CODESRIA Bulletin

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Editorial

This edition of the Bulletin is published on the backdrop of celebrations marking the birth of the Council. This year, CODESRIA turned forty-five, a remarkable achievement for an organisation that started in the 1960s as the Council of Directors of Economic and Social Research Institutes in Africa. In 1973, it was formally established as an independent panAfrican research organisation with Samir Amin as first Executive Secretary. February has therefore become a special month for the Council.

The founding of CODESRIA was apart a response to a history of epistemic violence and colonial hegemony that continued to define research and critical thinking in and about Africa. The Council was also born out of the need for intellectual hegemony to accompany the new wave of independence and self-rule that swept across the continent in the 1960s and 1970s. Formally established outside the climax of anticolonial and independence struggles, sixteen years after Ghana achieved independence in 1957, CODESRIA grew in an international knowledge system to which it had to relate, but against which it had to define an autonomous agenda. It is not surprising that amongst

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CODESRIA

This quaterly Bulletin is distributed free to all social research institutes and faculties in Africa to encourage research co-operation among African scholars. Interested individuals and institutions may also subscribe. Contributions on theoretical matters and reports on conferences and seminars are welcome.

many debates, endogenising knowledge from the continent and radically 'de-linking' Africa from the falsehoods of abstract Eurocentric intellectualism was a priority. The Council priorities were achieved through promoting vigorous research, networking and publishing on African realities. With an emphasis on publishing by Africans, the Council deliberately privileged strategies to decolonise knowledge and deal with resilient epistemic violence. Forty-five years after, as the international knowledge system mutates and becomes more invidious, this mission has acquired greater relevance and becomes more pressing as it was during CODESRIA's founding.

This historical context explains why CODESRIA Day is special. Until recently, the Council has observed February 1st to celebrate its birthday by hosting an event held at its headquarters in Dakar, Senegal. In 2018, however, CODESRIA inaugurated the CODESRIA Day Lecture as an Annual Lecture Series to commemorate the day. On February 21st with Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni presented the inaugural CODESRIA Day Lecture titled 'The Struggles for Epistemic Freedoms in Africa' in Harare, Zimbabwe during the Meaning-Making Research Initiative (MRI) launch workshop. We publish an abridged version in this issue of the bulletin.

This edition of the Bulletin thus critically engages resurgent debates around epistemic violence, these debates are apt because they touch on an issue that is core to the CODESRIA mandate. Other than Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni's exposé on struggles for epistemic freedom in Africa, the Bulletin carries a thought-provoking piece by Francis Nyamnjoh that (re) situates and (re)imagines contemporary sociological knowledge in the South African context against a background of struggles for epistemic freedom. This is symbolised by the "Rhodes Must Fall", "Fees Must Fall" and related movements. Perhaps even more provocative is Tafadzwa Tivaringe counterpoise that argues that race-centric efforts to decolonize the academy run into the inevitable pitfall of biological essentialism in a manner that is inadvertently antithetical to the emancipation of already subjugated epistemologies.

The next set of articles revisit the discussion on Africa's uncomfortable relationship with intellectuals on the one hand and African Studies on the other hand. Issa Shivji responds to Edward Said's (1994) question whether all organic intellectuals are public intellectuals and vice versa, emphasising that all public intellectuals are not organic intellectuals, especially as many public intellectuals give up their organic link with the oppressed masses in order to avoid tarnishing their public image. Livio Sansone discusses the decolonisation of African Studies, explaining how to overcome the colonial division of labor between producers of academic knowledge in the Global North and suppliers of information in the Global South. Ayanda Manqoyi and Mirjam de Bruijn's contributions reflect on the mobility of African scholars. Manqoyi focuses on South African exceptionalism and parochialism, and its subsequent devaluation of African knowledge and intellectuals. de Bruijn mobilises the notion of 'access denied' to reflect on Europe's visa policies and how this has dealt fatal blows to the dreams of young Africans seeking to expand their aspirational nodes.

The next two articles engage with concerns around bodily identities with Bebel Nepomuceno using the ascension of Hip-Hop identity movement among Brazil's Black youth to discuss the use of Black aesthetics as a way of confronting hegemonic power while Zoly Rakotoniera addresses the production and marking of queer bodies in Malagasy through humour. This is followed by a group of three articles by Dennis Masaka, Mlamuli Hlatshwayo and Kehdinga George Fomunyam, Donkor et al., Paola Vargas Arana, and Muhammed Bolaji are focused on changing higher education dynamics in Africa. The Bulletin concludes with two articles on African cinema with Africanus Aveh reflecting on the complexities of production in Ghana's film industry, while Okello Oculi closes with a freestyle discussion on Ousmane Sembene and his engagement with masculinity and femininity in film.

The Council hopes you will find the Bulletin refreshing and provocative and that you will indicate this by engaing the ideas contained in the Bulletin. We invite reactions, responses and rebuttals and hope this discussion will go beyond the Bulletin to other forums and platforms.

Godwin Murunga
Executive Secretary
and
Divine Fuh
Head of Publications and Dissemination

Éditorial

Cette édition du *Bulletin* est publiée sur fond de célébrations marquant la naissance du Conseil. Cette année, le CODESRIA a quarante-cinq ans, fait remarquable pour une organisation créé dans les années 1960 comme Conseil des directeurs d'instituts de recherche économique et sociale en Afrique. En 1973, il a été officiellement établi comme organisme panafricain indépendant de recherche avec Samir Amin comme premier Secrétaire exécutif. Février est donc un mois spécial pour le Conseil.

La création du CODESRIA était en soi une réaction à une histoire de violence épistémique et d'hégémonie coloniale qui continuait à définir la recherche et la pensée critique en Afrique et sur elle. Le Conseil est également né de la nécessité d'une hégémonie intellectuelle pour accompagner la nouvelle vague d'indépendance et d'autodétermination qui traversait le continent dans les années 1960 et 1970. Officiellement créé à la suite des luttes anticoloniales et d'indépendance, seize ans après l'accession du Ghana à l'indépendance en 1957, le CODESRIA a grandi dans un système international de production connaissances auquel il devait se rapporter, mais contre lequel il fallait définir un programme autonome. Il n'est pas surprenant que dans les nombreux débats, endogénéiser les connaissances du continent et «dissocier» radicalement l'Afrique des contre-vérités de l'intellectualisme euro-centrique abstrait était une priorité. Les priorités du Conseil ont été atteintes grâce à la promotion de recherches dynamiques, au réseautage et à la publication sur les réalités africaines. En mettant l'accent sur la publication par les Africains, le Conseil a délibérément privilégié des stratégies de décolonisation du savoir et de face à face avec la résilience de la violence épistémique. Quarante-cinq ans après, alors que le système international de production de connaissances évolue et devient de plus en plus injuste, cette mission est aussi pertinente et aussi pressante qu'à la fondation du CODESRIA.

Ce contexte historique explique le caractère spécial de la journée du CODESRIA. Jusqu'à récemment le Conseil célébrait son anniversaire le 1er février par un événement organisé à son siège à Dakar (Sénégal). Cependant, en 2018, le CODESRIA a choisi d'inaugurer la série de conférences de la Journée du CODESRIA, série annuelle qui sera organisée pour commémorer cette journée. Le 21 février, Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni a donné, à Harare (Zimbabwe), la première Conférence de la Journée du CODESRIA intitulée « *Les luttes pour des libertés épistémiques en Afrique* » lors de l'atelier de lancement de l'Initiative de recherche pour la construction du sens (MRI). Nous en publions une version abrégée dans ce numéro du *Bulletin*.

Cette édition du *Bulletin* engage de façon critique les débats autour de la violence épistémique, débats qui touchent à une question qui est au cœur du mandat du CODESRIA. l'exposé de Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni sur les luttes pour la liberté épistémique en Afrique, le *Bulletin* comporte une réflexion par Francis Nyamnjoh qui (re)situe et (ré)imagine les connaissances sociologiques contemporaines dans le contexte sud-africain sur un fond de luttes pour la liberté épistémique. Ceci est symbolisé par les mouvements «*Rhodes Must Fall*», «*Fees Must Fall*» et autre mouvements associés. Peut-être encore plus provocatrice est *Tafadzwa Tivaringe* qui argue que les efforts centrés sur la race pour décoloniser l'académie butte sur l'écueil inévitable de l'essentialisme biologique d'une manière qui est, par inadvertance, contraire à l'émancipation des épistémologies déjà asujetties.

La série suivante d'articles reprend la discussion sur les relations inconfortables de l'Afrique avec les intellectuels, d'une part, et les études africaines, de l'autre. Shivji répond à la question d'Edward Said (1994) de savoir si tous les intellectuels organiques sont des intellectuels publics et vice-versa, soulignant que tous les intellectuels publics ne sont pas des intellectuels organiques, car de nombreux intellectuels se coupent de leur lien organique avec les masses opprimées pour éviter de ternir leur image publique. Livio Sansone aborde la décolonisation des études africaines et explique comment surmonter la division coloniale du travail entre producteurs de connaissances universitaires du Nord et fournisseurs d'informations du Sud. Les contributions d'Ayanda Manqoyi et Mirjam de Bruijn portent sur la mobilité des universitaires africains. Manqoyi se concentre sur l'exceptionnalisme et le provincialisme sud-africains et sa subséquente dévaluation du savoir et des

intellectuels africains. De Bruijn mobilise la notion d'«accès refusé» pour réfléchir à la politique de visas de l'Europe et à comment cela porte un coup fatal aux rêves des jeunes Africains cherchant à développer leurs aspirations.

Les deux contributions suivantes abordent les préoccupations d'identités corporelles avec Bebel Nepomuceno qui utilise l'ascension du mouvement identitaire Hip-Hop chez les jeunes Noirs du Brésil pour discuter de l'utilisation de l'esthétique noire comme moyen d'affronter le pouvoir hégémonique. Zoly Rakotoniera aborde la production et le marquage bizarres des corps à Madagascar à travers l'humour. Cet article est suivi de trois articles par Dennis Masaka, Mlamuli Hlatshwayo et Kehdinga George Fomunyam, Donkor et al. ; Paola Vargas Arana et Muhammed Bolaji, qui portent sur l'évolution de l'enseignement supérieur en Afrique. Le *Bulletin* conclut par deux articles sur le cinéma africain avec Africanus Aveh qui se penche sur les complexités de la production cinématographique au Ghana, alors qu'Okello Oculi termine avec une discussion libre sur Ousmane Sembène et son engagement avec la masculinité et la féminité au cinéma.

Le Conseil espère que vous trouverez le *Bulletin* rafraîchissant et provocateur et que vous le manifestiez en engageant les idées contenues dans le *Bulletin*. Nous invitons les réactions, réponses et réfutations et espérons que cette discussion ira au-delà du *Bulletin* et intéresser d'autres forums et plateformes.

Godwin Murunga

Secrétaire Exécutif

et

Divine Fuh

Chef du Programme Publications et diffusion

From the Executive Secretary's Desk

This is the first issue of the CODESRIA Bulletin in 2018. It comes six months after I assumed duty as the new Executive Secretary of CODESRIA. This issue of the Bulletin is significant in several ways. But by far the most important is that it allows us an opportunity to set an agenda for it as an indispensable platform of CODESRIA. It is a revamped issue of the Bulletin, different from the previous one in two critical ways. First, we aim in this and subsequent issues of the Bulletin to recapture the historic spirit of the Bulletin. This specifically includes the central, indeed, critical role the Bulletin has played in projecting the image, aspirations, scientific content and convictions of the community of scholarship around CODESRIA. Second, this issue returns the Bulletin into a platform of vigorous debate; the forum through which urgent but pithy debates on issues relevant to the African social science and humanities community are discussed. We aim do continue doing this from a pan-African standpoint.

It bears re-emphasizing that at the core of the work of CODESRIA is a pan-African conviction and commitment. This is the touchstone that defines our intellectual project and one that we wish to amplify. The idea of 'African' historically envisioned by the Council is broadly understood. It is not necessarily a racialised idea; it is an idea defined by a commitment and conviction to Africans. Underlying pan-Africanism is a struggle for the humanity of African peoples across the world. Whether this struggle is waged for independence or continental unity, it is invigorated by the fact that the humanity of Africans has historically been battered and the agenda to re-assert that humanity is not, and should never be, taken for granted. It is therefore an incessant struggle that calls for utmost intellectual care but that must also be waged with greater tenacity today than ever before. After all, we live in a world where some continue to express doubt about the humanity of a whole race and where civil rights gains are subject to rollback. The relevance of struggle cannot therefore be overstated.

The Bulletin has historically given voice to struggles; it has done so by allowing the many-sidedness of struggles by Africans to be shared, discussed and heard. The Bulletin has, as a result, emerged as the space where divisions that deter African scholarly communities from articulating their thoughts are resolved. It is the space from where we have been able to reconcile linguistic as well as geographic distinctions and allowed the community of scholarship in Africa to immediately relate to the debates that occur within and beyond the continent in different languages, disciplinary orientations, theoretical frameworks and gendered perspectives.

This is the reason why this issue of the Bulletin represents, for us, a revived commitment of the Secretariat to the community of scholarship in Africa and beyond. Not only do we want to work for quality, vigorous debate, timeliness and relevance, we also want all these to turn the Bulletin into the space everyone goes when they want to feel the heartbeat of Africa's social science and humanities thinking.

We however cannot achieve this objective if the community of scholarship in Africa does not engage us and take ownership of the various platforms the Council offers. This therefore is also an invitation to the community to re-engage the Bulletin in fresh ways; ways that push the boundaries of debate, test the frontiers of radical scholarship, invite all audiences to the CODESRIA staple of intellectual outputs.

Over the last six months since the departure of Dr. Ebrima Sall, the sixth Executive Secretary of CODESRIA, we have reflected in the Secretariat about the best way to steer the work of the Council. We have also received messages from members of the community raising critical questions about our programming, the ease with which we communicate and overall quality of services we offer. It is for this reason that I wish to use this space to outline very briefly the thinking that is taking shape in the Secretariat with a hope it will enable us to find a most suitable way to steer the Council.

The Council has over the last 45 years sought to support basic research in the Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH) with an eye to shaping public debate in and about Africa. In doing this, the Council has focused on supporting African academics in universities and research centres. As a consequence, the Council has

played a major role in sustaining this intellectual community by committing to facilitate them to conduct basic research and, through their outputs, shape public debate.

In the last few years however, the need to pay specific attention to the reproduction of this community has become more urgent in order to respond, in more deliberate ways, to gaps in university postgraduate training. This is particularly the case with postgraduate training that currently produces graduates in mass but plays a limited role in sharpening and advancing their conceptual and methodological skill for high quality research output. The Council is better positioned to respond, in some measured ways, to the need for advanced training with an aim of creating Africa's best in the social sciences and humanities.

The idea therefore is to enhance the position of the Council in reproducing the next generation of African SSH scholars and scholarship. This will be achieved, first, by aligning our intellectual programmes to achieve internal coherence and, second, by refocusing our dissemination strategy in a way that affirms the key messages from our research. Ultimately, CODESRIA must project a message that shapes public discourse, demonstrates the relevance of basic research outputs to experiences of ordinary peoples of Africa and shapes a future that intellectually affirms human dignity by speaking to our common humanity.

The work of the Council will therefore be aligned around five pillars including research and training, publications and documentation, dissemination and communication and lastly, administration and finance. For these pillars to have the coherence we seek and to deliver the outputs we desire, the Council will invest on personnel and equipment. We identify these pillars with the hope of working towards internal coherence.

There are some key challenges facing the Council that need to be addressed as a way of ensuring the proper functioning of the identified pillars and optimal operation of the programmes. First, the Council needs to revitalise systems of internal oversight in order to speed up its capacity to respond quickly to the needs of the community of scholarship. While the Council has documented and codified many of its processes and procedures, we are committing to greater diligence in following them. This is with the goal to directing all possible resources the Council raises strictly to the core mandate of the Council – research, training, publication, documentation and dissemination. Second, resolving outstanding management issues resulting from previous audits, enhancing or repairing relations with funding partners and ensuring that funds allocated are judiciously used for the purposes of growing the scientific achievements of the community. Finally up-scaling the Council into a paperless organisation. This is necessary in order to grow a system of information and data management that supports efficiency, guarantees transparency and reduces wastage.

Meantime, a number of initiatives that have not previously enjoyed the visibility they deserve will be given due attention. Five are particularly important. The first is a *senior scholars initiative*. The Council will progressively invest more in senior African scholars. The desire to reproduce the next generation of African scholars and scholarship is best served by ensuring that mid-career academics have shoulders to stand on. The aim is to make sure there is inter-generational conversation and therefore continuity. The mark of success in building the next generation will be their capacity to produce good quality publications especially single-authored manuscripts.

The second is investing in *Reflections on Policy*. The demand for policy impact has become a box many research institutions feel compelled to tick. However, the tension between policy-driven research and research-driven policy persists. While there is no doubt that policy relevance is core to any academic undertaking, it is not clear if in fact we have a clear understanding of the policy process itself. It increasingly feels, sitting in the Secretariat, that many institutions seek policy impact without necessarily understanding the policy process. In order to ensure proper sequencing of the relationship between research and policy, the Council will invest in understanding the policy process and, in doing so, grow a shared interest in research and policy. This way, we hope to ensure continuous conversations with policy communities. The outcome should be a process of co-production of policy out of shared interest in pressing research questions. The aim is to ensure that issues of policy impact are problematized afresh to understand how impact emanates from a proper understanding of the policy process.

The third is prioritising gender and embracing feminist perspectives. Engendering social sciences has always been a priority of the Council. Indeed, the recent SIDA Evaluation of the 2012-2016 Strategic Plan noted that in percentage terms, CODESRIA funded more female projects in proportion to applications from female scholars. However, the numbers are miniscule and the percentages hide more than they reveal. The Council will invest in up-scaling the number of female

participant in its programmes through deliberate budging for female colleagues. The setting up of MRI grants restricted to female scholars is one step in this direction.

The fourth is renewed focus on academic freedom. The Council was founded on the logic of securing academic freedom. Its founders and a critical number of its luminaries have been academics in exile. In 1995, the Council started an academic freedom programmes. This was both an academic as well as activist undertaking headed by a programme officer. While the Council has issued statements highlighting abuse of academic freedoms, this has not been effective in activist and intellectual terms. The Council will revitalise the programme and aim to up-scale it back to a key programme of the organisation.

The fifth is a focus on the Humanities. The Humanities have come up for special attention in the Council in recent times. Previously, the Council invested in the humanities without necessarily emphasising their distinctive contribution to knowledge. Thus, up to roughly 30 per cent of our work has been in the humanities. Not only did the Council initiate the CODESRIA African Humanities programme as a collaborative programme with University of Ghana-Legon, the Council also ran a series of conferences titled SOS African History and continues to support the journal of the Association of African Historians. These programmes either stalled or are under-performing and need to be revitalised. Discussions around the humanities have commenced and an outline of the pathway to their revitalisation is developing.

The above reflections aim to provide a pathway for consolidating performing programme at CODESRIA while revitalising others. It also touches on issues of administration and finance in order to find a way of getting the different component of the Council to achieve synergy. The task of the new leadership is to spearhead this process of consolidation and renewal with a focus on reproducing the next generation of African scholars and scholarship. It is also to restore confidence in existing partners and invite new ones to join in supporting the agenda of reproducing the next generation of African scholars and scholarship in the SSH.

Finally, this is the year of the 15th CODESRIA General Assembly. Planned to take place from 17th to 21st December 2018 in Dakar, the Assembly will focus on the theme Africa and the Crisis of Globalisation. We invite member to join us as we prepare for the Assembly and to engage us throughout the year in the intellectually edifying output of the Council.

