Conference on African Thought was a culmination of a series of thoughts and activities that included consultation with key stakeholders within UNIZULU, an academic expedition to the United States to meet leading scholars on pan-Africanist thought, as well as several special pre-conference seminars and webinars.

A Brief Historical Background

The genesis of the conference can be traced to several meetings of the university management committee between 2019 and 2020, as well as several presentations by keynote speakers in the Vice-Chancellor's Webinar series in 2021 and 2022. Among the most memorable of these meetings that laid the foundation for the conference and the adoption of the idea of making UNIZULU a node for African thought is the management committee (MANCOM) meeting that took place at Jozini Hotel in December 2020. This was where the idea of African thought was formally and firmly adopted as part of the university's seven-year strategic plan. This meeting was followed by several presentations in 2021 on the meaning of the idea of African thought, the need to establish a Centre (or Institute) for African Thought and the question of the role of African languages in advancing African thought.

This was followed by a presentation on the meaning of African thought by Professor Morgan Ndlovu in March 2021; a paper on the role of African languages in grounding African thought by Professor Kwesi Prah in April 2021; the Africa Day Speech by the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Xoliswa Mtose; and yet another by Professor Sinfree Makoni from the University of Pennsylvania on the idea of a Global South university. These and other workshops

on decolonising the curriculum not only laid a foundation for the adoption of African thought by the university but also inspired management to initiate the Inaugural Conference on African Thought as a formal step in the evolution of the university into a full-fledged node for African thought.

The development of the idea of African thought at UNIZULU involved several stakeholders within and outside the university. These include visiting international guest speakers from the United States such as Professor Sinfree Makoni and Professor Opoku Agyeman, and local interlocutors such as Professor Sipho Seepe (Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Institutional Support), Professor Mogomme Alpheus Masoga (Dean: Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences), Professor Morgan Ndlovu (Department of Anthropology and Development Studies) and Dr Aghogho Akpome (Department of English), all from UNIZULU.

Summaries of Presentations

In order to understand the nature of the audience's reactions and responses to the main ideas presented at the conference, a concise exploration of the different presentations is important. The Vice-Chancellor opened with a focus on the purpose of the conference which was to discuss the idea of African thought with the view to institutionalizing, operationalising and modelling it within the university. Her presentation offered a reflection on how the peculiar history of the institution placed a burden on its leadership to act decisively in adopting the current strategic plan. She went on to emphasise the need for African thought to influence the whole business of the university, including curricula, pedagogy, research, academic citizenship, community engagement and institutional culture. In this way, she set a clear and strong agenda for the conference. This was followed by the presentation of the Minister of Higher Education, Dr Blade Nzimande, who stated that the idea of African thought is an idea whose time has come.

According to the minister, the modern university institution is largely informed by what he referred to as a 'bourgeoisie epistemology' which alienated most of the population, especially those from a working-class background. Though he emphasised the need for solidarity among Africans on the continent and in diaspora in order to achieve decolonization and Africanization of the modern university institution, he urged that the audience not to lose sight of their unique South African experience. In going way beyond the often cosmetic niceties offered by senior government functionaries at similar events, the minster set a high intellectual bar for the conversations that followed. In the words of Professor Sipho Seepe, the minister's presentation both 'sophisticated and complicated' the business at hand.

The minister's presentation was followed by that of Professor Michael West. It was a presentation that emphasised not only the revival of pan-African ideals in order to develop what he referred to as a 'University of the Global South' but also the anchoring of African thought on the shoulders of African intellectual giants of the past such as the liberation struggle stalwart, Dr Pixley ka Isaka Seme. Emphasising that decolonising the university is not an event but a process, West argued for the need of unity and collaboration among Africans both at home and in the diaspora. In this connection, he proposed the establishment of a Centre for Diaspora Studies at UNIZULU. He foregrounded the need to draw inspiration from salient revolutionary events in Black/African/South African history such as the Bambatha rebellion of 1906 in South Africa and the Haitian revolution of 1791 to 1804. These events, he argued, need to be commemorated, memorialized and taught not only as a central part of institutionalizing African thought in an African university but also in service of the struggle for the total emancipation of the modern African subject.

West's presentation was followed by that of Professor O. Agyeman who argued for what one can characterize as radical pan-Africanism. Agyeman provided an extensive record of the

atrocities committed against Africans by the colonial powers as a backdrop to the need for the re-assessment of Africa's place in the world today. He decried the tendency among some Africans to depend on collaborating with those who do not share their unique experiences as an oppressed race, thereby compromising their struggle for liberation. Reflecting the thoughts of Marcus Garvey, Agyeman dismissed the idea of planetary solidarity among the different races in the fight against racial oppression. He argued instead for what might be described as an essentialized African identity, and that this should be at the heart of efforts geared towards the liberation of peoples of African descent. These, in his view, would be crucial aspects of African thought and should undergird the epistemological project of any true African university. He went further to suggest that the successful implantation of the ideas generated during the conference would move UNIZULU close to the mark of becoming a university of the Black World.