Godwin R. Murunga
Executive Secretary

Du bureau du Secrétaire exécutif

Ceci est le premier numéro du *Bulletin du CODESRIA* en 2018. Il vient six mois après mon entrée en fonction en tant que nouveau Secrétaire exécutif du CODESRIA. Ce numéro du Bulletin est important à plusieurs titres. Mais de loin le plus significatif est qu'il nous permet de définir un agenda du CODESRIA comme plateforme indispensable. Il s'agit d'un numéro du Bulletin restructuré, différent du précédent en deux points critiques. Premièrement, notre objectif dans ce numéro et les numéros qui suivront est de retrouver l'esprit historique du Bulletin. Cela inclut spécifiquement le rôle central, critique dans la projection de l'image, des aspirations, du contenu scientifique et des convictions de la communauté de recherche du CODESRIA. Puis, le Bulletin reprend sa place de plate-forme de débats tout aussi rigoureux; le forum par le biais duquel sont débattus des questions urgentes mais stimulantes sur des problématiques d'intérêt pour la communauté africaine des sciences sociales et humaines. Notre objectif est de continuer cette pratique d'un point de vue panafricain.

Il convient de rappeler qu'au cœur des travaux du CODESRIA, il y a une conviction et un engagement panafricains. Ce sont les pierres angulaires de notre projet intellectuelet nous souhaitons les solidifier. L'idée d'« africain » historiquement envisagé par le Conseil est comprise dans un sens large.Ce n'est pas nécessairement une idée racialisée; c'est une idée définie par un engagement et une conviction envers les Africains. Le panafricanisme sous-jacent est une lutte pour l'humanité des peuples africains de par le monde. Que cette lutte soit menée pour l'indépendance ou pour l'unité continentale, elle est stimulée par le fait que l'humanité des Africains a toujours été malmenée et la réaffirmation que l'humanité n'est pas et ne devrait jamais être tenue pour acquit. Il s'agit donc d'une lutte perpétuelle qui exige une attention intellectuelle sans faille mais également plus de ténacité que jamais auparavant. Après tout, nous vivons dans un monde où certains continuent d'exprimer des doutes sur l'humanité de toute une race et où les droits civils sont en recul. La pertinence de la lutte ne peut donc pas être surestimée.

Le Bulletin a toujours historiquement porté la voix de luttes, permis à un grand nombre d'opinions et des luttes par des africains d'être partagées, discutées et entendues. En conséquence, le Bulletin est apparu comme l'espace de résolution des divisions qui empêchent les communautés savantes africaines d'exprimer leurs pensées. C'est l'espace qui nous a permis de réconcilier les espaces linguistiques ainsi que les distinctions géographiques et permis à la communauté académique de participer aux débats sur le continent et en dehors, au-delà des différences linguistiques, d'orientations, de disciplines, de cadres théoriques et de perspectives sexo-spécifiques.

C'est pourquoi ce numéro du Bulletin représente, pour nous, un engagement renouvelé du Secrétariat envers la communauté académique d'Afrique et d'ailleurs. Non seulement nous voulons travailler pour la qualité, des débats vigoureux, la rapidité et la pertinence, nous voulons faire usage de toutes ces dispositions pour transformer le Bulletin en espace où l'on va pour sentir battre le cœur de la pensée sociale et humaine l'Afrique.

Nous ne pourrons cependant pas atteindre cet objectif si la communauté des chercheurs d'Afrique ne nous engage pas et ne s'approprie pas les diverses plateformes offertes par le Conseil. C'est donc aussi une invitation à la communauté de réengager le Bulletin de manière inédite qui repousse les limites du débat, teste les frontières de l'érudition radicale, invite tous les publics à la production intellectuelle du CODESRIA.

Au cours des six derniers mois qui ont suivi le départ de Mr Ebrima Sall, sixième secrétaire exécutif du CODESRIA, le Secrétariat s'est demandé quelle était la meilleure manière de diriger le travail du Conseil. Nous avons également reçu des messages de membres de la communauté soulevant des questions cruciales sur notre agenda programmatique, la facilité de communication et la qualité générale des services que nous proposons.C'est pour cette raison que je souhaite utiliser cet espace pour décrire très brièvement la réflexion qui se dessine au sein du Secrétariat dans l'espoir que cela nous permettra de trouver le moyen le plus approprié de diriger le Conseil.

Au cours des 45 dernières années, le Conseil a soutenu la recherche fondamentale en sciences sociales et humaines (SSH) en vue de façonner le débat public en Afrique et sur l'Afrique. Ce faisant, le Conseil a apporté son soutien aux chercheurs africains dans les universités et les centres de recherche. En conséquence, le Conseil a joué un rôle majeur dans le maintien de cette communauté intellectuelle en nous engageant à faciliter leurs recherches fondamentales, et à travers leurs productions, structurer le débat public.

Au cours des dernières années cependant, la nécessité d'une attention particulière pour la reproduction de cette communauté est devenue plus urgente afin de répondre, de façon plus affirmée, à des lacunes dans la formation post universitaire. Ceci est particulièrement le cas de l'université qui produit des diplômés en masse, mais joue un rôle limité dans l'affûtage et le développement de leurs compétences conceptuelles et méthodologiques pour la production de recherche de haute qualité. Le Conseil est mieux placé pour répondre, de manière mesurée, au besoin de formation avancée dans le but de produire le meilleur de l'Afrique dans le domaine des sciences sociales et humaines.

L'idée est donc d'améliorer la position du Conseil en produisant la prochaine génération de chercheurs africains en sciences sociales et humaines. Nous y parviendrons, d'une part, en alignant nos programmes intellectuels sur la cohérence et l'efficacité internes et, d'autre part, en recentrant notre stratégie de diffusion d'une manière qui soutient les messages clés de notre recherche. En fin de compte, le CODESRIA devra diffuser un message qui façonne le discours public, démontre la pertinence des résultats de la recherche fondamentale pour les expériences des peuples africains ordinaires, et propose un avenir qui, intellectuellement, affirme la dignité humaine en s'adressant à notre humanité commune.

Les travaux du Conseil s'articuleront donc autour de cinq piliers : recherche, formation, publication et documentation, dissémination et communication et enfin, administration et finances. Pour que ces piliers aient la cohérence que nous recherchons et produisent les résultats souhaités, le Conseil investira dans les ressources humaines et renouvellera le matériel. Nous identifions ces piliers afin de parvenir la cohérence interne.

Le Conseil doit relever certains grands défis pour assurer le bon fonctionnement des piliers identifiés et le fonctionnement optimal des programmes. Premièrement, le Conseil doit revitaliser les systèmes de contrôle interne afin d'accroître sa capacité à répondre rapidement aux besoins de la communauté universitaire. Alors que le Conseil a documenté et codifié plusieurs de ses processus et procédures, nous nous engageons à plus de diligence dans leur respect. L'objectif est de strictement allouer toutes les ressources du Conseil à son mandat fondamental: recherche, formation, publication, documentation et diffusion. Deuxièmement, il s'agit de résoudre les problèmes de gestion latents soulignés par les audits précédents, d'améliorer ou de rétablir les relations avec les partenaires financiers, et de développer de nouveaux partenariats qui permettront au Conseil d'accroître son soutien. De plus, cela garantira que les fonds alloués sont utilisés judicieusement à plus de réalisations scientifiques de la communauté. Et enfin, le Conseil se transformera en une organisation sans papier et plus efficace. Cela se fera par la mise en place d'un système d'information et de gestion de données qui contribue à l'efficacité, garantit la transparence et réduit le gaspillage.

En attendant, un certain nombre d'initiatives qui n'ont pas encore bénéficié de la visibilité qu'elles méritent recevront toute l'attention voulue. Cinq sont particulièrement importantes. Le premier est une Initiative pour les universitaires seniors. Le Conseil investira progressivement dans les chercheurs à mi carrière africains. Le désir de reproduire la prochaine génération d'universitaires africains est mieux servi si l'on veille que les universitaires à mi-carrière ont les épaules pour les porter. L'objectif est d'assurer une conversation intergénérationnelle et donc une continuité. La capacité de produire des publications de qualité, en particulier des manuscrits à auteur unique, sera la clé du succès dans la construction de la prochaine génération.

La seconde consiste à investir dans les *Réflexions sur les politiques*. La demande d'impact sur les politiques est devenue une réalité pour de nombreux instituts de recherche. Cependant, la tension entre recherche axée sur les politiques et politique axée sur la recherche persiste. S'il ne fait aucun doute que la pertinence politique est au cœur de toute entreprise universitaire, il n'est pas clair que nous comprenions bien le processus politique lui-même. De plus en plus, vu du Secrétariat du CODESRIA, de nombreuses institutions recherchent l'impact politique sans nécessairement comprendre le processus politique. Cependant, l'impact sur les politiques doit être compris comme faisant partie d'un processus, et non simplement comme un résultat. Pour un bon séquençage de la relation entre recherche et politique, le Conseil investira dans la compréhension

du processus politique et, ce faisant, développer un intérêt commun dans la recherche et la politique. De cette façon, nous espérons construire des conversations continues avec les communautés de décideurs. Le résultat devrait être un processus de coproduction de politiques par intérêt commun pour des questions de recherche urgentes. L'objectif est de problématiser à nouveau les questions d'impact des politiques afin de comprendre comment l'impact part d'une bonne compréhension du processus politique.

La troisième est de donner la priorité au genre et d'adopter les perspectives féministes. La promotion du genre dans les sciences sociales a toujours été une priorité du Conseil. En effet, la récente évaluation du Plan stratégique 2012-2016 par SIDA a noté qu'en termes de pourcentage, le CODESRIA a financé plus de projets par des femmes proportionnellement aux demandes de financement de femmes universitaires. Cependant, les chiffres sont très bas et les pourcentages cachent plus qu'ils ne révèlent. Le Conseil insistera sur la mise à l'échelle du nombre de femmes participant à ses programmes par le biais d'une consolidation délibérée des collègues femmes. La sécurisation dans le budget 2018 de subventions MRI réservées aux femmes universitaires est un pas dans cette direction.

Le quatrième est un intérêt renouvelé pour les libertés académiques. Le Conseil a été fondé sur le principe de garantie de la liberté académique. Ses fondateurs et un grand nombre de ses premiers membres ont été des universitaires en exil. En 1995, le Conseil a lancé un programme sur les libertés académiques. C'était à la fois une entreprise universitaire et une entreprise militante dirigée par un administrateur de programme. Alors que le Conseil a publié des déclarations mettant en exergue les abus de libertés académiques, celles-ci se sont révélées peu efficaces sur le plan activiste et sur le plan intellectuel.Le Conseil revitalisera le programme et le transformera en un programme clé de l'organisation.

La cinquième est axée sur les sciences humaines. Ces derniers temps, les sciences humaines font l'objet d'une attention particulière du Conseil. Auparavant, le Conseil investissait dans les sciences humaines sans nécessairement insister sur leur contribution particulière à la production de connaissances. Ainsi, environ 30% de notre travail a été réalisé dans les sciences humaines. Le Conseil a non seulement, avec l'Université du Ghana-Legon, lancé le programme Humanités africaines en tant que programme collaboratif, mais il a également organisé une série de conférences intitulées *SOS African History* et continue de soutenir la revue de l'Association des historiens africains. Ces programmes sont soit bloqués, soit sous-performants et doivent être revitalisés. Les discussions sur les sciences humaines ont commencé et un aperçu de la démarche de leur revitalisation est en cours d'élaboration.

Les réflexions ci-dessus doivent fournir une voie pour la consolidation et la performance programmatiques au CODESRIA. Elles abordent également des questions administratives et financières afin de réaliser la synergie des différentes composantes du Conseil. La tâche des nouveaux dirigeants est de mener à bien ce processus de consolidation et de renouvellement en insistant sur la production de la prochaine génération de chercheurs africains. Il s'agit également de rétablir la confiance avec les partenaires existants et d'en inviter de nouveaux à soutenir le programme de production de la prochaine génération d'universitaires africains et de recherche en sciences humaines.

Enfin, nous aurons la 15ème Assemblée générale du CODESRIA qui est prévue du 17 au 21 décembre 2018, à Dakar. Elle a pour thème « L'Afrique et la crise de la mondialisation ». Nous invitons les membres à se joindre à nous dans cette Assemblée et à nous engager tout au long de l'année dans les activités du Conseil.

Godwin R. Murunga
Secrétaire exécutif

Revisiting Trajectories of Epistemological Decolonization in Africa*

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Introduction

Today's struggles for epistemic freedom across the world are ranged against existing and resilient cognitive injustices cascading from colonialism and maintained by global coloniality, which fundamentally amount to violation of the very idea that all human beings were born into valid and legitimate knowledge systems (Mudimbe 1994). Cognitive injustice manifests itself as a failure to recognise the different ways of knowing by which diverse people across the human globe make sense of the world and provide meaning to their existence (Santos 2014). In short, cognitive injustice is basically a social injustice that cascades from denial of humanity of other people and by extension refusal to recognise their epistemic virtue (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2018).

Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1986) underscored how the metaphysical empire unfolded in terms of invasion of the mental universe of the colonized people. In his book entitled *Something Torn and New: An African Renaissance*, Ngugi wa Thiong'o (2009) elaborated that this invasion of the mental universe amounted to the removal of the hard disk of previous African knowledge and memory and downloading into African minds the software of European knowledge and memory. The key consequences of all these processes has been epistemicides (killing of existing endogenous knowledges), linguicides (killing of existing indigenous languages and the imposition of colonial languages), culturecides (killing of indigenous cultures and setting afoot cultural imperialism) as well as alienation (exiling of indigenous people from their languages, histories, cultures and even from themselves). Suffice it to say that African knowledges, languages, and cultures were too strong to be completely swept away by colonialism. Even their very existence in oral forms made it difficult to destroy physically. It could not be burnt like books.

Today the struggles for epistemic freedom are represented by the *Rhodes Must Fall* (RMF) and *Fees Must Fall* (FMF) movements in South Africa, *Why is My Curriculum White* in the United Kingdom or *Black Lives Matter* in the United States of America. These movements, which are mainly spearheaded by students, the youth and a few radical intellectuals and academics, are erupting over what appears to be old yet unresolved epistemological and ontological questions (Ciccariello-Maher 2017: 1). These movements have brought back to the public arena longstanding and interrelated problems cascading from what William E. B. Dubois (1903) termed the 'the colour line.' This 'colour line has given birth to 'the epistemic line' Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2018). These seemingly old questions remain new as long they have not been resolved and settled.

Africa: from academic freedom to epistemic freedom

The recognition that all human beings were born into valid and legitimate knowledge system is the basis of the assertion of epistemic freedom. Epistemic freedom is a deepening rather than replacement of academic freedom. While academic freedom is closely related to the ideas of freedom of expression and speech rights; epistemic freedom is closely related to social justice and democratization of knowledge (academic democracy). The struggles for epistemic freedom are about building intellectual sovereignty in production and reproduction of knowledge. What is underscored in epistemic freedom is the right to think, write, theorise, communicate and interpret the world from where the African people are located (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2018).

We are continuing the struggles for epistemic freedom today within a modern world that is said to be a global village underpinned by a global economy of knowledge simply because of the existence

of a resilient uneven intellectual division of labour, which engenders what Paulin Hountondji (1997) termed epistemic dependence. Knowledge that is considered valid and scientific cascades and circulates from Europe and North America to the rest of the world. In this uneven division of labour, Africa in particular and the Global South in general, exist as sites for hunting and gathering of raw data (Hountondji 1997; Hountondji 2002). Europe and North America remain the key sites of professional processing and data for the purposes of formulation of social theories. These theories are voraciously consumed in Africa. What are considered prestigious and international peer-reviewed journals that easily earn African scholars' recognition and promotion are based in Europe and North America. All these are clear hallmarks of intellectual/academic dependence that provoke the resurgence of struggles for epistemic freedom in the 21st century.

A call for epistemic freedom is a vehement rejection of all the illusions of a magnanimous liberal empire that has delivered a global economy of knowledge of which every human being contributed. At the centre of the so-called global economy of knowledge is resilient Eurocentrism. In a fundamental sense, struggles for epistemic freedom were and are a direct response to denial of humanity itself, (coloniality of being), which automatically resulted in the denial of knowledge and epistemic virtue to those who became victims of colonialism (Maldonado-Torres 2007; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2018). What must be remembered is that the success of colonialism and coloniality in the domain of knowledge was and is still dependent on winning some of the colonized people to its side to the extent that they then speak and write as though they were located on the racially privileged side of the global power spectrum (Grosfoguel 2007). This was possible because colonialism was a seductive process that promised to be a civilising enterprise while in reality it was a death project.

Epistemic freedom is a search for meaning after centuries of reduction of African people to a subject race (sub-humans) bereft of alphabet and knowledge. For Ngugi wa Thiong'o (2009b), the struggles for epistemic freedom are aimed at 'remembering' Africa after centuries of 'dismemberment.' Engelbert Mveng (1983:141) stated that 'if political sovereignty is necessary, the scientific sovereignty is perhaps more important in present-day Africa.' Epistemic freedom for Ake (1979) was necessary in enabling Africa to escape the trap of reproducing 'knowledge of equilibrium' (knowledges of maintenance of status quo of coloniality). For veteran novelist Chinua Achebe (1997:179), epistemic freedom had to 'help us to get on our feet again.' Francis B. Nyamnjoh (2017:5), believed that epistemic freedom was to deliver 'convivial scholarship' that 'confronts and humbles the challenge of over-prescription, over-standardization, over-routinization, and over prediction.' In short, the struggles for epistemic freedom confront epistemological colonization and all other consequences of the invasion of mental universe of the colonized people with the aim to democratize knowledge in terms of freeing it from Eurocentrism. The expected outcome of these struggles is what Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2014) termed 'ecologies of knowledges' (plurality of epistemologies reflective of the diversity of human species and richness of human knowledge). Epistemological decolonization remains elusive.

Trajectories of African struggles for epistemic freedom

Early African educated elites like Blyden and James Africanus Beale Horton of Sierra Leone, and J.E. Casely Hayford of Ghana, agitated and fought for the establishment of universities in Africa from as early as 1868 (Ashby 1964). While these early African educated elites fought for a very particular type of university – the 'African university' (rooted in African cultural and intellectual soil and climate) – the reluctant colonial regimes imposed the 'university in Africa' (transplanted from Europe and North America).

This means that the struggles for epistemic freedom emerged concurrently with the contestations over the suitable model of the University for Africa. Blyden and Hayford exhibited the earliest ideas of a decolonised higher education. According to Eric Ashby, Blyden advocated for an African university that was free from the grip of the 'despotic Europeanizing influences which had warped and crushed the Negro mind' (Ashby 1964:12-23; see also Blyden 1882). Blyden became the leading advocate, if not the pioneer, of the philosophy of 'African personality', which he did not want Western education to destroy. Rather, he wanted it to be nurtured as part of the restoration of African cultural self-respect.

The philosophy of 'African personality' was predicated on five key issues: the separate and unique destiny of black people from Europeans; the development

of a distinctive African mentality; religion's place of pride in African thought and life; the inherent socialist/communal nature of African society; and the strong idea of 'Africa for Africans' (Frankel 1974). Blyden was opposed to modern Western civilisation as he saw it as a carrier of 'race poison', and harked back to the Greek and Latin civilisations as classics that could nourish Africa intellectually without racism (Ashby 1964:13). Blyden is also the earliest advocate to promote African languages, African songs and African oral traditions as part of higher education. His decolonial ideas were echoed by Reverend James Johnson of Sierra Leone who wanted a higher education institution that would 'Leave undisturbed our particularities' (Wandira 1977: 40).

Hayford was another early African decolonial thinker who advocated for a decolonised higher education for Africa. His ideas about an indigenous university were captured in his book *Ethiopia Unbound* (1911. Hayford, a pioneer African nationalist and advocate of Ethiopianism, was very critical of an African university that was a mere replica of European institutions and that mimicked and reproduced foreign influences. He went further to propose the use of African indigenous languages in teaching and learning. Like Blyden, Hayford was a proponent of an African university that 'would preserve in the students a sense of African Nationality' (Hayford 2011).

What happened to these early struggles and demands for an African university is analogous to what happened to the person who cried for a fish and was given a snake instead. In the first place, the colonial regimes argued for a sound African secondary education as an essential prerequisite and foundation for African university education. Second, the early educational institutions established in Africa, such as Fourah Bay College in Sierra Leone (1876), emerged as 'colleges' of overseas universities (Ashby 1964). Third, the colonial regimes continued to turn a blind eye to the expansion of higher education for Africans, leaving the missionaries to concentrate on primary and secondary sectors. As argued by Mazrui, mission education inaugurated the first form of African intellectual dependency and acculturation 'cultural schizophrenia' through separating young Africans from their parents and enclosing them in mission boarding schools (Mazrui 1978:27). Colonial education at whatever level amounted to desocialization of Africans and their miseducation.

The challenges of re-socialization and re-education

African nationalism carried the promise of re-socialization and re-education of African people after centuries of desocialization and miseducation. Thus, the dawn of African political independence in the 1960s was accompanied by intensified struggles to Africanise the university in Africa into an African university. At its deepest level, this struggle entailed formulating a new philosophy of higher education informed by African histories, cultures, ideas and aspirations as well as a fundamental redefinition of the role of the university. But to achieve this objective, there was a need to navigate carefully not only the imperatives of 'standards' set in Europe and the African local imperatives of the 'social function' of the university, but also the dangers of looking 'inward' at the expense of the universal aspect of knowledge (Mkandawire 2005: 22-23). This challenge was well expressed by Julius Nyerere of Tanzania when he became the first black chancellor of the University of East Africa on 28 June 1963:

> There are two possible dangers facing a university in a developing nation: the danger of blindly adoring mythical 'international standards' which may cast a shadow on national development objectives, and the danger of forcing our university to look inwards and isolate itself from the world (Nyerere 1966:218-219).

While Nyerere emphasised the dangers of failing to maintain a balance between the national and international character of the university in Africa, Ali A. Mazrui highlighted three important relationships that the university in Africa must navigate and negotiate:

> A university has to be politically distant from the state; secondly, a university has also to be culturally close to society; and thirdly, a university has to be intellectually linked to wider scholarly and scientific values of the world of learning (Mazrui 2003:141).

It was in the 1960s that the idea of an African developmental university emerged. Such a university was expected to be truly African and to play an active role in nation-building, socio-economic development and promoting African consciousness (Nyerere 1966:219). Thus, on another level, the 1960s constituted the 'golden age' of the African higher education sector. Not only did the institutions of higher learning multiply, but the Africanization agenda was embraced by leading scholars such as Cheikh Anta Diop who dedicated

his entire career to producing Africa-centred knowledge and exploding the myths created by imperial colonial historiography (Diop 1974; Diop 1981). A vibrant and respected African Nationalist School emerged at the University of Ibadan in Nigeria, led by historians such as Kenneth Onwuka Dike, Jacob Ade Ajayi, John Omer-Cooper and many others who contributed immensely to the Africanization of history as a discipline, as well as to the African nation-building project (Ifemesia 1988; Falola 2001:224).

Nationalist historiography was 'passionate, combative, and revisionist' as it consistently and persistently dethroned the 'Eurocentric perceptions of Africa' and Africans (Falola 2001: 224). It was the historians of the Ibadan, Dakar, Maputo and Dar-es-Salaam nationalist history schools that introduced the oral tradition methodology in their writing of African history; they successfully countered the negatives imparted by imperial/ colonial historiography; and they shifted the African historical focus from 'conquest' to 'resistance' as part of their recovery of African agency in history (Falola 2001). The nationalist historians also actively and tirelessly worked to change history curricula and to put what they termed 'the African factor' at the centre of history courses (Falola 1993:72).

The formation of the Association of African Universities (henceforth, AAU) in Rabat, Morocco in 1967 revealed the continued commitment by African leaders to decolonise and Africanise universities in Africa and make them truly African universities. But unlike the nationalist political leaders, African intellectuals never tired of defending so-called 'international standards' while Africanising and decolonising the university in Africa. The AAU expressed adherence to world academic standards and development of a higher education in the service of Africa, and was in favour of linking the African spirit of the university with the pan-African spirit embodied by the Organisation of African Unity (Yesufu 1973:5). At its first general conference held in Kinshasa, Zaire, in September 1969, the AAU's chosen theme – 'The University and Development' – was revealing of the envisaged role of the university.

A 1972 an AAU workshop, themed 'Creating the African University: Emerging Issues in the 1970s', which ran from 10–15 July in Accra, Ghana, demonstrated that the struggle for an African university was continuing even within a context where African economies were beginning to collapse. The Workshop's purpose was to formulate a new philosophy of higher education and develop institutions of higher education that were truly African, drawing 'inspiration from Africa, and intelligently dedicated to her ideas and aspirations' (Yesufu 1973:5).

Importantly, the workshop delegates agreed that tinkering with imported ideas was not enough and that what was needed was a fundamental re-conceptualisation of the very idea of the university in Africa. There was a clear agreement among the members of the AAU that the African university must be a developmental one. However, Wandira (1977) raised critical concerns about what he termed the 'Yesufu University Model' which emerged from the 1972 AAU workshop.

Even though the African economies were hit by crisis in the 1970s and despite the fact that some notorious dictators like Idi Amin had ascended to power, African intellectuals and academics continued to fight for intellectual spaces, this time outside the declining universities. The formation of the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (henceforth, CODESRIA) in 1973 is a case in point. With the support of donor funding, CODESRIA emerged as a research council that became a comfortable home for exiled academics like Thandika Mkandawire from Malawi and Archie Mafeje from South Africa. It also became a home for radical left-leaning intellectuals like Samir Amin from Egypt, Mahmood Mamdani from Uganda, Sam Moyo from Zimbabwe, Issa Shivji from Tanzania and many others. In the words of Mamdani (2016: 78), the council 'was a ready-made forum for public intellectuals.'

What distinguished CODESRIA from other intellectual spaces was the intense public debates it generated on topical issues affecting Africa, such as African politics and the problem of political authoritarianism; African political economy; dependency; democracy; gender and emancipation of women; the agrarian question and land reform; neoliberalism and structural adjustment programmes; higher education; economic and social development; and the national question and constitutionalism. What also distinguished CODESRIA was its 'non-disciplinary' orientation (Mamdani 2016: 78-79).

CODESRIA produced some of the most ground-breaking researches that directly confronted Eurocentrism (the mother and father of epistemological colonization). For example, the work of Samir Amin (2009) confronted Eurocentrism directly while that of

Archie Mafeje (1991) that directly and consistently challenged anthropology as a handmaiden of colonial knowledge. It was actually CODESRIA that published two of the most influential volumes on the university in Africa: *African Universities in the Twenty-First Century: Volume 1: Liberalization and Internationalization (2004a) and African Universities in the Twenty-First Century: Volume 2: Knowledge and Society* (2004b). To its credit, CODESRIA has maintained a clear oppositional position to imperialism, colonialism and neo-colonialism.

The council is still a vibrant intellectual space and one can only hope that it builds on its unparalleled intellectual work to directly address the topical issue of the decolonisation of the universities and the epistemological question. At a general level, the decline of African intellectualism in the mid-1970s provoked two important questions. The first is why African intellectualism declined in the early 1970s. Why did the early decolonisation/Africanization initiatives fail? These issues led Mazrui (2003:137) to pose the question: 'Who has killed intellectualism in East Africa?' The first killer of intellectualism was the rise of brutal dictatorship, symbolised in East Africa by the coming to power of Idi Amin Dada in Uganda through a military coup in January 1971. He unleashed a reign of terror that had an immense impact on intellectualism (Mazrui 2003).

The second killer was the advent of the Cold War between Western powers and the Soviet bloc. The Cold War not only polarised Africans into pro-West and pro-East ideological dichotomies, but within states like Kenya that became pro-West, '[b]eing socialist or left-wing as an intellectual became a political hazard' (Mazrui 2003: 138). In the same manner, in a country like Tanzania, led by respected intellectual Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, who chose the path of socialism, the local excessive enthusiasm for socialism bred ideological 'intimidation in the name of socialism' and respect for Nyerere that Mazrui critiqued as 'Tanzaphilia' (Mazrui 1967). What suffered severely in both cases was academic freedom.

Considering the preceding analysis, it is not surprising that the 1980s and 1990s became crisis years for the university in Africa, and attempts to create an African university collapsed. New factors intervened to deepen the crisis. For example, the World Bank introduced a negative attitude towards universities, discrediting them as agencies of development and public institutions worthy of government and international support. Instead, the World Bank (1986) prioritised secondary education. The idea of creating African universities died as the powerful international forces of neoliberalism and global finance posited that Africa had no need for universities, and that what they were taught was irrelevant to the needs of the global market and national development (Olukoshi and Zeleza 2004b). But instead of the university in Africa dying, it was forced to mutate into a 'corporate university' in the 1980s and 1990s. Markets became the major agents of coloniality.

Corporate university and knowledge as commodity

The late 1980s and the 1990s witnessed the rise of the 'corporate university', characterised not only by the invasion of the university by business models but also by 'great antipathy to thinking' (Gordon 2006:5). What distinguished the corporate university in the words of Lewis R. Gordon (2006:9-10) was the rise of the 'academic managerial class' using 'corporate analogues' as its basis of governing the institutions. Gordon (2006:10) elaborated that the rise of this 'academic managerial class has been, perhaps the most catastrophic development in the modern university.' The catastrophic aspect of this phenomenon is multidimensional. Firstly, this academic managerial class, according to Gordon (2006: 10), is 'unlike past scholars who so happened also to administrate' because it 'no longer has knowledge as part of its telos.'

Worse still, this academic managerial class 'has folded onto itself as the object of its own preservation and the result is its proliferation' (Gordon 2006:10). Gordon further characterises the composition of this academic managerial class as 'consisting of failed academics and scholars whose credentials do not extend beyond their doctorates' and who practise the 'sociology of revenge and entrenched resentment toward productive and influential scholars' (Gordon 2006:10). It is this academic managerial class that 'seeks inspiration from the corporate world primarily because of a form of decadence of the imagination in which corporate management is equated with management itself' (Gordon 2006: 10-11). It is within this context of a decadent corporate university presided over by an equally decadent academic managerial class that many scholars found themselves in the midst of what Mamdani (2007) termed the 'market place.'

New struggles and old questions

The South African students who spearhead the Rhodes Must Fall (henceforth, RMF) and the Fees Must Fall (henceforth, FMF) movements must be understood broadly as heirs to the long-standing struggles for an African university and epistemic freedom in Africa. What the South African students put to the fore is what Oginga Odinga (1968) articulated as 'Not Yet Uhuru' – a clarion call to continue the struggle for decolonisation even after the dismantlement of direct colonial administrations and juridical apartheid. It is not surprising that South Africa, hailed by neoliberals as a democratic society with one of the most liberal, progressive constitutions in the world, has become the site of resurgent decolonial struggles, because what was gained in 1994 was democracy without decolonisation. 'Neo-apartheid' rather than 'post-apartheid' best describes present-day South Africa, where racism, inequalities and exclusions signify a problematic democracy; where a dispossessed black majority refuses to accept the constitutionalised apartheid theft of resources and their continued concentration in the hands of the minority white population; and where a few black people use control of the state to engage in bureaucratic petit-bourgeois looting.

Like all struggles of decolonisation, the RMF and FMF movements were inevitably riddled with internal ructions, contradictions, ambiguities and struggles-within-the-struggle. This has given ammunition to its critics like Jonathan Jansen (2017) to mount some of the criticism which borders on dismissal and discrediting of the movements. The outbreaks of violence in particular, have armed the opponents of the RMF and FMF movements including justifications of employing and deploying private security companies, resulting in the militarisation of campuses. Rather than diminishing it, this contributed to an escalation in the violence.

What is also clear is that there has always been a robust internal critique if not auto-critique that raised such issues as the patriarchal tendencies; intolerance of divergent views; the sometimes careless use of the discourse of racism, which affected the initial multiracial quality of the student movements; weak responses to the realities of the intersectionality of student struggles, which caused struggles within the struggle as the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community complained of being side-lined; and the challenge of avoiding being used by external political forces (see Chinguno et al 2017). However, the fact remains that South African students have taken the torch of epistemic decolonisation and successfully put decolonisation squarely on the public agenda. In the process, they have forced universities to revive their mission to be torch-bearers of equality, democracy, justice and human rights. Whether the 'westernised' universities in Africa will rise adequately to these noble demands is yet to be seen. As a way forward, there is need for:

- Provincialization of Europe and deprovincialization of Africa to resolve the twin problems of overrepresentation of Europe and underrepresentation of Africa in the domain of knowledge.
- Reviewing of existing disciplines with a view to enhance their fitness for purpose and relevance.
- Decolonial critique of dominant knowledge to unmask its provincial roots and race poison.
- Decolonization of normative foundation of theory to deal with some of the problems cascading from Cartesianism, Enlightenment reason and Hegelianism.
- Rethinking thinking itself to recover and re-centre marginalised knowledges (see Odora-Hoppers and Richards 2012).
- Resocialization and re-education with a view to banish Eurocentrism and colonial mentalities of alienation (details are in Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2018).

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How Amos Tutuola Can Inspire: (re)situating and (re) imagining contemporary sociological knowledge within the context of South Africa, Africa and the Global South*

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To address the central theme of this conference – navigating uncertainties, (re)situating and (re)imagining contemporary sociological knowledge in South Africa, Africa and the Global South – I turn to an unlikely intellectual ancestor, Amos Tutuola, for inspiration.

Who was Amos Tutuola?

Amos Tutuola was born in Abeokuta, Nigeria, in 1920. He benefitted from only six years of frequently interrupted formal education, and died on 7 June 1997 desperately seeking completeness in a world of binary oppositions and obsession with winning. Within the framework of colonial education and its hierarchies of credibility, Tutuola was seen by some as an accidental writer or "the unlettered man of letters". Never wholly endorsed at any given time away or at home, Tutuola's literary career went from, in the words of Bernth Lindfors, "foreign enchantment and local embarrassment" to "universal but qualified acceptance" through "foreign disenchantment and local reappraisal" between 1952 and 1975 alone.

Tutuola's parents – Charles and Esther Aina Tutuola – were cocoa farmers and also Christians. Their religion was significant as Christianity, its symbols, morality and beliefs feature prominently in Tutuola's books, where not even the bush of ghosts is able to escape its ubiquitous grip, and are a clear illustration that Tutuola is far from stuck in a frozen African past filled with fear and terror, as some of his critics have suggested.

In his works, Tutuola seeks to reassure his readers that it is possible to be what Charles Taylor terms "open and porous and vulnerable" to a world of spirits, powers and cosmic forces, and still be "disenchanted" enough to have the confidence of Taylor's "buffered self," exploring one's own "powers of moral ordering".

Equally noteworthy is the fact that Tutuola did not allow his embrace of Christianity to serve as an ideological whip to flog him and his Yoruba cultural beliefs into compliance with the one-dimensionalism of colonial Christianity and the dualistic prescriptiveness of European missionaries, vis-à-vis their African converts. His Christianity simply afforded him an opportunity to add another layer of complexity to his toolkit of personal identification (adopting the name "Amos" for example, without giving up "Tutuola") and to his Yorubaness of being.

As a Christian named Amos, Tutuola was resolute in turning down an invitation to break with his past and to disown the gods, beliefs and traditions of his land, even as these were reduced to thunderous silence, often with the complicity of purportedly enlightened Afri-cans. He was at odds with the hypocrisy of some Africans who harkened to Christianity by day and succumbed by night to endogenous African religions disparaged as superstition yet would not own up in broad daylight to being more than just Christians. Studies in contemporary African religions and religiosities attest to the tensions and frustrations felt by many an African with a Christianity unyielding in its preference for conversion over conversation and determined asphyxiation of endogenous religions and belief systems in Africa.

Tutuola served as a servant for a certain Mr F. O. Monu, an Igbo man, from the age of seven. Mr Monu sent him to the Salvation Army school of Abeokuta in 1934. He also attended the Anglican Central School in Abeokuta. Following the death of his father in 1939, Tutuola left school to train as a blacksmith, a trade he practised from 1942 to 1945 for the Royal Air Force in Nigeria. The significance of Tutuola's employment by the Royal Air Force is worth bearing in mind, as some critics have tended to express surprise at how Tutuola is able to make reference to aeroplanes, bombs and other technological gadgets usually assumed European.

Tutuola tried his hand at several other vocations, including selling bread, as a metal-worker and as a photographer, as well as serving as a messenger for the Nigerian Department of Labour, which he joined in 1948. From 1956 until retirement, he worked as a storekeeper for the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation in Ibadan. He married Victoria Alake in 1947 and had eight children with her. He published his first book, *The Palm-Wine Drinkard*, in 1952, followed by *My Life in the Bush of Ghosts* in 1954. In 1967 he published *Ajaiyi and his Inherited Poverty*, with a dedication that read: "In memory of my Mother Mrs. Esther Aina Tutuola who died on 25th November 1964".

How Can Tutuola Inspire the Re(Situation) and Re(Imagination) of the Social Sciences and the Humanities in Africa?

The need to turn to Amos Tutuola for inspiration has become more urgent with recent and surging student protests across universities in Africa seeking decolonisation and transformation of higher education. In South Africa, for example, intensifying student protests for the transformation of an alienating, often racialized, higher education system currently across universities – symbolised by the "Rhodes Must Fall", "Fees Must Fall" and related movements, initiated by students of the University of Cape Town– is an indication that even so-called privileged African students in first-rate African universities feel just as unfulfilled and alienated by an overly Eurocentric index of knowledge and knowledge production. There is almost total discontinuity between the idea of knowledge in African universities and what constitutes knowledge outside universities and in African art and literature.

The student-driven ferment seeks recognition and integration in teaching and research on popular and endogenous forms of knowledge and ways of knowing informed by African experiences and predicaments, and especially by the continent's frontier realities. As a frontier author of frontier stories with little interest in zero-sum games of dominance and conquest, Tutuola is well placed to point us in the direction of more truly inclusive, solidly open-ended Africanised systems of higher education on the continent.

Once despised, exoticised, primitivised and ridiculed as a relic of a dying and forgotten past of a dark continent awakening and harkening to the call of the floodlights of a colonising European civilisation, Tutuola is increasingly influencing younger generations of story-tellers and filmmakers, especially following his death in 1997. His brushstrokes are gaining in popularity. New editions of his works are surfacing, and scholars of different disciplinary backgrounds, students and intellectuals of other walks of life who hear of him are keen to locate and read his books. As Wole Soyinka has suggested in an introduction to the 2014 edition of Tutuola's first published novel, *The Palm-Wine Drinkard*, Tutuola appears to be enjoying a "quiet but steady revival" both "within his immediate cultural environment, and across America and Europe". What might account for such growing interest in someone who was for a long time summarily dismissed by elite African intellectuals as an embarrassment and an expensive distraction? I cannot speak for others, but I find Tutuola inspiring for the following reasons.