The next keynote was delivered by Professor Mogomme Masoga, dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at UNIZULU, who fleshed out the university's position on the subject of African thought. He argued that though UNIZULU was conceived of as a black university by the apartheid regime, it was not an actual African university in terms of serving the interests of its African students and environment. Rather, the purpose of the apartheid founders was to achieve their discredited notions of 'separate development'. Commenting on transformation in South Africa since the end of official apartheid, Masoga reminded delegates that de-racialisation is not equivalent to decolonisation. As such, he argued, there remains a pressing need for decolonising, Africanising and indigenising black institutions which had been founded on Western thought. He further argued for the establishment of a Centre for African Thought at UNIZULU to catalyse research on African knowledges and ways of knowing which would facilitate the cross-fertilization of African ideas, perspectives and experiences and enable their infusion into the curricular, pedagogy, academic citizenship, and community engagement.

Masoga's ideas intersect with those of Professor A. J. I. Bewaji who followed after him. Bewaji advocated for and described the role of African indigenous knowledges in making African universities truly African. Bewaji called for the privileging of marginalized indigenous knowledges that continue to inform the African world view in many communities in Africa, in spite of the unrelenting attempts by colonising forces to decimate them. He gave the example of taboos, folklore, and the prevalence of indigenous languages as genuine manifestations of colonial difference and alterity in postcolonial Africa. Thus, like other presenters before him, Bewaji felt that UNIZULU is well positioned to tap into knowledges and civilizations 'otherwise' that remain in substantial measures within its semi-rural location.

The last keynote presentation came from the linguist, Professor Sinfree Makoni, based at Pennsylvania State University. His focus was on the question of African languages and their role in decolonizing, Africanizing, and indigenizing the university. Makoni stressed that linguistic colonization is one of the key colonial matrices of power that has always been at the heart of the colonial project. He vehemently rejected the idea of domesticating European languages as a way of decolonizing, indigenizing, and Africanizing the modern/colonial university institution. He argued that language in the colonial project is not just a means of communication but a vital part of changing the 'mental universe' of the colonized subject. Makoni contends that language serves more as an effective means of acculturation rather than communication. These presentations were interspersed by a rich series of responses and commentary from Professor Seepe, Professor Ndlovu and Dr Akpome, who took turns to highlight the key points raised by each keynote address while providing fitting points of entry for engagement between the main speakers and members of the audience.

The Profile and the Responses of the Audience

The conference audience consisted largely of academics as well as the administrative staff complement of the university. These

included all the deans of the institution's four faculties, namely the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, the Faculty of Commerce, Administration and Law, the Faculty of Science, Agriculture and Engineering, and the Faculty of Education. Others were a cross-section of heads of departments as well as senior management and administrative personnel within the office of the Vice-Chancellor. The director of the Richards Bay campus was also physically present. Most staff members attended the conference via virtual means in the comfort of their offices and homes. This was one way of ensuring that the conference was attended by members of staff from all university campuses and faculties. This profile of attendees is important for the analysis of their responses, since disciplinary background plays a role in understanding, interpretating and engaging with the idea of African thought. Thus, for instance, we observed that most attendees with a background in the humanities and social sciences seemed to be more forthcoming in engaging with the issues under consideration. By contrast, participants from the natural sciences such as physics, mathematics and biology, and commerce subjects such as accounting and business studies, appeared to be less receptive to the idea of African thought, something that might influence their acceptance or otherwise of the different views canvassed by speakers.

The first response that caught our attention during one of the interactive sessions was that of the dean of the Faculty of Commerce, Administration and Law, Professor Greyling, a macro-economist. She stated that she has always wondered why the Keynesian theory, one of the key theories of economics, has not been able to find solutions to most of the economic challenges affecting our society. She expressed appreciation of the conference presentations that have taught her that most of the modern disciplines such as the discipline of economics were designed to conceal rather than reveal the 'truth' about the inner workings of the modern global economy. She stated that she has always thought that the so-called developed countries achieved wealth and 'development' by

applying bespoke policies. But this view was shaken by what she learnt from conference presentations, which demonstrate that much of the wealth of the dominant West today is a result of histories of enslavement, colonialism, and neo-colonialism – something that is hardly mentioned in economics' textbooks and theories.