Tutuola's novels are not just works of fiction. They are founded on the lived realities of Yoruba society – realities shared with many other communities across the continent – and depict endogenous epistemologies that are very popular in Africa. The stories he recounts are commonplace across the continent. A closer look at the universe depicted by Tutuola suggests it has far more to offer Africa and the rest of the world than was initially provided for by the one-dimensional logic of conquest and completeness championed by European imperialism and colonialism. Tutuola's universe is one in which economies of intimacy go hand-in-hand with a market economy, and where pleasure and work are expected to be carefully balanced, just as balance is expected between affluence and poverty, nature, culture and super nature.

Tutuola draws on popular philosophies of life, personhood and agency in Africa, where the principle of inclusive humanity is celebrated as a matter of course, and the supremacy of reason and logic are not to be taken at face value. Collective success is emphasised (and Black Tax is not a sin or a sign of primitive collectivism), and individuals may not begin to consider themselves to have succeeded unless they can demonstrate the extent to which they have actively included intimate and even distant others (family members and friends, fellow villagers and even fellow nationals and perfect strangers, depending on one's stature and networks) in the success in question.

Tutuola's work, Judith Tabron remarks, "reflects the coexistence of English and Yoruba influences in both his cultural past and present". Indeed, his work in Yorubanised English, contributes to the building blocks of the materialisation of the imagined community known as "Nigeria."

As a *lingua franca*, English (domesticated and otherwise) provided Tutuola and continues to provide other "Nigerian" writers a chance of bridging ethnic divides communicatively and exploring the possibilities and challenges of nationhood, and seeking recognition and relevance in an interconnected and dynamic world.

Despite his unconventional English domesticated by his Yoruba syntax, modest and less than intellectual education in elite African terms, Tutuola has contributed significantly to the resilience of ways of life and worldviews that could easily have disappeared under the weight of extractive colonialism, globalisation and the market economy. His are stories of an accommodating resilience against a tendency towards metanarratives of superiority and conquest championed by the aggressive zero-sum games of the powerful. Tutuola's stories emphasise conviviality and inter-dependence, including those between market and gift economies.

Tutuola has much to teach us on how to integrate and draw on popular and widely shared ontologies of incompleteness which he explores extensively in his writings. Through the capacity of his quest heroes to reach beyond the normalcy of their bounded geographies and existence in quests for solutions to predicaments for which they have no readymade conventional answers, Tutuola exposes us to the fathomable and unfathomable richness and possibilities of the crossroads or frontiers as both zones of encounters, and likely and unlikely conversations with difference. Such crossroads encounters and conversations have potential for conviviality as a currency not only in popular African ideas of reality and social action, but also in how we go about doing justice to the nuanced complexities of what it means to be African in a world of flexible mobilities of people, things and ideas.

Tutuola is a fascinating precursor to ongoing debates on flexible and fluid categories, social and biological bodies, and of how usefully to bring essence and consciousness into fruitful and innovative conversations. Consciousness opens a window to the world in its tangible and intangible, visible and invisible multiplicities, by means of which it constantly enriches itself. He introduces us to the complexity of consciousness not only through the transcendental capacity for presence in simultaneous multiplicities, but also through the reality of intricate interconnections and inter-dependencies.

Tutuola's ontologies of incompleteness are usual for (r)esituating and (re)imagining sociology. His conceptions of incompleteness could enrich the practice of social science and the humanities in Africa and globally. I suggest that we consider incompleteness as a social reality and form of knowing generative of and dependent on interconnections, relatedness, open-endedness and multiplicities.

Incompleteness harbours emancipatory potentials and inspires unbounded creativity and hopefully a reclamation of more inclusionary understandings of being human and being in general. Incompleteness is not a unidirectional concept. Every social organisational category is incomplete without the rest of what it takes to be human through relationships with other humans, as well as with non-humans or other beings – in the natural and supernatural worlds. Africa is incomplete without the rest of the world, and the world is incomplete without Africa.

Social sciences and humanities steeped in the dualisms of colonial ways of knowing and producing knowledge in Africa are ill-prepared to midwife the renaissance of African ways of knowing and knowledge production that have been victims of unequal encounters with Western colonialism and its zero-sum games of completeness and winner takes all.

To achieve such an epistemological turn, African scholars and academics would have to turn to and seek to be cultivated afresh by ordinary Africans immersed in popular traditions of meaning making. As Tutuola's experiences as a writer illustrate, these people in rural areas and urban villages are the very same Africans to whom the modern intellectual elite in their ivory towers tries to deny the right to think and represent their realities in accordance with the civilisations and universes they know best. Many scholars schooled in Western modernity push away or even run from these worldviews and conceptions of reality. Instead of creating space for the fruit of "the African mind" as a tradition of knowledge, they are all too eager, under the gawking eyes of their Western counterparts, to label and dismiss (however hypocritically) as traditional or superstitious the creative imagination of their fellow Africans.

The full valorisation of African potentialities in future social scientific endeavours depends on the extent to which scholars in the social sciences and humanities in or of Africa are able to (re)familiarise themselves with and encourage these popular modes of knowing and knowledge-making in the production of social knowledge. There is a clear need to decentre social sciences and the humanities from their preponderantly parochial

or provincial, not to mention patriarchal, Eurocentric origins and biases and from illusions of completeness, and for African researchers and scholars to (re) immerse themselves and be grounded in endogenous African universes and the interconnecting global and local hierarchies that shape and are shaped by them.

Tutuola's use of the idea of crossroads and frontiers as zones of contact, possibility and renewal in the stories he tells is fascinating and inspirational. Africans who are able to successfully negotiate change and continuity by reaching out and taking in what they encounter at the crossroads and bringing into conversation various dichotomies and binaries qualify as frontier Africans. Their frontier-ness comes from their continual straddling of myriad identity margins and bridging of various divides. This encourages them to recognise and provide for the interconnections, nuances and complexities in their lives made possible or exacerbated by technologically inspired and enhanced mobilities and encounters. In this regard, there is an interesting conversation to be had between forms of mobility and the capacity to tame time and space, inspired by jujus or spells and charms in Tutuola's universe, and the forms of mobility and presence made possible by new information and communication technologies such as the television, internet, cell and smart phones.

Popular ideas of reality and the reality of frontier Africans suggest an approach to social action in which interconnections, interrelationships, interdependen-cies, collaboration, coproduction and compassion are emphasised, celebrated and rewarded. Within this framework of conviviality, intricate entanglements and manglements, if hierarchies of social actors and actions exist, it is reassuring to know that nothing is permanent or singular about the nature, order and form of such hierarchies, and that no one or nothing has the monopoly of action.

Commitment to crossroads conversations across divides makes frontier Africans express discomfort with suggestions or ambitions of absolute autonomy in action and reject ideas that humans are superior to any other beings and that a unified and singular self is the only unit of analysis for human action. In the absence of permanence, the freedom to pursue individual or group goals exists within a socially predetermined frame that emphasises collective interests at the same time that it allows for individual creativity and self-activation.

Social visibility derives from (or is facilitated by) being interconnected with other humans and the wider world of nature, the supernatural and the imaginary in an open-ended communion of interests. Being social is not limited to familiar circles or to fellow humans, as it is expected that even the passing stranger (human or otherwise, natural or supernatural) from a distant land or from out of this world should benefit from the sociality that one has cultivated on familiar shores.

The logic of collective action that underpins the privileging of interconnections and frontier beings is instructive in a situation where nothing but change is permanent, and where life is a currency in perpetual circulation. The tendency towards temporality, transience or impermanence calls for social actors to de-emphasise or domesticate personal success and maximise collective endeavours. It calls for humility and the interment of mentalities and practices of absolutes and conquest.

The Attractive Conviviality in Popular African Ideas of Reality and Social Action

Scholars interested in rethinking African social sciences and humanities could maximise and capitalise upon the currency of conviviality in popular African ideas of reality and social action evident in Tutuola's writings.

Conviviality is recognition and provision for the fact or reality of being incomplete. If incompleteness is the normal order of things, conviviality invites us to celebrate and preserve incompleteness and mitigate delusions of grandeur that come with ambitions and claims of perfection.

Conviviality emphasises the repair rather than the rejection of human relationships with fellow humans as well as with the non-human world. It is more about cobbling and less about ruptures. It is fundamental to being human – biologically and so-cially – and necessary for processes of social renewal, reconstruction and regeneration.

Conviviality depicts diversity, tolerance, trust, equality, inclusi-veness, cohabitation, coexistence, mutual accommodation, interaction, interdependence, getting along, generosity, hospitality, congeniality, festivity, civility and privileging peace over conflict, among other forms of sociality.

Convivial Scholarship as an Answer to Delusions of Completeness

Granted the intricacies of popular conceptions of reality, and in view of the frontier reality of many an ordinary African caught betwixt and between exclusionary and prescriptive regimes of being and belonging, nothing short of convivial scholarship would do justice to the legitimate quest for

an epistemological reconfiguration of African universities and the disciplines, a reconfiguration informed by popular agency and epistemologies.

In convivial scholarship the logic of inclusion is prioritised over the logic of exclusion and the violence of conquest. It is a scholarship most likely to provide for and take seriously comprehensive depictions of endogenous univer-ses in Africa wherein reality is more than meets the eye and the world an experience of life beyond sensory perceptions.

A truly convivial scholarship is one which does not seek a priori to define and confine Africans into particular territories or geographies, particular racial and ethnic categories, particular classes, genders, generations, religions or whatever other identity marker is ideologically in vogue.

Convivial scholarship confronts and humbles the challenge of over-prescription, over-standar-disation, over-routinisation, and over-prediction. It is critical and evidence-based (though not in the limited sense of the observational sciences); it challenges problematic labels, especially those that seek to unduly oversimplify the social realities of the people, places and spaces it seeks to understand and explain.

Convivial scholarship recognises the deep power of collective imagination and the importance of interconnections and nuanced complexities.

It is a scholarship that questions assumptions of a priori locations and bounded ideas of power and all other forms of relationships that shape and are shaped by the sociocultural, political and economic circumstances of social actors.

It is a scholarship that sees the local in the global and the global in the local by bringing them into informed conversations, conscious of the hierarchies and power relations at play at both the micro and macro levels of being and becoming. Convivial scholarship is scholarship that neither dismisses contested and contrary perspectives a priori nor throws the baby out with the bathwater.

It is critical scholarship of recognition and reconciliation, scholarship that has no permanent friends, enemies or alliances beyond the rigorous and committed quest for truth in its complexity and nuance, and using the results of aspirations for a common humanity that is in communion with the natural and supernatural environments that make a balanced existence possible.

Convivial scholarship does not impose what it means to be human, just as it does not prescribe a single version of the good life in a world peopled by infinite possibilities, tastes and value systems. Rather, it encourages localised conversations of a truly global nature on competing and complementary processes of social cultivation through practice, performance and experience, without pre-empting or foreclosing particular units of analysis in a world in which the messiness of encounters and relationships frowns on binaries, dichotomies and dualisms. Indeed, like Tutuola's universe, convivial scholarship challenges us, however grounded we may be in our disciplines and their logics of practice, to cultivate the disposition to be present everywhere at the same time.

It is a scholarship that cautions disciplines, their borders and gatekeepers to open up and embrace the crossroads culture of presence in simultaneous multiplicity and concomitant epistemologies of interconnections. With convivial scholarship, there are no final answers, only permanent questions and ever exciting new angles of questioning.

Conclusion

Tutuola suggests ways for vulnerable Africans to challenge victimhood. In his stories, very ordinary Africans are quite simply extraordinary in their capacity to challenge victimisation and the brutal and brutish games of power and conquest. His stories challenge the illusion of the autonomous, omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent individual by inviting the reader to embrace and celebrate incompleteness as the normal order of being and of things. They suggest an epistemology of conviviality in which interdependence is privileged and delusions of grandeur and completeness discouraged. Rich and poor are co-implicated and mutually entangled in Tutuola's universe of the elusiveness of completeness.

Tutuola himself epitomises the universe he depicts, not only through his own cunning and trickery, prankishness and elusive quest for completeness in a world of zero-sum games of civilisations founded on exclusionary violence, but also by pointing a critical finger at the modern African intellectual elite who have unquestioningly yielded to a narrow Eurocentric index of civilisation and humanity, founded on borrowing without acknowledgement and on the fallacy of the permanently activated autonomous self.

Note

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Decolonizing the Academy: The Limits of Race-centric Approaches

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Introduction

In the last 5 years, the global south has been characterized by intense debates on how universities can best produce knowledge that serves local populations instead of former colonial masters. In South Africa, calls for a more locally relevant university have, by and large, manifested in a "decolonial movement" that strongly takes race as the central axis of decolonial strategies. To be sure, the increasing popularity of race-centric decolonial strategies as a means to empower historically marginalized groups extends beyond the global south. In the US - and indeed the West in general - similar strategies have been advanced by scholars such as Martin (1976), Ladson-Billings and Tate IV (1995) and others. Given this level of preeminence, race-centric decolonial strategies have effectively become the preferred mode of organizing for subaltern groups across many university campuses. Yet, given the complexity of the composition of local populations in the global south (both in terms of identities, and the power dynamics within and between such identities) as well as the intricate character of knowledge production (see Said, 1994; Chibber, 2014; Smith & Tivaringe, 2016); the idea that race-centric decolonial strategies are, by definition, emancipatory to the subaltern becomes, at best, simplistic and inadequate, and at worst, ill-informed and therefore a misdiagnosis of the real challenges that characterize knowledge production. In this paper, I explore whether race-centric decolonial strategies can effectively lead to the decolonization of the academy. I argue that, efforts to decolonize the academy through a shift in the racial configuration of academics run into the inevitable pitfall of statically equating particular ideas with particular identities in ways that are inadvertently antithetical to reclamation of subjugated epistemologies. For this reason, the exclusive focus on race as a decolonial strategy may as well be the contemporary impediment to the reclamation of epistemologies rather than the solution. The argument raised here is primarily theoretical. As such, the first sections of the paper will discuss a) the philosophical underpinnings of race-centric decolonial solutions, and b) the theoretical challenges (both explicit and implicit) that render race-centric decolonial solutions theoretically untenable. Beyond the theoretical limitations, the later sections of the paper will also examine a race-based decolonial strategy in South Africa to further show the empirical conundrums that emerge from implementation of such a decolonial initiative.

Race-centric decolonial strategies: The Gramscian Roots

Race-centric decolonial strategies aimed at decolonizing the academy have been advanced along one fundamental line of reasoning: since the colonial process was characterized by the subjugation of epistemologies associated with the colonized groups (often non-whites), it follows that the reclamation of the said epistemologies in the post-colonial era can be fundamentally achieved by ensuring that more people from historically marginalized groups participate in the knowledge production process (Mangcu, 2016). For this paradigm, increa-sed participation of histo-rically marginalized groups in the academy necessarily translates to the reclamation of subjugated epistemologies. For instance, in his model for "decolonizing South African Sociology", prominent academic, Xolela Mangcu, argued that "South African sociology must place Black perspectives on race at the center of its curriculum" (2016, p.5). Building on Henry

Louis Gates Jr.'s idea of a "shared text of Blackness", Mangcu posits that Black perspectives can be drawn from "Black writers" (p.6). For him, the central inclusion of Black writers in South African sociology "would provide a practical example of the decolonization of the curriculum demanded by students throughout the university system" (p.7).

Mangcu is not alone in making this call. In their seminal, *Toward a Critical Race Theory of Education*, Ladson-Billings and Tate IV's (1995) analysis of the challenges between learning, political economy and policy leads them to a conclusion akin to Marcus Garvey's "race first philosophy" (p.61). Having observed that, because of its reliance on "white standards," the turn to multiculturalism in the US education system was essentially incompatible with the "authentic black personality," Ladson-Billings and Tate IV reasoned that "any program of emancipation would have to be built around the question of race first" (1995, p.61).

Theoretically conspicuous in the reasoning provided by Mangcu (2016), Ladson-Billings and Tate IV (1995) and other such race-centric decolonialists (see also Zavala, 2013; Tuck and Yang, 2012; Blassingame, 1971) are two fundamental commitments: a) that there is an authentic and homogenous shared thought among a particular racial group - what Mangcu calls "black perspectives from black writers" (2016, p.6); and b) that just as there are racial differences, such monolithic perspectives also vary along racial lines. In other words, there is a static mode of reasoning that is intrinsically linked to a particular racial group).

By character – at least in the power asymmetry between social groups – these theoretical commitments are synonymous with Gramsci's seminal work, *Cultural Hegemony*. In this work, Gramsci advances the concept of the "subaltern" as a category of populations that are outside of the hegemonic power structure (1995, p.32). For Gramsci and subsequent theorists who share these commitments (see for example Hall, 2007; Spivak, 2007), intellectuals from hegemonic groups advance their epistemologies through marginalizing epistemologies from non-dominant groups. To be fair, unlike Mangcu (2016) and the other race-centric theorists, Gramsci (1995) delineates between population groups on the basis of culture instead of race.

The invocation of Gramsci here is aimed at a) acknowledging the intellectual lineage of the decolonial paradigm, b) to reaffirm that indeed the need to address asymmetrical power dynamics in knowledge production remains an important contemporary challenge, and c) importantly, to show that, because of the inherent race reductionism in race-centric decolonial theory, such a model of advancing decolonization necessarily fragments the subaltern. Since the subaltern groups that the race-centric decolonial theorists seek to emancipate are composed of people whose subjugation occurs along numerous lines that include but is not limited to race it therefore seems regressive that a project that once started with culture as a central organizing axis has now shifted to race. For, given the heterogeneity of racial groups that continue to be negatively impacted by colonial processes, limiting decolonial approaches to race-based strategies shows that a once promising attempt to address social asymmetries is becoming a mode of fracturing subjugated groups through colonial hierarchies.

Race-centric Decolonial Approaches: The Pitfalls

That the subjugation of ways of knowing that were incongruent with colonial ideas was both a corollary and a product of the colonial process is a well-documented historical fact that virtually elicits no contention. Furthermore, that such historically "subjugated epistemologies" (Foucault, 2012) ought to be reclaimed is as ethically sound as it is intellectually prudent. On that score, decolonial theory is raising key normative and intellectual issues that warrant serious consideration. However, if the task raised by decolonial theory is of reclaiming subjugated epistemologies, then the solutions advanced by the race-centric variant of this school of thought are, at the very least wanting and at most, antithetical to achieving such ends. For starters, because race-centric decolonial theorists are fundamentally committed to a conception of knowledge that posits a static link between identity and knowledge, this theoretical paradigm inevitably runs into the challenge of equating modes of thoughts with racial identities. In other words, it becomes perfectly justifiable for racial groups to effectively claim ownership – and indeed monopoly – over modes of thought. For instance, in his account of how

research strategies can be decolonized, Miguel Zavala argues for an invocation of what he terms "a Raza standpoint that privileges the vantage point of colonized peoples from Latin America" (2013, p.56) to enable the reclamation of subjugated epistemologies of indigenous Brown people from Latin America. To Zavala, the term "Raza" is used "strategically as a broader socio-cultural and political identity, which includes the standpoint of indigenous and colonized Mestizo/ Brown peoples from Latin America" (ibid). Since Zavala invokes identity as the central axis on which to define indigeneity and, crucially, the strategy to ensure that the reclamation of the "vantage point of colonized" people from Latin America is achieved, he naturally begins by asserting his Latin American identity (2013). To be sure, it is not that the mere invocation of his "Xicano identity" is itself an equation of identity and a particular mode of thought (ibid). Rather, it is the manner in which he uses his identity here as a way to legitimate his voice as representative of the "vantage point of the colonized Brown Latin American people" that betrays a) commitment to an ontological view of knowledge that perceives knowledge as different along identity lines and b) a commitment to the idea that such differences in ways of knowing remain true across different time periods.

The challenge, of course, is that the spirit of Zavala's (2013) argument is to ensure that decolonization is achieved. Yet, paradoxically, his attempts to achieve decolonization reproduce the containerization of knowledge that was at the centre of the colonial process. Indeed, by holding onto the idea that there is a uniquely "Brown people's vantage point" that is fundamentally different from other people's modes of thought, he commits to the same ontological viewpoint that legitimated the claims of exclusive ownership to modes of thoughts that typified the colonial process. For, history has shown, the claims of exclusive ownership to modes of thoughts were simultaneously a key strategy as well as a product of the colonial process during which powerful groups claimed ownership to modes of thought based on asymmetrical dynamics rather than the existence of inherent differences on modes of thoughts by racial group. This is not to say that there have never been differences in dominant ways of knowing among particular groups at a particular time. Rather, the point here is that, knowledge has always been fluid and the dominant ways in which groups of people perceive of the world have historically been continuously (re)shaped by contact with others as opposed to merely developing in isolation as is suggested by the commitment to "authentic" modes of thought that typify race-centric decolonial reasoning (see Said, 1994). In fact, the calls for exclusive ownership of knowledge are at the core of colonial thought and should therefore not be at the center of strategies that are meant to challenge colonial reasoning. As postcolonial theorist and educator Aimé Césaire famously declared, "no race has a monopoly on beauty, intelligence and strength and there is room for everyone at the convocation of conquest" (Said, 1994 p.227). Thus, by insisting on ownership patterns of knowledge developed for colonial conquest, race-centric decolonial theorists are inadvertently reproducing colonial ideologies even beyond the colonial era.

Further, accepting that modes of thought are fundamentally racialized and that the existing knowledge production system has been producing white knowledge since the beginning of colonialism, how is it possible that black scholars whose training is dominated by white ideas can reasonably be able to decolonize the knowledge production process? In other words, is decolonization of knowledge production a mere reconfiguration of the personnel involved in the knowledge production process or is it the rejection of ideas of a colonial character? In truth, the reality is that, even as non-whites have been gradually increasing in the knowledge production process, the dominant ideas as well as the structures that constitute this process remain similar. The domination of particular colonial ideas against the backdrop of an increase in the number of non-whites in the academy continues to take place because knowledge production process involves complex ideological and structural elements that will not be fixed by merely changing the racial composition of the faculty. Racial identity of scholars is therefore just but one element within an otherwise complex knowledge production structure. Indeed, other elements of the

knowledge production process such as, patterns of ownership in the knowledge production sphere and the ideas underpinning the mode of production system within which the knowledge production sphere is embedded present a more promising decolonial path than merely rearranging the proverbial deck chairs on the Titanic (Smith & Tivaringe, 2016, Chibber, 2014).

Conclusion

In conclusion, while efforts to decolonize the knowledge production system are undoub-tedly still characterized by colo-nial ideologies that perpetuate asymmetrical structures within the knowledge production sphere, it is unproductive to ameliorate such asymmetries by reducing the structures that characterize this sphere merely to those of a racial nature. This is a misdiagnosis that perpetuates the continued reproduction of the colonial thought via non-white and white academics committed to ideologies that justify asymmetries in social economic and political order. Furthermore, this misdiagnosis fragments the subaltern by fixating on mere racial identities when effective solidarity to decolonize could be waged across racial groups.

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The metamorphosis of the revolutionary intellectual

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Without repeating the cliché, let me sincerely say that that this is a great opportunity for me to converse with my fellow intellectuals in honour of Harold Wolpe, I wish to thank Wolpe posthumously for giving us an excuse for self-reflection.

I would also like to thank the University of Wits for flying me from Cape Town to Johannesburg and inviting me to do this lecture. Most of all, I am grateful to the Institute of Poverty and Land Reform (PLAAS) at the University of Western Cape which awarded me a two-month Visiting Professorship to its campus. This has allowed me to get a peep, (only a peep, I must say), into your intellectual discourses. More fascinating have been your street languages and the freedom with which you discuss your political affairs and the governors of your state. To be sure, I cannot say how free the streets are when I see early morning homeless scavenging foods from black bins of trash from palacious white bungalows. It seems the sun has not yet set on your sunset clauses! I should restrain myself from treading on this slippery and sensitive ground – slippery for me, sensitive for you!

Let me first start by declaring interest and making a disclaimer. My presentation today is an auto-critique, in two senses – personal

and collective. Collective is a shorthand reference to African intellectuals of whom I have first-hand knowledge through our "ideological struggles" in East Africa in the '60s, '70s and '80s, and through our splendid pan-Africanist organisation, CODESRIA.

In my presentation you may find that I exaggerate and even caricature. I make no apologies because I believe I am exaggerating the truth to make a point and that is permissible. I draw validation of my style from one of our great revolutionary intellectuals, Archie Mafeje. During the debate on democratisation in the late '80s and early '90s, there was an interesting exchange between Thandika Mkandawire, Ibbo Mandaza and Peter Anayang' Nyongo, in which I made a short intervention. Mafeje reviewed this debate in his brilliant and brutal piece called, "Breaking bread with my fellow-travellers' (1995). Commenting on my piece, he said, and I quote:

> He trivialised his own problematique by presenting it in a Charlie Chaplain fashion. … But, as is known, Charlie Chaplin's message was always very profound to the disquiet of the Americans who found it necessary to deport him back to his native England.
>
> Irrespective of the reaction Shivji elicited from his colleagues (irritation from Mandaza and disgust from Anyang' if only with his 'hackneyed terms'), his diagnosis is more correct than most and, theoretically, is better founded than that of his detractors.

Pardon my immodesty but then modesty is not the petty bourgeois intellectual's forte!

Intellectuals are producers and purveyors of ideas. They produce all kinds of ideas: ideas to rationalise and legitimise, ideas to explain and deceive; ideas to mystify and mesmerize; ideas to decorate and demonise; ideas to inform and entertain – all kinds of ideas. They may produce ideas gratuitously or, these days, more often than not, for a price.Thus, ideas become a commodity, an artificial commodity. To Karl Polanyi's list of three artificial commodities – land, labour and money – we should add a fourth one – ideas. When mystifying and clarifying ideas are fused together and systematised in a coherent whole, they become ideologies. As ideologies are propagated and disseminated, and internalised, they become common sense - beyond doubt, beyond question. Such ideologies we call hegemonic – à la Gramsci.

Intellectuals produce ideas to explain and define others, and in the service of others. But they also produce ideas to define and serve themselves. They are very good at producing self-serving ideas. They exaggerate and inflate their importance and role, their indispensability and alacrity, their sanctimony and sacrifice. Intellectuals are one species who are egoistic to the bone. But being masters of mystification, they package their egoism in altruism.

Who are intellectuals? Half a century ago when yours truly was still a student, Ali Mazrui, the rising and shining intellectual star of the time, defined an intellectual as someone who is fascinated by ideas. 'Even a clown is fascinated by ideas', a student-comrade retorted, obviously in ridicule. Now with the maturity of hindsight, I say: why not? Indeed, a clown is an intellectual. And some clowns are very good intellectuals. They can do something that academic intellectuals cannot do. They poke fun at power; they ridicule power. They not only speak truth to power, as Edward Said would have it, but they also speak to people, which many us fail to do. We speak to each other, and, a few, to our credit, do dare speak truth to power! If such few did not exist, we would have fallen from people's grace long ago.

A revolutionary intellectual of humble intellectual origins (he was a school teacher), sitting in a fascist jail in Italy, gave us the first significant classification of intellectuals – organic intellectuals. To simplify Gramsci somewhat, we can say there are organic intellectuals of the ruling bloc and there are organic intellectuals of the dominated classes. They generate and articulate respective ideologies from the elements of existing ideologies according to the hegemonic logic or principle of the dominating or dominated bloc. Organic intellectuals of the oppressed and exploited social classes may be considered, proto revolutionary intellectuals to the extent that they seek to make the ideology - by word and deed – of the oppressed hegemonic. By thus participating in ideological struggles, they contribute to the underlying class struggle, even though they may not participate directly in such struggles. Some of these organic intellectuals may become actual revolutionary intellectuals by directly participating in class struggles.

We have examples of such revolutionary intellectuals in our midst. Amilcar Cabral was one such intellectual; so were Chris Hani, John Garang, Félix Moumié, and Walter Rodney, to name a few. All of them were assassinated at strategic moments in the respective struggles they were involved in. We do not know how they would have metamorphosed on attaining power. I know of at least one and his metamorphosis in power – Yoweri Kaguta Museveni. He was the head of our University Students African Revolutionary Front (USARF) when we were students at the University of Dar es Salaam. He was involved in armed struggle to oust Idi Amin Dada, the coup leader who overthrew Obote and ushered in an 8-year reign of terror in Uganda. Museveni, through armed struggle, overthrew Obote II and came to power with a pretty radical programme of transformation. Once in power, he was so fascinated by it that now he does not want to leave it. (I am not sure if it is a normal trajectory – from being fascinated by ideals of power to being fascinated by power. I guess power produces its own ideas – like the idea of immortality in power.) I am sure there are many examples of such metamorphosis in South Africa. I can think of a couple but dare not name names, partly because I do not know enough – no investigation, no right to speak – and partly because I am not on my home terrain.

Some putative, revolutionary intellectuals, particularly in the academia, metamorphose into public intellectuals. This is a relatively new term in the African discourse on intellectuals. I cannot recall if that is how we described ourselves in the heydays of 60s and 70s. Public intellectuals, I take it, are political intellectuals. They comment on everything political but also on matters not so political. They are articulate and admired by young aspiring intellectuals and have many followers on social media. They are sought after by the media to comment on anything and everything. Their works and deeds are in the public domain and they do not shy away from publicity which, occasionally, puts them on the firing line of politicians.

A few, brilliant ones, migrate to the North joining ivy leagues. Many, not so "brilliant", remain home. A few of the remainder continue to be in academia weathering the storm of economic scarcity and overt and covert political repression. Not so few, give up intellectual vocation altogether. They shift their terrain to NGOs and policy institutes, where donor pressure and funding constraints metamorphose them from public intellectuals to policy pundits. Other few, not so few in some countries, "enter" politics as practitioners. They become politician-intellectuals. Very soon they find themselves increasingly giving up the consistency and commitment required of a public intellectual to become politician-entrepreneurs.

When I talk of few entering political power, I am not referring only to state power. I include entering other sites of power – à la Foucault – like university administrations.

What about our migrants to the North? A significant few attain celebrity status. They are held up as an example of some – I say some! – brilliance in an otherwise intellectually barren continent. They are under pressure to produce best sellers to maintain their status. And what sells best in the North is that which finds a niche in the academic fashion of the day. Which means they end up recycling and regurgitating the same content packaged in fancier language.

Edward Said says somewhere that all organic intellectuals are public intellectuals but all public intellectuals are not organic intellectuals (see Said 1994). I agree with the second part – all public intellectuals are NOT organic intellectuals. In fact, many public intellectuals give up their organic link with the oppressed masses so as not to tarnish their public image. I am not sure, though, of the first part of Said's statement. I do not think ALL organic intellectuals are public intellectuals. If I am right in my description of public intellectuals, then organic intellectuals are not, and cannot afford to be public intellectuals. Their loyalty is not to the amorphous public. Their loyalty is to the oppressed, the down trodden, to the wretched of the earth. And more often than not, that loyalty has to be hidden, has to be disguised and at times has even to go underground rather than be exhibited in public. When Said made that statement, maybe, he was thinking of public intellectuals in the North, or public intellectuals of the South living in the North.

Then there is another category of intellectuals. Fidel Castro, agonising over the role of intellectuals in the Cuban revolution, in an address to the conference of writers and artists in 1961, talked about what he called honest intellectuals. Honest intellectuals do not want to tell lies. They want to pursue truth and stick to truth. But they do not want to speak truth to power. They do not want to take sides. That is not the job of intellectuals. They plead objectivity and neutrality. They desire change but do not want to do anything about it. They are fence sitters. As fence sitters they are vulnerable; inevitably they roll over to the side of domination, their neutrality notwithstanding.

Honest intellectuals constitute a huge chunk of academic intellectuals. Their site of operation is universities and institutions of higher education. As the academia is increasingly commodified, universities become market places. Academics, willingly or under duress, must break up their courses and introduce new ones to make them saleable to the consumers. They must package, brand and certify their products. History becomes tourism and heritage; corporate greed becomes corporate responsibility and democratic governance is taught as good governance. Archaeology is museumised whose artifacts are exhibited at a fee to ignorant and disinterested American tourists. Political economy is replaced by econometrics, with no sense of either politics or economy. Africans in Africa study Africa in Centres of African Studies in the image of Centres in the North. Are not all our studies African studies? Law students write PhDs applying the convention on rights of indigenous people to their own citizens. To talk of citizens' rights is foreign, Western; to ruminate on indigenous rights is authentic, African! We have been metamorphosed – from colonial natives and migrants to neo-colonial indigenous and tyrants, thanks to imperial intellectuals and their African caricatures.

A few resist the metamorphosis but many, with an eye on funding, job-security and promotions resign to their fate, taking pride in the ranking of their universities. Just as Fitch and Moody's give credit rating to our countries, some fishy ranking agencies in the North rank our universities. Once upon a time our universities took pride in being centres of controversy; now we covet to become centres of excellence. You cannot attain excellence if you're controversial! This is a simple truth that is often overlooked.

As I approach the end of my auto-critique, let me take the tongue out of my cheek and pay tribute to hundreds of revolutionary, including public intellectuals, who have sacrificed their lives and families in the service of the liberation of their countries and the emancipation of the masses. Revolutionary intellectuals led our liberation movements. Revolutionary intellectuals initiated and organised our left, and democratic, formations. Thugs and mercenaries of imperialism and their hirelings have murdered revolutionary intellectuals all over the continent. They have been subjected to torture and humiliation of prison as Harold Wolpe was. But with Thomas Sankara they continue chanting: "While revolutionaries as individuals can be murdered, you cannot kill ideas."

Revolutionary intellectuals, whether living or dead, continue to inspire and lead by example our young intellectuals. Revolutionary intellectuals are humble and modest people. They do not inflate their role nor do they suffer from inflated egos. They remain the beacon of hope.

History will award them.

Note

Harold Wolpe Memorial Lecture 2017, University of Wits, South Africa, 19 October 2017.

Are All African Intellectuals Studying African Studies?
An Auto-Critical Response to Issa Shivji's Harold Wolpe Memorial Lecture

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It is difficult, indeed redundant, to respond to someone or something you almost fully agree with. However, when a point of disagreement close to one's own heart, no matter how small, emerges, one is bound to respond. So, here I am, responding to Shivji's take on African Studies.

Shivji presents a profound personal and collective "auto-critique" of African intellectuals. In doing so, however, he singles out a "few, brilliant ones" who "migrate to the North joining ivy leagues." Although he does not name names, one can sense that the example *par excellence* is none other than his friend and colleague during the heydays of the radical Dar es Salaam School of the 1970s, Mahmood Mamdani, currently based at Columbia and Makerere. Shivji queries:

> What about our migrants to the North? A significant few attain celebrity status. They are held up as an example of some – I say some! – brilliance in an otherwise intellectually barren continent. They are under pressure to produce best sellers to maintain their status. And what sells best in the North is that which finds a niche in the academic fashion of the day. Which means they end up recycling and regurgitating the same content packaged in fancier language.

Karim Hirji, another colleague of Mamdani during the famed Dar es Salaam School, shares Shivji's nostalgic sentiments. However, Hirji is more overt as he does not shy away from naming names. In his recent book entitled *The Enduring Relevance of Walter Rodney's How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (Year?), he devotes a whole section on Mamdani as "an instructive example":

> The Ugandan political Scientist Mahmood Mamdani is a case in point. An erstwhile Marxist and colleague of Rodney at the University of Dar es Salaam, he authored well regarded leftist books… To this day, he remains a prolific, respected, award winning writer on African issues. Yet while a few of his writings still display a critical stand on the Western role in global affairs… his conceptual horizon shifted in a fundamental way. Economic issues and ideas like underdevelopment, imperialism, neo-colonialism, neoliberalism and class analysis are no longer germane to his analytical method. Instead, he operates on the legal, political, and cultural planes with identity group, ethnicity, religion, race, tribe, and nation as his basic unit of analysis. His focus is on politics, law, administration and conflict resolution, with class and anti-imperialist struggles deleted from the picture. Insightful and well researched as his analysis is, it is incomplete and biased as it avoids the underlying reality and economic trends that constitutes the long-term foundation for the problems he examines… Mamdani thus… stands in the company of the bulk of modern day historians of Africa who can go no further than distort and superficially critique the works and Marxist approach of Walter Rodney.

Contrast that with what Shivji lamented about in 2003 on Mamdani's apparent metamorphosis:

> It is unfortunate that in his magnum opus, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism* (1996), Mahmood Mamdani abandons political economy too radically and falls into *an institutional* analysis of the colonial state. He finds that the colonial state was bifurcated, when an examination of its social character reveals the unity of state power. While his conclusions on the tasks of democratic struggle are unassailable, his institutional analysis results in a "recommendation" that state structures be reformed rather than a call for a new form of nationalist struggle. Throughout his analysis, Mamdani concentrates on the "native question," the preoccupation of the colonial power, but has

> little to say about the National Question, the preoccupation of the resistance.

This background enables us to see where Shivji is coming from when he thus laments in 2017:

> As the academia is increasingly commodified, universities become market places. Academics, willingly or under duress, have to break up their courses and introduce new ones to make them saleable to the consumers. They have to package, brand and certify their products. History becomes tourism and heritage; corporate greed becomes corporate responsibility and democratic governance is taught as good governance. Archaeology is museumised whose artifacts are exhibited at a fee to ignorant and disinterested American tourists. Political economy is replaced by econometrics, with no sense of either politics or economy. Africans in Africa study Africa in Centres of African Studies in the image of Centres in the North. Aren't all our studies African studies? Law students write PhDs applying the convention on rights of indigenous people to their own citizens. To talk of citizens' rights is foreign, Western; to ruminate on indigenous rights is authentic, African! We have been metamorphosed – from colonial natives and migrants to neo-colonial indigenous and tyrants, thanks to imperial intellectuals and their African caricatures.

As someone who has studied African Studies in both the 'Global South' and the 'Global North', I find it difficult to agree with Shivji's rhetorical question that seems to imply that all our studies are African Studies. For instance, to study Sociology in Africa does not necessarily mean engaging in African Studies. Its 'holy trinity' remains Karl Marx, Emile Durkheim and Marx Weber and not Ibn Khaldun, W.E.B. Dubois and Ida B. Wells. In my erstwhile discipline, Psychology, it is the same story – we start with the likes of Sigmund Freud and Carl Rogers rather than Frantz Fanon and Chabani Manganyi. An African student in the Philosophy department may graduate knowing the German George Hegel without having heard of the Ghanaian Anton Wilhelm Amo who taught and published in German universities in the 18th century way before Hegel. As Ernest Wamba dia Wamba reminds us, the "foundation of African scientific research is still based on a philosophy of returning to the Western sources." Shivji himself has captured this intellectual predicament regarding his discipline elsewhere:

> Some of us who adopted more radical approaches, albeit still within Western traditions, did not perhaps subscribe wholly to Thompson's thesis that the rule of law was an 'unqualified good'. Yet we, too, saw in bourgeois law and legality, space for struggle to advance the social project of human liberation and emancipation. Law, we argued, was a terrain of struggle; that rule of law, while expressing and reinforcing the rule of the bourgeoisie, did also represent the achievement of the working classes; that even though bourgeois democracy was a limited class project, it was an advance over authoritarian orders and ought to be defended. The legal discourse, whether liberal or radical, thus remained rooted in Western values, exalting the Law's Empire.