What we deduced from this response is that the conference was a platform for re-learning and unlearning for some of the audience as well as a site of resocialization. This is an important development because one of the objectives of holding the Inaugural Conference on African Thought was to prepare the key stakeholders in the university for the journey towards making UNIZULU a node for African thought rather than a site of Western thought, where Western interests are privileged via the medium of knowledge production at the expense of subjugated African subjects.

The second noteworthy response from the audience was that of Dean of Education Professor Ntombela, who stated that the conference became a moment of 'epistemic cleansing' for her. By foregrounding African interests, thoughts, knowledges, and ways of knowing as key to the operation of the university, the conference was inaugurating a process that is akin to cleansing because Africans cannot benefit meaningfully from education unless they 'see themselves clear'. She further decried the role of 'epistemic dislocation' in bewitching Africans into becoming their own worst enemies in matters of thinking and knowledge production. This is an error that cannot be remedied without aligning Africans with their epistemic and social locations.

The third reaction to the presentations that were made at the conference came from one of the heads of department in the Faculty of Science, Agriculture, and Engineering, who inquired about the relevance of decolonisation, Africanization and indigenization to subjects such as mathematics, engineering and medical sciences. He was of the opinion that the discourse of decolonisation, Africanisation and indigenisation are primarily relevant to humanities and social science disciplines rather than the so-called STEM disciplines,

since the theories that inform the latter are universal and objective. This question solicited a number of responses from speakers in the audience who took turns to remind him that though they are not as obvious, STEM subjects are as liable to biases as other subjects, given that they are also informed by particular cultures.

In this connection, a speaker from the Department of English argued that the mere fact that these subjects are taught in the English language to students whose first language and 'mother tongue' is not English betrays the fact they are part of a 'civilizing' project. In general, the debate on whether the decolonization, Africanization and indigenization discourse is relevant to all or some subjects became a debate about 'objectivity', 'neutrality' and 'universality', all which serve as technologies of subjection within the global colonial matrix of power. Thus, as the decolonial philosopher, Ramon Grosfoguel (2007: 213) has eloquently put it:

> In Western philosophy and sciences, the subject that speaks is always hidden, concealed, erased from the analysis. The 'ego-politics of knowledge' of Western philosophy has always privileged the myth of a non-situated 'Ego'. Ethnic/racial/gender/sexual epistemic location and the subject that speaks are always decoupled. By delinking ethnic/racial/gender/sexual epistemic location from the subject that speaks, Western philosophy and sciences are able to produce a myth about a Truthful universal knowledge that covers up, that is, conceals who is speaking as well as the geo-political epistemic location in the structures of colonial power/knowledge from which the subject speaks.

Here we have to quote Grosfoguel (2007) at length because it is this 'god-eye view' or 'point zero' (Catsro-Gomez 2003) hubris about knowledge that has enabled the imperial subject to produce abstract universals in the false name of knowledge that are informed by his/her particular point of view and bias and that pretend to be without

any biased point view. In reality, our knowledges are always 'situated' as 'we always speak from a particular location in the [modern/colonial] power structures' that make it impossible to escape 'the class, sexual, gender, spiritual, linguistic, geographical, and racial hierarchies' (Grosfoguel 2007:213) that inform our world views and our world sensing. Thus, in the context of the Inaugural African Thought Conference, the audience was urged by different speakers to take the location, identity, and experience of the African subject seriously in matters of knowledge production and dissemination.

The fourth interesting response that was raised came from one of the heads of departments in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, who asked whether the discourses of decolonization, Africanization, and indigenization are not protest scholarship aimed at opposing Eurocentrism without proffering alternatives to it. This assertion provoked a debate among the audience and presenters in which the majority of the interlocutors acknowledged that, in spite of epistemicidal colonialism, Africa still possesses critical residues of 'knowledges otherwise' in the form of pre-existing indigenous knowledges whose reality and efficacy cannot be ignored. This was followed by a subsequent question on the nature and state of these indigenous knowledges in the aftermath of colonial encounters and in the context of the present global coloniality. Among the more memorable responses to this question is the idea that most of the indigenous concepts, ideas, ontologies, and epistemologies are themselves tainted by coloniality and as such, they cannot be taken for granted as 'pure'. While notions of essentialised African knowledge were generally discouraged, Spivak's concept of 'strategic essentialism' (Spivak 1993:53) as a way of rallying Africans around a unifying cause was also invoked as a way of striking a balance of views.

It was also noted that some members of the audience warned against uncritical approaches to the idea of indigenous knowledges, especially traditions that were invented by the coloniser (see Hobsbawm & Ranger 1983 on the *Invention of Tradition)* to 'define

and rule' (Mamdani 2012) oppressed subjects in Africa. While there were contestations about alternatives to Eurocentrism, in the end there are genuine manifestations of alterity that offer opportunities to develop alternatives to the dominant colonial worldview. There was a consensus that colonialism was and remains a hegemonic structural system that suffers radical incompletion and fissures, making it possible for unique African thought and African ontologies to exist.