So, no, we are not all doing African Studies. However, all African intellectuals ought to do it irrespective of our disciplinary boundaries. Harry Garuba has consistently made a case for this by highlighting that the study of Africa has not yet been fully integrated in the traditionally Western disciplines. The "study of Africa", he aptly notes, "was calling upon us to open the disciplines rather than adopt and justify their self-admittedly fragmentary understandings of the world." It is what he refers to as the "blinkers of the inherited disciplines" that needs to be fully smashed. What is a better way of doing it than 'Bringing back African Studies to Africa'?

Note

1. First published in the UDADISI blog, October 22 2017: http://udadisi.blogspot.com/2017/10/are-all-african-intellectuals-studying.html

Africa has no special smell: Towards academic equality in African studies

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In my work in Brazil, together with a group of colleagues, I have tried to incorporate African studies – with a special attention for those carried out from within the African continent – in the mainstream of the social studies. This is part of a larger effort to decolonize our production of knowledge by developing new South-South links and promoting what I call a new horizontal curiosity – as a way to counter our historical vertical obsession with the Global North. To be frank I have much more experience as facilitator of African studies in Brazil, maybe even as passeur of African studies, than any actual specialization in African studies proper.

The improvement of the conditions for knowledge production in Africa itself and for scholars based in Africa more generally are at stake in this paper [1]. This is, of course, a concern shared by most and a topic that has ravished the mind of many African intellectuals, whether based in Africa such as Mafeje and Houtondji or partly abroad such as Mamdani, Macamo and Mkandawire, as well as their main organization since its inception, CODESRIA. I owe a great deal to these colleagues and their radicalism with their denunciation of intellectual dependence and (self) imposed theoretical introversion if not invisibility as opposed to universal ambitions as regards social theory, to which I associate my own Latin American radical touch. It is the same radicalism that in Brazil produced the Factory of Ideas twenty years ago: an international advanced course in ethnic and African studies that operates largely though not exclusively along the South-South nexus and that posits that intellectual excellence and social inclusion can go hand in glove. The Fábrica de Ideas, as we call it, is also the first think tank on these questions based in cities and towns of the Global South, often in their historical centres, as opposed to most other think tanks that are based in places such as Stanford and Bellagio, locations that are in many ways in the middle of nowhere – agora without polis. In fact, I believe that anti-Africanism and anti-Latin Americanism, and the seminal though sometimes acrimonious debates they have generated on issues such as endogeneity and cosmopolitanism, should look much more to one another for inspiration. CODESRIA and CLACSO (Latin America Social Sciences Reearch Council) should cooperate much more on this. Henceforth here in this paper, which is very much fresh from the oven, I do not plan to say anything particularly new nor that encompassing.

In my opinion such improvement of the intellectual climate requires and is related to, among other things, the development of African studies from a broader variety or regions and viewpoints, associated to a critical reassessment of traditional African studies, area studies and development studies usually originated in the Global North. Here I ought to add that of these three terms area and development studies have received over time much more criticism than African studies after all. Area studies have been associated with the term plot or coup d´etat, whereas development with the notion of myth. A frequent criticism of African studies is milder: it is an end in itself. Here, of course, we need to historicize because we all know that there have been several generations of African studies and Africanism, from the first colonial generation to successive generation that engaged more critically with colonialism and its aftermath even though a truly decolonial multi-centred Africanism is still to be or, if we want to be optimistic, is still in the making.

My simple contention is that this improvement also requires an effort to make the South-South connection and perspective sustainable in this troubled world where soft and hard power and cultural cold wars are more diffused and entangled than ever. In Brazil we are experiencing an ironical situation: we are too great to receive US and, to some

extent, European money, but the mastering of our national money is rather whimsical. Nowadays the Brics, which seemed to have been the engine of the South South, are much less in evidence in terms of leadership – South Africa, Brazil and India have become much more inward looking, conservative and isolationist. Generally speaking, it has been progressive governments that have been more prone to invest in the South-South. So was the case in Brazil in the periods between 1959-1964 and 2002-2016. The present Temer government, result of a silent coup, has primed in cutting most exchanges and South-South projects as part of an effort to dismount the Lula foreign policy. Our promethean effort to turn Brazil from a country where to come and do "tropical research", as well as experience first-hand tropical life and atmosphere, to a tropical research country is alas faltering. Bear in mind that Brazil has historically been a major destination for academic tourism, so such renewed magic, political and emotional "turn towards the North" is especially painful to most of us. The real question is how to conceive of the South-South exchange so as to make it sustainable. Such exchange needs also to be based on our own resources (perhaps also crowd sourcing plus the support of selected private companies) as well as the support of key centers in the North, such as Michigan State University or University of Indiana at Bloomington in the United Sstates or in Europe the University of Bayreuth – in a country such as Germany that is experimenting with new forms of soft power, also through institutions such as the Goethe Institut (see the very interesting Vila Sul Project in Brazil which brings every year for three months to Bahia a number of scholars and artists also from the Global South). Ours ought to be an exchange based on the win-win principle, where both sides benefit somewhat equally. For this reason, the agenda of each partner should be stated in good detail.

The South-South need not repeat the same errors of the North-South. We can learn a great deal from a critical reappraisal of its history as much as of the history of the South-South since 1945. This raises a number of methodological, ethical and political questions. Let me add that even though I work in an interdisciplinary graduate program, and African studies tends to be interdisciplinary, I do consider the question especially from the point of view of anthropology. Because I am an anthropologist and because anthropology has been the most criticized of the social sciences in such critical scrutiny, to the point of becoming sometime a useful scapegoat.

First, we have a question of scale, which is very dear to us anthropologists – truly small-scale fans. The advancement in critical theory has questioned the very scale of most African studies (and, I dare say, of anthropology more generally, because it is the branch of the social sciences traditionally leading with less segmented and less complex societies or, more recently, with small samples of complex wholes). There has been a move from an emphasis on community to a focus on networks, flows and social, cultural and economic landscapes; as well as a move from area to global studies – which emphasize the porosity and interconnectivity of different cultural areas and regional markets. In this move away from the closeness and even coziness of the small scale to the often less tangible and certainly less easy to explore ethnographically big world of flows, landscapes and network, we ought to scrutinize what we lose and what we gain. Beware of throwing away the baby out with the bathwater. A focus on community need not mean isolationism and it can have the advantage of eliciting subjectivities and actors that are often almost invisible if not silenced from a distance.

Second, we have the question of complexity. It goes without saying that Africa is as contradictory as a continent can be: Afropolitanism and neo-nativism can share the same space and time, the same city and the same market place (the market of Medina in Dakar or of Bandim in Bissau for example), or the same national election campaign for that matter! Complexity as much as ambiguity have always been there, even though some poststructuralists and, more recently, "decolonialists" seem to suggest that ambiguity is the essence if not even the exclusivity of late-modernity. As a matter of fact, the question is that nowadays we are more inclined to perceive it and highlight it. The local has never been exactly as local as we described it or perceived it or as it was narrated or recalled in the process of generating or reinventing traditions over and again. We should learn to accept complexity, relativity and contradiction as the normal state of African societies and cultures, rather than the exception – and, why not, of most if not each and every society.

In the third place we have the issue of experience. Africa, even more so that the rest of the Global South, has been idealized as trope that once could best define as a "first hand continent". In other words, in the geopolitics of knowledge Africa is the "place" where to carry out field work, where to delve in messy and often deteriorating, but rich and colourful archives, where to experience things first hand

– without the intermediation of institutions, colleagues or, even less so, "local" intellectual traditions – where local perspectives can be and must be felt, seen, smelled, tasted and understood personally, first hand. It is the place of raw data, not the locality where data can and should be processed and stored, possibly in close cooperation with local colleagues, then dealt with as academic and scientific peers. Being in Africa and having been there repeatedly – and adventurously - has historically been celebrated as a unique experience, essential to the making of African studies. From the true Africanist good and tough stories, and storytelling, is expected.

Fourth, we ought to explore ways and methods that, potentially, reposition Africa in the production of knowledge. Here communication technology and the digital turn are the question. In spite of the tendency of many of us to revamp certain forms of Luddism or technophobia (as the reaction to over-digitalization of African sources by the controversial project of the Aluka archive has shown[2]) we have to learn to ride the tiger of these technologies if only because they co-determine the new geopolitics of knowledge defining challenges by new - and no less imperial than the previous ones - politics of storage. Those who are able to store the original document will, to a large extent, call the shots. For this reason, but also on account of their convenience and relatively easy access and mustering we should endeavor on the path of the critical usage of the digital turn. Digital generosity (through the creation of joint virtual\digital museum, collections, libraries and book series), digital repatriation of images and documents. Repatriation is a polemic and growing issue that cuts across North-South relations, but also affects South-South connections because when and if objects are repatriated to other places from Paris for example, the question is where are they supposed to be taken back to? This is a problem I discussed last year with the then curator of the Ifan Museum in Dakar, Ibrahina Thiaw, and it is an issue the recent speech by French President Macron on repatriation will certainly blast new life in. The digital turn also increases opportunities to test our generosity and altruism through new technical resources for collective curatorship and crowd-sourcing as well as to empower physical and on line journals produced in Africa also by including them in the various indexes and ranking systems. In the same line of thought one can try to empower local networks of (young) scholars (such as those in Mali) and to strengthen graduate studies in Africa itself also by means of partnerships between graduate studies inside and outside the continent with a combination of long distance and face-to-face learning, and the organization of intensive international courses hosted in African universities rather than mostly outside the continent. More experiment can be carried out through digital ethnography, joint Facebook pages, on-line field work (or webcam ethnography, where ethnography in Africa is shared on as well as offline with colleagues from other locations in and outside the continent). These are all methods we should explore and that can help us give African scholars a different and more central position.

In closing, and in trying to answer a key question raised in the position paper of this conference - How can we help to overcome the colonial division of labor between producers of academic knowledge in the Global North and suppliers of information in the Global South? - I suggest a political practice of "normalizing" Africa. By this I mean both taking away the exotic veil from Africa and provincializing the Global North, in a process and project that is very much in line with Mkandawire´s position, made very clear in his 2010 public lecture, who with much better authority than I, has already denounced what can be described as the paradigm of 'This works everywhere except Africa', which is the staple diet not only of the press but of a considerable amount of some recent academic writing on Africa (Mkandawire 2010:15). Our African studies (new style), the kind of study this symposium held at the University of Bayreuth where this paper was first presented (see note 1) wants to generate, can benefit from a detox therapy centred on emphasizing similarities, comparisons and general trends, rather than the exceptional nature and fiber of the African continent. In order to try to achive this goal we could try a number of methods and approaches: comparing research priorities and ethnographic sensibilities of scholars in and outside Africa; creating joint research priorities (inspired by the win- win principle) formed by scholars of similar academic standing (so that the African counterpart is more than just a key informant); achieve African scholars in research projects in and on other continents; testing categories molded in Africa such as "the politics of the belly" or "necropolitcs" in other contexts; inflating new life in transnational comparative research on topics of obvious universal relevance such as populism, crime, drug abuse, family change, youth culture, corruption, extreme inequality, violent cities and so forth.

Another example of such detox therapy is asking over and again why do we do African studies. This is the question we ought to ask ourselves everywhere and at any time, as much as all over Latin America over the last decades we have demanded that Latinamericanists from outside the region explain the motives

and agendas of their interest in our region (much of the rejection of Brazilianists from the side of scholars based in Brazil is based on very much the same motives of the rejection of Africanists in Africa).

Our interest in Africa in Brazil is largely on account of our national soul searching. Africa as a trope has been part and parcel of our history, first as onus later as bonus. Looking at Africa and dealing with African scholars is also a way to get to know ourselves, to decolonize our mind. For us, developing a South-South curiosity is a way to detox from our vertical obsession which posits that everything good comes from the North, in fact such effort can be seen as a late form of Latin American modernism – the process of rethinking our place in the future by adding a new value to the characteristics of our people as well as of popular culture and popular art. We have a clear political interest and we are interested in politically committed good African or Africa-based scholars, not just in any good African scholar. In fact, these are basically the only African scholars we manage to get as visiting scholars: they certainly do not come to us to make any money. For that they have to go elsewhere. African Studies from the South, and certainly from Brazil, seem to have an antidote against one of the most serious shortcomings of conventional scholarship on Africa, that is its exceedingly prescriptive inclination. This is simply because it would be ridiculous to insist on such catch-terms as accountability, governance, sustainability and empowerment as guidance to our research priorities, because in Brazil they are by no truly hollow principles, associated with the pre-Lula period when we were largely dependent on our research from US foundations – who imported and insisted we used such terms.

I am not sure we need African studies, but we certainly need studies in Africa, (also) of Africa and by Africans – on Africa of course, but also on the other continents. We should also ask Africans whether they are interested in our research or, in a more positive mood, which part of the studies on Africa developed outside Africa are relevant to them. On their part African studies centres, and they are mostly outside the continent, should ask themselves how they establish their priorities and have a critical scrutiny of the making of their ethnographic sensibility. It is often embarrassing to notice how little research priorities established elsewhere suit the mood of scholars based in Africa, who are oftentimes obliged to dance to the academic music of African studies in the Global North in order to survive as intellectuals – as we know, being an intellectual in the Global South can be expensive (books, internet, travel, visas are dearer than in other parts of the world). This raises the following question: What is African in African studies? That is, how much and in which way have African studies contributed to improve knowledge production in the African continent or, on the contrary, have made it even more difficult than before? I believe we are all ready for a new moment of synthesis, that mediates and incorporates the best of the tradition of African and even Area studies as well as the best part of the rebellious attitude that scholars based in Africa have developed as from the 50s and that has certainly been important in the first years of CODESRIA, which we can call the period of strategic isolationism or essentialism, to use a concept of Gayatri Spivak (1987).

We have to learn to combine our focus on a region, Africa for that matter, or part of it, with the constant preoccupation with the naturalization and uncritical use of such geographical focus. It is, of course, a difficult equilibrium, but it is worth trying.

We must also make an effort to make Africa, and theories and research developed somehow from within the continent, relevant for the mainstream of the social sciences and, thus, also for non- specialists. I imagine that scholars based in Africa have much to gain from the acceptance of part of their theories as ideas of universal value as well as by being invited to contribute to research projects of issues such as violence, durable inequalities or the Pentecostal wave in other parts of the world – why not, in Latin America.

Only after doing such therapy can we properly ask questions regarding what is specific to Africa and will eventually be able to produce a new style of African studies.

Notes

1. This paper was originally presented at the international conference Africa Multiple which was held at the University of Bayreuth, Germany, on December 6-8, 2017.
2. The digital archive Aluka (www.aluka.org) started as an independente initiative, but later joined the comercial entreprise JStor.
3. Spivak, Gayatri 1987. In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics. Abingdon (UK): Taylor and Francis.

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Mobility as African Scholars: Debating South African Exceptionalism

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This contribution engages with physical and social mobility in Africa. It draws on ideas about home countries and abroad. Engaging with mobility as a South African, I brings to attention an exceptionalism which often associates travel and journey more with countries known as the West – United States of America and Europe – as being abroad than within the African continent. It is no secret that South Africans scholars do not consider training and building productive networks as scholars in other regions of the African continent do. Moving against the grain that is obsessed with western notions of the abstract distinction between nature and culture, Nyamnjoh defines Frontier Africans as 'those who contest taken-for-granted and often institutionalised and bounded ideas and practices of being, becoming, belonging, places and spaces' (2015: 7). These bounded ideas include the essentialised and dual notions about being abroad and home, being a foreigner and local, being in your country and my country. To embrace being a frontier African is to understand lived realities in a universe of incompleteness and an existence that is filled with infinite possibilities.

Mobility

If mobility is as Adey (2010) states a way of life, then the physical and social mobility of Africans is best understood as an emotional, relational and social phenomenon captured in the complexities, contradictions and messiness of their everyday realities (Nyamnjoh 2013). Mobility enables us to make sense of the world. It is not only the physical aspects that are mobile, but also ideas, beliefs, practices, and social and material culture. At the destination, mobile social processes are reproduced and adapted on our own terms. For those seemingly immobile, encounters and interaction with mobile others transform the social and physical context (Adey 2010). However, rather than reflect frontier realities, globalisation along with identity politics of nation-states has strived to detect the difference and single out locals or insiders from foreigners or outsiders (Nyamnjoh 2006). Even when limited notions of identity exist at global and state level, through mobility and relationships among Africans negotiations, differences, and accommodation of those claiming indigeneity to a place and those arriving into the place is part of most African social formations. Being an insider or an outsider is always a work in progress, is permanently subject to renegotiation and is best understood as relational and situational. For this reason, there is a need to understand the interconnecting global and local hierarchies – be these informed by race, place, class, culture, gender, age or otherwise – that shape connections and disconnections, and produce, reproduce and contest distinctions between insiders and outsiders as political and ideological constructs which defy empirical reality. A historical perspective is crucial towards understanding the continuities with the past that make contemporary mobilities intelligible. Those who are able to move and privilege their versions of the encounter have gone as far as determining how those claimed to be fixed can move and be visible within an established marketplace of ideas.

Privileged mobility as researchers, sometimes gives an impression that we are removed from the subjects produced so much so that we see ourselves in the images of our "masters". For researchers, assuming a status of "master" along with the prerogative to freeze certain cultures, stunts the growth and potential of fellow (African) researchers. Taking on these limited views of African mobility continues a fight started by our ancestors. For decades, scholars from within Africa, and other previously colonised territories have radically challenged the authority and authenticity of the social and historical imaginings of their peoples, locations, and experiences from insensitive perspectives informed by an 'epistemology of alterity' (Mafeje 1998). Mafeje's insistence on privileging Africans as self-knowing subjects was evident early on when he worked as

research assistant to Monica Wilson in *Langa: a study of social groups in an African township* (Wilson and Mafeje 1963). By privileging the self-definition of "homeboys" rather than "tribesmen", he began what later became a more self-reflexive critique of alterity in *The Ideology of Tribalism* (Mafeje 1971). The negation of tribalism was not a fight by one person. Magubane (1968) was a prominent critique of the notions of alterity such as "tribe" and "tribalism". Mafeje (1976) did not only deconstruct the conceptual and empirical assumption of the European other but rather he reflected deeply on African scholarship produced to imitate its masters. Similar to Mafeje (1976), Ugandan poet Okot p'Bitek ([1966] 1984,) in his classic poem, *Song of Lawino*, stressed similar critiques about imbibing the masters' traditions. The common problem of social and physical mobility enabled by capital materialism often included husbands making the journey from places of birth in search of education and employment in urban areas and abroad. According to the poem, Ocol returns to the place of birth after gaining an education abroad. Ocol denounces his wife as "traditional" and "primitive" for sticking to the values and social process of the land. Lawino expresses no interest in imbibing European ways of dress and behaviour such as those depicted by Clementine, Ocol's companion abroad. For Africans in general, to stake claim to status as established mobile scholars with a taste for the finer things in life requires imitation of impatience and the frustration Europeans extended to Africans. As Mafeje (1976) states, 'We did not know all along' that such negation by fixing the mobility of others imbibed tensions that would exist for the future of Africa and African identities.

Mobility in Africa: South Africa is no exception

In 2018, many South Africans ignore the lessons from Mafeje and p' Bitek on the problems of a kind of social and physical mobility that is a zero-sum game in domestic negation. We seem to aspire to be the Ocols' and Clementines' of the 21st Century. It is a kind of mobility that makes Lawinos, not only of individuals - regardless of gender, age, and ethnicity, but nations outside South Africa, within the African continent. This uncritical bias toward the ideas informing the rise of a nation-state Africa has transformed those with weak technologies of mobility into outsiders. The idea of South African citizenship has historically been shaped by preoccupations with mobility and its regulation with yardsticks such as official status, lawfulness, and residence. Klaaren (2000) traces the current inclusive and simultaneously structurally unequal legal cultural concept of citizenship based on the official residence to the regulation of the mobility of three populations (Asian, African and European) in South Africa between 1897 and 1937. The interests of economic actors in restricting the mobility of labour and the interest of political elites in establishing and safeguarding their status and identity within their communities together motivated and influenced the regulation of mobility and, by extension, the South African concept of citizenship. Such persistent ideas of bounded notions of citizenship and problematic representations of African mobility and its continuities of representation uncritically reproduced by so-called independent African nation-states are at the core of current articulations of citizenship and belonging as a zero-sum game in South Africa and throughout the continent. The elites compounded the ideas on who belongs and who does not by motivating arbitrary distinctions between "our" poor and poor "others".

I do not remember a time in my life in South Africa exclusive from intimate relations with mobile Africans. The teachers and professionals include those who came from various parts of the continent. Science, maths, and technical drawing instructors came from Ghana, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Cameroon, etc. The same went for doctors and nurses working at hospitals. Some of their children went to local schools, speaking both the language of their host communities and those of their places of origin fluently. This was a time before the same people were said to carry HIV/AIDS targeting particularly local women. Somehow the local men in relationships with the women from the same countries of origin were spared. The women though were not protected from accusations about taking jobs from local South Africans. Increasingly, there was a social acceptance that Africans from within the continent took jobs away while white people and anyone else not black and African took residence with no questions asked. It was not long before the same people were accused of crime and a threat to cultural values. Sadly, this propaganda affects intellectuals and professionals in equal measure as the urban poor often depicted in media.

Tim Wu (2016) argues that intellectuals who read everything, insist on having opinions and think themselves immune to propaganda are, in fact, easy to manipulate. It is particularly propaganda supported by the media because it presents one set of distorted 'facts'. For example, respected black South African academics at my previous university – the University of Cape Town – have been among those who

have questioned the employment of mobile African scholars in various positions as not truly affirmative in action. Yet, the same individuals are likely to have been taught at school, defended from bullies, and treated at hospitals by the same mobile Africans. While South Africa often regards its bounded citizenship an exceptional one to the rest of the African continent, differences and tensions exist throughout the continent that uses bounded nationality as a key indicator of exclusion. It comes as little surprise that accelerated mobility also increased uncertainty, often producing tensions encouraged by the autonomy-seeking difference (Nyamnjoh 2007). Even though such differences exist, it is in no small measure that media, politicians, and scholars have ignored historical immigration patterns and their benefits for recipient states. Minority ethnicity is ignored and the tendency for such studies in Africa often focuses on large-scale 'civic' citizenship, whose juridico-political basis is uncritically taken to be more inclusive than the cultural basis of ethnic citizenship (Mamdani 1996). What is missing in these narratives are the success stories of forging new relationships of understanding between citizens and subjects that are suggestive of new, more flexible, negotiated cosmopolitan and popular forms of citizenship with the emphasis on inclusion and the celebration of difference.

As a privileged mobile frontier African scholar, I remain grounded by the lessons of Mafeje, p'Bitek. I draw inspiration from Dibango's journey (1994) in the book *Three Kilos of Coffee*. A frontier African born in Doula, Cameroon, Dibango embodied a life of incompleteness by taking in the opportunities and experiences while at the same time giving an adapted and modified sense of Africaness to the world. Moving between Europe and Africa, without sacrificing one for the other, Dibango created complex music crossing boundaries of the world. Although not a scholar in the conventional sense, Dibango's reflections and analysis of social mobility as relational is empirically convincing and inspiring. However, I was no different to many privileged South Africans who define their mobility as global or abroad only with western countries as symbols of progress. While I have established new relationships and been exposed to new resources as a PhD student at an American university, my networks in South Africa, Senegal, Kenya, Cameroon, Zambia and Namibia remain strong. The combination of imbibing stereotyping forms of African mobility and South Africa's mistaken exceptional mobility of global consumerism remains a problem associated with many forms of violence. To be at home or to be abroad (within Africa and beyond the continent) is not a question of location but rather of purpose and function of relationships. Adey (2010) invites us to conceptualise mobility as the vital relationship through which we live, understand and engage with a world increasingly on the move. Our very sociality, humanity, and survival depend on mobility, which is seldom a singular process, as we always tend to carry our worlds along and are confronted with mobilities of our and other worlds.

Conclusion

The paper has argued for an understanding of mobility that embraces difference and complexity by Africans in places of birth and host communities. To imbibe colonial traditions of immobile others is to rob fellow Africans of creativity and dignity that can potentially be restored as frontier beings. African scholars, in line with bounded notions of a nation-state, have not done enough to continue the fight started by our ancestors against notions of radical alterity. The South African scholarship is not exceptionally superior to that of countries in the African continent. To be an African scholar educated across the oceans does not necessitate sacrificing connections, relations, and values with places of birth in order to achieve progress and success. Such understanding of mobility often leads to various forms of violence in Africa. To live in a world on the move is to embrace sociality, humanity, and survival that is dependent on mobility characterised by infinite possibilities.

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Access Denied: European Visa Policies and the Dislocation of Dreams

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I am in Cameroon, working with Marius, a student from central Africa. Buea, Cameroon, is, for him, a writing environment. The situation in Bangui does not allow him space to reflect and write. He should have been in the Netherlands. I am here because Marius' visa for the Netherlands was refused four times over the past year. The repeated reason given at the French Embassy in Bangui: 'this young man will probably not return to his homeland'. And this is where the story ends and begins. Marius has been accepted as a PhD student at Leiden University, we had produced all letters necessary. There was no reason to not give him the visa. We thought by confidently insisting on his application, and thus repeating it, the Embassy staff would realize their misjudgement. All other diplomatic efforts we tried failed. Marius reflects on it: 'why do they deny me access to a world where I can learn more? Where I can develop myself into an academic so that I can help my country?'

Humiliation

I could not agree more. It is very unfortunate that the inequalities in our world are played out at this level. Are we not in the right corrupt position? A question that is raised by the recent convocation of the French Ambassador in Bangui, amongst others also for: "délivrance de visas en situation de conflit d'intérêts".

As the responsible person in the visa demand I feel humiliated and hopeless.. As an academic the only thing I can do is to write and to visualize difficulties and inequalities that are the everyday realities for many young people in Africa, so that others know. One of such realities is Marius'.

Appearances

And Marius is not alone. A Chadian friend told me how, when he went to pick up his visa for the Netherlands at the French Embassy in N'djaména, out of all the (mainly) young men only one or two got a visa. His was also refused. Another case where all things were in order with the necessary letters of invitation, return ticket, insurance, but refused on the same grounds. This young artist – Rasta hair – has no fixed income but is always receiving assignments and is managing his own studio. One can imagine the authorities think: '*Certainly* a youth who wants to stay in Europe.' He was invited to come to the Netherlands to finalize a film project with his Dutch colleague-cineastes and me. This is a film that might reach out to festivals and critical film competitions. But to get there we need to be able to join forces. The topic of this film is youth and inequality in the world and at home, and the socio-political dynamics this creates. The story of visas should probably be integrated into the project. I will have to travel again to Chad to work on this project; I am not denied a visa: I can freely go were my work and aspirations take me. That is how it should be.

Aspirations Denied

In many African countries we cannot deny that aspirations of young people are killed by the governance systems and economies. Many young men from countries such as the conflict ridden Central African Republic long for a life elsewhere. The images and stories about the

'other' world that are circulating on social media are alluring. Why not try? The situation at home is rather hopeless, so it would be good to go out.

The widespread protests that we see in many countries in West and Central Africa are related to the same feelings of 'let's try'. Of course, each country has its own special dynamics, political structures, dictatorships and histories of violence, but there is a common denominator. Youth make up more than 60% of the population. Due to the rapid urbanization process the towns become large reservoirs of youth who have left the rural areas, at times forced because their land has been bought by Chinese, European or African businessmen with international relations, transforming the former farmers into cheap wage laborers. Hence, they take on small jobs in the urban economy and enter a new world, including the world of social media.

In some countries, like Chad, there are other ongoing processes that are, to say the least, unjust and incite people to protest. Here, the elites have been stealing from the people for decades while the population suffers from cuts in salary, rising prices, and impossibility to send children to school. Their consequent strikes make the economy even less performing. The poor get poorer and the rich richer.

Escapes?

When I record all this…. it is so logical that protests are rising, and youth want to escape their situation. This is the case especially today because we are connected. The Marxist and pan-African writers like Fanon, Aime Cesare and DuBois, and the killed leaders Sankara and Lumumba, are alive again and referred to in Facebook posts. Protests in Africa and attempts by the youth to escape their situation will not stop until the present-day leaders are gone, the international community comes to reason and inequalities have reduced tremendously.

Denying visa

Why deny these men a visa? Do they not have the right to travel, without any explanation? Many of these young people will, like Marius', come to learn, to work and to discover. Denying a visa to youth who have the right to be mobile is against justice.

Note

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Body, Black Aesthetics, Racial Belonging: Identity construction and empowerment among Brazil's Black youth

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Introduction

This article aims to outline an identity movement in spiral ascension among Brazil's Black youth, which emerged from the surfacing of Hip-Hop in the country, by the end of the 1980s, among young people of São Paulo's poor neighborhoods. Since then, this movement has expanded all over the country, also reaching young people with higher education and of middle class. In addition to conceptions of racial belonging this movement brings out at once, but not necessarily together, the exalting of an African-Black aesthetics and style, the valorization and pride of Black peoples' history and culture, and notions of empowerment. It has emerged as a form of amusement as well as contestation among poor young people without access to leisure or cultural equipment. In recent years this movement has gained new contours, creating or expanding opportunities of visibility and socioeconomic mobility for many of its members.

They named themselves "Tomba-mento Generation", meaning attitude, causing an impact but also re-signifying the expression 'tombou' that trivializes the

violent death of Black teenagers, both male and female in urban spaces, usually by police forces, and has been reinventing the way of doing politics. Unlike the formal Brazilian Black movement of the 1930s, 1960s,1980s or 90s, which met in associations headed by prominent leaders, the people taking part in "Tombamento Generation" today despised conventional forms of organization and use tools they know how to manipulate such as the internet and social media. These tools have become channels par excellence of their actions, causes and ideas; they adopt discourses and attitudes towards the deconstruction of normativities of gender and sexuality; they proudly display curly and bulky hair as a sign of affirmation – often in vivid colors, transforming the body in to a political instrument and 'place of multiple discourses to sculpt history, memory, identity and culture' (Irobi 2007: 900).

Particularly noteworthy in this movement is the prominence of Black women, both in blogs and YouTube channels – which congregates thousands of followers and attracts the attention of the media and other sectors of society – or leading cultural productions or networks of entrepreneurship, although they cannot be seen as a leadership in the strict sense of the term. Women are also the potential target of most of the racist attacks that are increasingly filling social networks.

The use of Black aesthetics as a way of confronting hegemonic powers and standards is not something new in the context of Brazil's Black movement. In the 70s and 80s, inspired by conceptions of the African American Black Panthers and in solidarity to the struggles for colonial liberation in African countries during the 60's and 70's, many Brazilian activists adopted, at that time, Black Power hairstyles as well as African-style tunics, using their hair and body as expressions of contestation and Black identity. As argued by anthropologist Nilma Gomes,

> Hair and body are thought through culture. In that sense, kinky hair and black body can both be considered symbolic expressions and support of Black identity in Brazil. Together, they enable social, cultural, political, and ideological construction of an expression created within the black community (Gomes 2012:2).

However, the emphasis of "Tombamento Generation" on aesthetic issues – in which one can point to a certain influence of the Congolese *sapeurs* –, although betting on the body as a locus of social demands and identity affirmation, and the tendency towards isolated actions raise criticism and distrust by part of the formal Black movement, which accuses these young people of not delving into militancy and academic studies. Such a position is justified in an article published in blog *Blogueiras Negras* (blogueirasnegras.org), one of the compasses of the Black youth, which states:

> The youth in combat to racism, sexism and LGBTfobia has been making efforts to stop being indoctrinated by oppressions of class, race, sexuality and gender. To "Tombamento Generation" political transgressions really matters: to us, being out in the streets with our colorful kinky hair, wearing paintings that bring back elements of African culture, listening to black music is, on its own, a transgressing attitude that has impact over this historic time (Rocha e Soares 2016).

Body and Contestation

The body has always occupied a central spot in the Black cultures of the diaspora. Stuart Hall (2003) states that it has been used as if it were, and often has been, the main cultural capital of Black people. 'We have worked on ourselves as on screens of representation.' (Hall 2003:342). Costa (2006:117) reminds us that 'to the enslaved who was excluded from the bourgeois civil world organized around dialogue, the body itself remained a means of manifestation and communication'. The Nigerian playwright Esiaba Irobi (2007) goes even further pointing out what he calls the 'episteme of the body', present, according to him, in African societies and diaspora.

Emphasizing the power of the body as a place of multiple discourses, Irobi argues that the human body is the main source, place and centre of physical or transcendental perception and expression, being an essential instrument to develop, articulate and express all ideas and art, given that it is possessed of memory and can be a locus of resistance. (Irobi 2007: 900).

During the slave trade, enslaved Africans arriving in the "new world" had their heads shaved by their masters, losing not just their freedom, their families, and their home but also losing a piece of their identity. Ayana Byrd

and Lori Tharps state that "[g]iven the importance of hair to an African…[t]he shaved head was the first step the Europeans took to erase the slaves culture", and to gain some of this individuality back enslaved Africans took their own steps to replace the combs, herbal ointments, and palm oil used in Africa for hairdressing, taking advantage of what was available to them. Nevertheless, they recognized that hair was an essential part of identity (Byrd & Tharps 2009 cited by Brisbon 2009:4).

In Brazil, the process of culturally stripping the enslaved African and his descendants was not different. In slavery society, the enslaved had its place demarcated, being instituted the parallelism between the dark skin and inferior social position (Fernandes 1978). After slavery, this demarcation remained in Brazilian society. The contempt for Black people and mestizos workers, added by attributions of negative qualities and stereotypes of African descendants borrowed from European racialist theories generated a situation of racial, educational, social and pay inequalities which continued until date.

At the beginning of the twentieth century the republican enlightened elite devised a nation-based project on cultural and aesthetic ideals of the great European centers, since, according to the view of these intellectuals, the white race was the only one capable of producing culture (Santos 2002). In this process, Brazil has imagined itself white, adopted and privileged French manners and fashion, and elected Caucasian features as a model of beauty (that is fair skin and eyes and straight hair, preferentially blond). On the other end, Black people and their cultural practices and knowledge were associated with barbarism, ugliness, incivility and other negative aspects. The Black body seen as an object-body during slavery became a rejected body in the republican regime.

In a society that has always been extensively mixed racially, excluding and with fluid and changeable ethnic markers like Brazil, seeking an approximation to the idealized white model as a way of being accepted and integrated, and to minimize the exclusion was the path adopted by many Afro-Brazilians, either by smoothing their hair through chemicals or hot irons and combs, or by distancing themselves from/or disguising physical and cultural elements and characteristics that might associate them with their African ancestry.

> The history of the social rise of the Brazilian Negro is thus the story of his assimilation to the white patterns of social relations. It is the history of the ideological submission of a racial stock in the presence of another that becomes hegemonic. It is the history of a renounced identity, in view of the circumstances that stipulate the price of recognition to the Negro based on the intensity of his denial (Souza 1990: 23).

Ambiguously we have a country with a white European imagery, that is in fact Black and biracial (Gomes, 2012). According to 2010's Census, 50.7 percent of the population declared itself as Black and 'pardo'(mixed race). The set of these two groups is recognized as the Black population by the Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística- IBGE (Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics), responsible for the census. Also, in an ambiguous way the myth of racial democracy prevailed in the country until recently. However, behind a proclaimed model of perfect racial *convivence*, hides subtle and violent forms of racism and exclusion.

The identity of the Black Brazilian is developed amidst this dual and ambiguous atmosphere. The process of construction of identity, as pertinent studies point out, is relational. It occurs when in contact with others and depends on something exterior to itself to exist. This process, according to Tomaz da Silva (2004:15), is also linked to social and material conditions, and has the body as "one of the sites involved in the establishment of the frontiers that define who we are".

In this way, kinky hair and black bodies, in Brazilian society, are vehicles of the racial conflict and tension that pervade society. They can be places of assimilation, as well as contestation and resistance. They represent a socially and culturally rejected body. These traumatic experiences lead many Blacks to a denial of themselves, low self-esteem and, in many cases, depression (Silva 2016:15). According to Nilma Gomes (2012) "a black person's hair, seen as "bad", is the expression of the racism and the social disparity that fall upon that person. Seeing black people's hair as "bad" and

white people's hair as "good" expresses a conflict. Therefore, modifying the hair may mean an attempt from the black person to leave a place of inferiority or to introject it. It might also represent a feeling of autonomy, expressed in bold and creative ways to wear their hair" (Fig 1).

Boldness and creativity in the cuts and hairstyles, as well as the defense of hair without the use of chemicals, smoothing or even products to 'tame' the volume, has been one of the main weapons of the "Tombamento Generation " to impose itself and to show that there are other patterns of beauty outside of the universal white model. The quest for beauty references in an idealized African aesthetic has been the way to confront the hegemony of European beauty standards. More recently, this attitude has become an instrument of economic empowerment. Pinho (2004) posits: "The black body, full of an [A]fricanness previously seen as negative, primitive and associated to ugliness and stench, is reinvested of an [A]fricanness re-signified to inspire pride and beauty. This way, Africa is rewritten in the body" (110).

Public Policies and Female Protagonists

Some determining and conditioning factors are linked to this insurgency of racial valorization. Public and cultural policies with differentiated characteristics and scopes, implemented mainly from the first term of president Luis Inacio Lula da Silva, in 2003, in response to demands and long-time struggles of Black movements strengthened and helped to boost and to give visibility to the "Tombamento Generation". Among those, a national law made the teaching of African and Afro-Brazilian history and culture mandatory in schools; income transfer programs were instituted, which allowed the poorest sections of the population greater access, among other things, to computers and the Internet; racial quota policies were implemented in public universities and student financing led to an increase in the number of Black students in higher education over a period of ten years.

In 2004, Black and biracial students aged 18 to 24 years old in higher education accounted for 16.7 percent of all students, jumping to 45.5 percent 2014. It should be noted that despite this rise the percentage of Black students was still below the level of 47.2 percent held by white students ten years earlier, in 2004.

In this effervescent universe of the "Tombamento Generation", young Black women play a crucial role, and they also spread their action into the sexist Hip Hop environment. In May 2015 Facebook launched the series 'Empoderadas' (facebook.com/programaempoderadas), created and produced by two filmmakers with the purpose of giving visibility to Black women from different areas that have the potential to serve as inspirational models of empowerment to other women. On YouTube, there are at least 10 channels led by young Black girls who use this media both to talk about aesthetics and to present makeup, hairstyles, and turban mooring as well as to address social, gender and racial issues, creating spaces of formation and production of knowledge, for a specific public.

They were the ones, for example, to take to the streets what became known as "March for Kinky Pride", parades that took origin in individual social network posts with the intuit of exalting the beauty of curly and voluminous hair, in reaction to the dictatorship of straightened hair bombarded at women through advertising by the cosmetic industries. Although they emphasize questions around aesthetics, these marches generally occupy symbols of financial capital on public spaces, such as is the case of Avenida Paulista, or places where the elite congregate and wherein Black people are not usually welcome (Fig 2).