The question of alternatives that led to the debate on the viability of the idea of indigenous knowledges naturally led to the question of language, particularly the question of whether it is possible to drive decolonization, Africanisation and indigenization while using a colonial language in the form of English. There were many responses from both the audience where the question came from and the presenters, particularly Professor Makoni, who clarified that when dealing with language within the discourses of decolonisation, Africanization and indigenisation, we do not treat language just as a means of communication but as a carrier of culture. By this, he means that language places a limit on the quest to decolonize, indigenize, and Africanize knowledge and by extension, reality, because it operates from within the belly of the same cultural system regarded as decadent. Though this was one of the most comprehensive explanations and responses to the questions, there were nonetheless some among the members of the audience who downplayed the issue of the English language, as they claimed that what is important are the ideas and not language *per se*.

Others continued to the extent of posing the question of whether indigenous languages are themselves not tainted by colonial inflections, since colonial orthographers and linguistics also tempered with African languages especially through standardization and essentialisation by European missionaries for religious purposes. Though such questions proved the depth of the challenge of language in matters of decolonization, Africanization, and indigenization, there was a growing consensus that the

meticulous use of indigenous languages was a better option for achieving epistemic freedom rather than the continued use of colonial languages.

Final Remarks

Our analysis of the responses, questions, and ideas from the audience during the Inaugural African Thought Conference proved that it was going to be a fatal mistake to disregard the audience's voice in capturing the proceedings of the conference. Thus, among many of the benefits of enabling the voices of the audience to be aired was the opportunity to understand the nature of the discursive 'force-field' in which African thought is to be implemented. It is also to test the effectiveness of the pedagogic discourse of the presentations, to re-negotiate meanings and to co-learn between the audience of different disciplinary backgrounds as well as between the audience and presenters. Below are our preliminary conclusions from the above considerations.

The fact that the main purpose of the conference was to start the process of turning UNIZULU, in very practical terms, into a node for African thought, the responses of the audience became a platform for understanding the nature of resistance and/or cooperation that one would encounter during the implementation of conference resolutions. Thus, such resolutions included the need to decolonize, Africanize and indigenize the curricula and pedagogy, the need to change the institutional culture of the university, as well as the need to generate knowledge that takes serious African views, knowledges, and experiences. All these required a common understanding of the idea of African thought and the generative environment behind it. Since the audience constituted the main 'foot soldiers' in the implementation process of the idea of African thought, such as the heads of departments, deans and other senior academics, it became important to hear their views, interpretations and/or misinterpretations of the idea.

The responses of the audience to the presentations became an important platform for testing the effectiveness of the pedagogic discourse of the presentations. The presenters were invited to the conference on the basis of their expertise, and as such they were expected to share their knowledge with the audience for the purpose of learning. In this way, the presentations were meant to take the audience through a 'zone of proximal development' – a process by which members of the audience were expected to grow intellectually, especially in matters of decolonizing, indigenizing, and Africanizing the University. In this way, the presenters were expected to play the role of facilitation and mediation; a role that can be equated to that of a teacher.

Through the participation of the audience during the conference, we observed that certain meanings were contested and renegotiated for the purposes of finding a common ground, or the best definitions for the betterment of every participant's circumstances. Thus, for instance, the meaning of decolonization and that of who is an African were subjected to serious scrutiny until it was agreed that everyone stands to benefit from a shared comprehensive understanding. It was understood that decolonization is not hatred of white people but a process of de-hierarchization of many of the dehumanizing hierarchies of power that affect most of the world, regardless of their racial pigmentation. It was suggested that being and becoming African is not a question of race and racialization but a question of allegiance and commitment to the African cause. Such a process of contesting and renegotiating meanings became an important part of conferencing because it allayed unfounded fears which would have served as an obstacle to the envisaged project of decolonizing, Africanizing, and indigenizing the university via curricula, research, academic citizenship, and community engagement among other activities.

Lastly, the voices of the audience gave the conference an opportunity to co-learn, particularly from the position of inter-disciplinary and transdisciplinary perspectives. The fact that the

audience comprised members of the academic community from different disciplinary backgrounds meant that they entered the discourse of African thought from different disciplinary and post-disciplinary perspectives. This has enriched the debate on African thought by drawing on multiple experiences, examples and world views shaped by the different backgrounds of each contributor to the discussions. This richness was further enhanced by the different positionalities of the contributors within hierarchies of power that characterize our modern/colonial world, such as the racial, gender, class, sexual, religious, ethnic, linguistic, and epistemic hierarchy.

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