These movements of aesthetics and identity affirmation ended up generating small businesses and networks of entrepreneurs that have made possible the social and economic rise of participants of the "Tombamento Generation". Such business do not exist physically but has spread through the social media: they sell fabrics, turbans and jewelry, in addition to self-produced literature for courses on Black history and culture. Recently, there was a surge of small theatre companies composed of young Black actors and actresses in which they privilege stories focusing on the universe, cultures and lives of the Black population, grounded in the experiences of Africans.

The web has also been the instrument used to disseminate literature known as "marginal",

which focused on racial themes and the reality of the urban peripheries. A poetry recital that began in bars gave way to modest publishers, through which some groups and individuals commercialized their productions, ignoring the circuit of the great publishers, who in turn did not recognize their work as literature. Not to mention vloggers or digital influencers that congregate thousands of subscribers.

The world of Hip Hop concentrates many of the "empowered" boys and girls who stimulate other young people and seek to increase their self-esteem and racial belonging. One of these empowered individuals is rapper Karol Conka, whose songs revolve around feminism, racism and empowerment. She is considered one of the icons of "Tombamento Generation ", and one of her music video, 'Tombei', which lends name to the movement of the youth, reached five million viewings on the Internet. Conka was chosen to take part in the opening show of the 2016 Olympics in Rio de Janeiro.

In the same successful path of Karol Conka two other young Black rappers, Emicida[1] and Evandro Fióti, recently launched their own brand of clothes at São Paulo Fashion Week which is considered the most important fashion event in Latin America. Inspired by the bantu philosophical principle 'Ubuntu' (I am because we are), he took to the catwalk Black models, Black power hairstyles, and plus-size models to emphasize the diversity of Brazilian society in a remarkably white environment (Fig 3&4).

Such visibility and exposure, however, has its negative consequences. A growing wave of racist attacks is spreading on the Internet, targeting exponents of the "Tombamento Generation" movement. According to Paulo Rogério Nunes, a researcher from the Berkman Center for Internet and Society at Harvard University, who coordinates a project that maps initiatives from young people producing innovation and technologies for the combat of online racism, the Internet has come to prove that Brazil is one of the most racist countries in the world. Data from SaferNet, an institution that monitors violations of rights in the network, indicated a total of 469 thousand reports of racism cases in ten years. Last year alone, there were 55,000 complaints.

To Paulo Nunes, social networks reflect the offline world. "There is no way to separate the racism committed in digital networks from the system of racial oppression that exists in Brazil outside the virtual world."[2] However, he sees a positive aspect in these attacks. According to him, racists attacks destroy the myth of racial democracy, a flag that the Black Brazilian movement carried alone for a long time, since it was believed that the Brazilians were not racist.

Despite these attacks, which undoubtedly leave psychological sequels to their victims, the "Tombamento Generation" does not seem to be willing to give up the potential of the Internet, which not only allows them to shout out against imposing a unique model of beauty as it has provided the means to overcome the exclusion and disadvantage of the Black population in Brazilian society.

Conclusion

This article approached a movement of racial valorization and empowerment among the black Brazilian youth, self-denominated "Tombamento Generation". Drawing from the internet and social media, young Blacks have taken actions and attitudes that aim to affirm and value racial identity. The movement, with a strong emphasis on aesthetic issues but without neglecting discussions about gender, racism and racial inequalities, has paved the way for the social and economic mobility of several of its members who seek to be a kind of mirror in which other will inspire to change their lives.

Notes

1. The name "Emicida" is a fusion of the words "MC" and "homicidal", because of his constant victories in improvisational battles through rhymes. Later, the rapper created a connotation of acronym for the name E.M.I.C.I.D.A. (in a free translation, While my imagination composes? Computer? insanities [I] master [the] art.)
2. 'A Internet chegou para provar que somos um dos países mais racistas do mundo'. An interview with the newspaper El País in June 15th, 2016. Retrieved on October 23, 2016 from http://brasil.elpais.com/brasil/2016/05/10/politica/1462895132_579742.html

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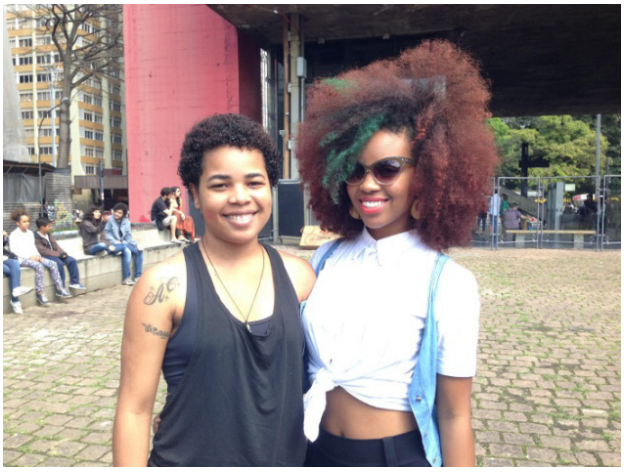


Figure 1: Curly and bulky hair proudly displayed

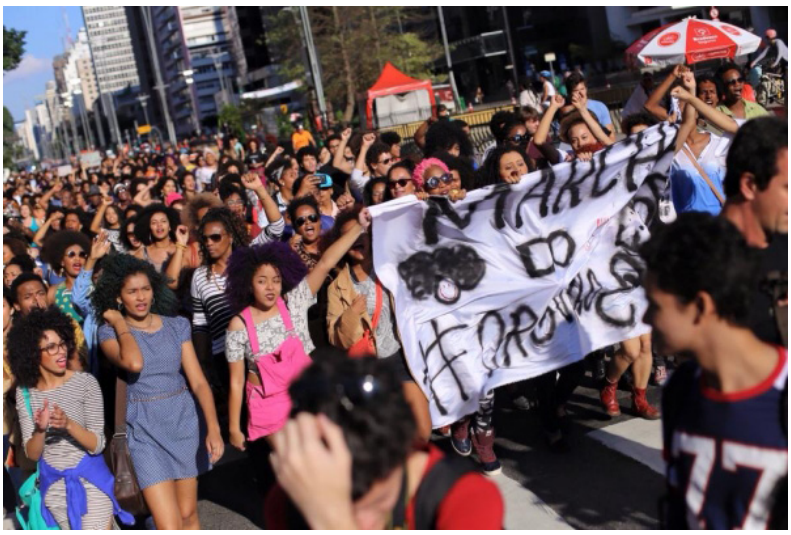
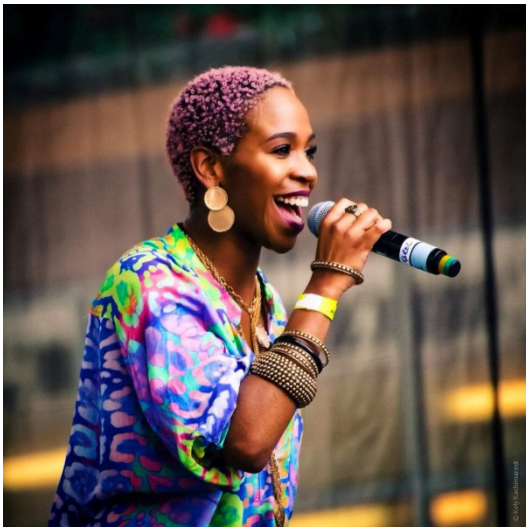
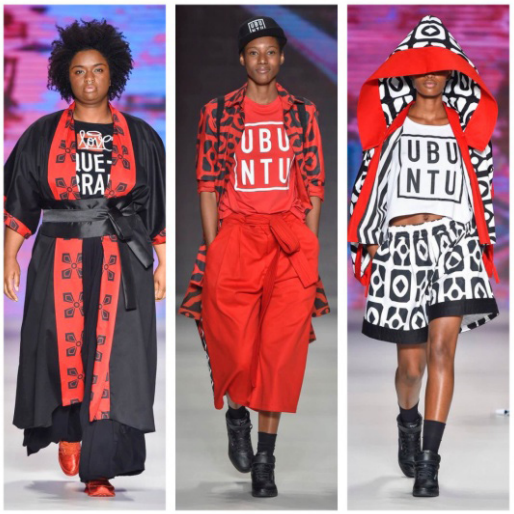


Figure 2: Kinki hair taken to the streets in rallies



Figures 3: Rapper Karol Conka and her look "tombamento"



Figures 4: A fashion show of rapper Emicida

Hilariously Queer: the Transgender and Transsexual Body in Malagasy Culture

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There is an old saying in Malagasy that "*Ny tarehy ratsy no tsy azo ovaina fa ny toetra ratsy azo ialàna",* literal translation "it is impossible to modify an ugly face, but it is possible to change negative traits of character". This saying summarizes the traditional and deeply- rooted Malagasy belief that the body is an immutable receptacle, to be accepted and complied with. However, starting particularly in the 20th century, a growing interest in body modification is visible in the country, a fact that raises much controversy. Indeed, body art changes the classical image of the body into a malleable surface on which meanings are inscribed. Among the most polemical aspects of body modification is queer body modification, a practice which is viewed as embodying two forms of transgression: violation of the "agreed-upon meanings of bodies and identities" (Pitts 2003: 196) and sexual deviance. Clearly, the subject of body modification tells a lot about Malagasy notions of self and society, cultural politics and power relations. Yet, little has been written about the issue because of one main reason: the invisibility of transsexual and transgender bodies in Malagasy society. One of the very few Malagasy cultural expressions that showcase queer bodies is humor. A study of the representation of the queer body in *The Torak'Hehy*[1] sketches offers a more systematic understanding of body modification in Malagasy culture: on the one hand, the transgender body is the ultimate "Other", on the other hand, there is a conscious effort not to dismiss the denatured body but to make it more acceptable.

Body Modification and Homosexuality in the Malagasy Context

Nowadays, the sight of young people's tattooed and pierced bodies is very common in Madagascar. It testifies to the popularity of body art, more particularly, tattoos and piercing among certain groups of the population. Tattooing and piercing services are available in many urban areas around the country at quite accessible prices. *Feeling Tattoo*, a tattooing and piercing salon for example, has up to 15[2] people a day coming for tattoos and/or piercings.

Queering practices, however, are totally different matters. Transsexual surgery is not yet done in Malagasy public or private hospitals but transgender bodies can be seen in a small number at public places all over the country, especially in the capital city. Such a situation can be explained by two factors, namely the dominant sexual secrecy typical of Highland culture[3] and the general rejection of homosexuality. In Malagasy culture, especially among the Merina people, sexuality belongs to the realm of the hidden, the ineffable or the taboo (Rakotomalala 2012: 216). An even more predominantly silent and negative attitude surrounds homosexuality in Malagasy society.Within the private sphere, attitudes about homosexuality range from tacit acceptance to outright physical violence, particularly against transsexual and transgender sex workers. Homosexuality is therefore kept secret. In fact, according to many, making sexual transgression public is disruptive because, firstly, by informing the audience of the very existence of the transgression, one urges imitation. Knowing about it may encourage others who are morally susceptible. Secondly, publicizing homosexuality is viewed as a form of provocation as it publicly challenges norms and authorities. Finally, publicity of homosexuality contaminates third parties such as schools, families and religious communities.

One of the very few public texts that clearly refer to homosexuality is the law. The penal code provides for a prison sentence of 2 to 5 years and a fine of 2 to 10 million Ariary ($1,000 to $5,000) for acts that are "indecent or against nature with an individual of the same sex under the age of 21."[4] However, the law does not prohibit discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) activity. The artistic representation of queer bodies is thus a rich and appropriate cultural expression to read and have a better understanding of queer body modification in the Malagasy context.

The Spectacle of the Other: the Transsexual and Transgender Body in Malagasy Humor

An in-depth analysis of the representation of the transgender and transsexual body in the *Torak'Hehy* sketches reveals that it is first and foremost perceived as the ultimate "Other" in Malagasy culture. Otherness, put simply, is understood not in terms of what it is, but in relation to what we are not or do not wish to be. The representation of otherness is mainly achieved through humor based on the incongruity of the queer body.

Up to 20 *Torak'Hehy* sketches feature transgender characters, but 8 have been selected for this article as they focus mainly on transgender humor, that is to say, the butt of humor is "all sorts of infirmity, littleness, discomfiture, unworthiness and so forth" (Penjon1893: 113) related to the transgender and transsexual. The nature of the humorous stimuli generally involves language and setting as well as the body, looks, gestures and movements of the characters.

Incongruity theory has its origins in comments made by Aristotle in the *Rhetoric* and was later developed by Kant (1790) and Kierkegaard (1846). Primarily focusing on the object of humor, this type sees humor as a response to an incongruity, a term broadly used to include ambiguity, irrelevance, and inappropriateness. According to the incongruity theory, humor is generated when there is conflict or incongruity between what we expect to occur and what actually occurs. Common examples include a play on words, polysemy, misspelling and mispronunciation. (Billig 2005: 57)

The first humorous stimulant based on incongruity in the representations of transsexuals and transgenders is the body. All the queer figures are cross-dressed, men dressing as women. The incongruity lies first of all in the imperfection of the transformation which indicates that the true body beneath clearly signals a particular gender in inappropriate outfit. The male voice and the badly shaved face reinforce such incongruity. Here, the construction of the queer body as the Other is obvious as the body on stage is neither male nor female but something in-between. The subject here has totally failed his transformation because the first "thing that constitutes success in queer body transformation is […] to pass… Passing means the denial of mixture" (Stone 1997: 352).

Another recurrent characteristic of the transgender and transsexual body as represented in the sketches is its grotesqueness[5], a typical feature of incongruity. In *Safety Belt*, *Full*, and *It doesn't Work*, three sketches staging Honorat, a transgender, clothes are important signifiers among the elements constituting physical appearance. In an effort to look female, the character wears a woman's red and flashy, tight-fitting pants and T- shirt, which are intended to reveal the contours of her body, namely her curves and edges. What the clothes reveal, however, is a grotesque body, the incongruous par excellence, characterized by a very flat chest and a pot-belly that is half covered by the clothes. According to theorists, the grotesque body is: "open, protruding, irregular, secreting, multiple and changing, it is identified with non-official 'low' culture or the carnivalesque (Russo 1995: 78).

Indeed, the transgender and transsexual body is also represented as carnivalesque[6]. In *Full*, for instance, the carnivalesque aspect is shown

through the dance performed by the character. Dance, especially in the open air in Madagascar, is a very popular form of carnival. But the belly dance of the transsexual in *Full* is particularly carnivalesque in the Bakhtinian sense. Bakhtin says that the carnival is a special way to reveal a certain type of body:

> the body that censorship has caused to disappear reappears and this reappearance, which occurs in the form of gigantic, hypertrophied forms and in the grotesque doubling through noses and phallus, 'exposes' both the body and official culture (cited in Lachman 2007: 151).

It is this idea of transgression, of inappropriateness, the very essence of the carnival, which is emphasized in the dancing scene. In fact, through the dance, the often concealed body, especially its sexual parts, are revealed. Additionally, the revelation focuses on the grotesque body's excesses and abnormalities which are put to view through the dancing performance.

In a nutshell, the *Torak'Hehy* sketches offer a real "spectacle of the other" (Hall 1997: 223) to borrow Stuart Hall's terms. The persona of the Other who is grotesque and carnivalesque unites the audience in ridicule of the transgender. Another aspect of the humor, however, as will be seen in the last subpart of this article, makes viewers feel empathy for the transgender and transsexual. Indeed, the fact that those queer characters make the audience laugh everyday in a way informs the audience that they are not harmful, that on the contrary, they are likable. Such a situation marks a shift in Malagasy people's perception of queer body modification.

A Changing View of the Transgender and Transsexual Body

In spite of its conservative aspect, the *Torak'Hehy* phenomenon signals a shifting paradigm in the representation and reception of the image of the transgender in Malagasy culture. The use of humor to deal with body modification and homosexuality, as well as the portrayal of queer sexuality are significant details.

Torak'Hehy is viewed by more than 50 000 households on TV and is watched by thousands on YouTube. When interviewed about the reason why they enjoy the sketches so much, most viewers mentioned the funny transgenders. As said earlier, queer bodies and homosexuality belong to the ineffable in Malagasy culture. The simple fact that such a taboo subject as transgenderism is represented publicly and is well-received is a huge change, marking a step towards acceptance.

The choice to use humour to represent queer bodies is also noteworthy. It reflects a conscious effort to make the topic acceptable. One possible explanation of the suitability of humor to represent sensitive issues in the Malagasy context is that it deals with the subject only superficially. It does not intentionally attempt to correct or change the situation. When watching the humorous sketches, people think it is time to feel and not to act. The audience enters into aesthetic rather than practical relations with the object of humor. The humorous process, then, like play, is its own end and justification" (Billig 2005: 137).

Another visible effort to make the transgender body "culturally intelligible" (Butler 1990: 105) can be traced through the elimination of every shocking element in its representation. No direct reference to the intimate, especially to sexual parts are made, words are carefully selected to avoid hurting the susceptibility of the audience. In so doing, the humorists mostly rely on psychic release theory[7]. Humor based on psychic release includes a saving of emotional energy, since what might have been an emotionally provoking situation turns out to be something that should not be treated seriously. According to this theory, humor is a method of releasing the audience from their inner battles or torments, by giving a sense of release from threat. Dark jokes, dirty jokes and jokes dealing with taboo topics are within this category.

Two of the most representative of these sketches can illustrate this idea. In *Mugged,* a queer character is attacked by a mugger who threatens her with a knife and asks for money. She says she does not have any but the mugger does not believe her and starts to search her body. The queer character then begins to enjoy the mugger's touch and urges the mugger to continue searching. If he does that she will give him a check, she says. The mugger is frightened and attempts to run away. The queer character is outraged and refuses to let him go. As she chases the mugger, she says that the latter is an amateur mugger and forces him to continue what he has begun: touching her. The mugger begs her to let him go and offers to pay her if she does.

The psychic release here operates on two levels. First, the act of robbing which is a frightening one turns out to be funny as the queer persona enjoys the process. Then the possible tension elicited by the gay intimate scene becomes a source of laughter as the situation is reversed: the mugger runs away and proposes to pay if she leaves him alone

Another show staging Olga, a transgender, portrays the homosexual's open sexual invitations to men. The "victims", as they are generally called in the sketches, always manage to escape from the sexual predator, Olga. The humor lies in the different tricks the victims use to get rid of their predator. Psychic release

is here made possible because homosexual intimacy is avoided in a funny way.

The other set of sketches involving psychic release are the ones staging Philomena, a transgender in her fifties. She is hyper-feminine and is toothless. In a show entitled *It's Been a Long Time*, the storyline presents two characters, one of whom is a younger man who seems to be about to say something very important to Philomena, though he is hesitant as it might offend her. The two characters stand very close to each other, in a place that is ideal for romance and physical intimacy. Philomena looks to be particularly smitten with the young man, something which is reflected in her facial expression, her hyper-feminine, sugar-coated tone of voice and words. She is very impatient to hear what the man has to say, and the spectator is led to believe that she expects to get a proposal or a love declaration. Finally the man says that for a long time he has wanted to tell her that her teeth need to be fixed. The hilarious moment is here, based on the different expectations of the two figures. Moreover, psychic release happens when the anxiety incited by the possible intimacy involving a transsexual and a young man turns into something funny.

In *The Shrew and the Drunkard Husband*, a man who is always drunk is persecuted by his old[8] wife. He always tries to find tricks to escape from domestic duties, and one day he pretends to fall and faint. The wife's brother comes to help and is about to practice mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. The man refuses to be touched by another man, and stands up saying that kissing a man is just unthinkable, it is even worse than kissing his old wife. The punch line at the end of the sketch provokes laughter and prevents the intimate scene from happening, in other words, engendering psychic release.

In the generally conservative Malagasy society, humor is a subtle and interesting way to represent queer body modification. The use of humor in the *Torak'Hehy* sketches is a double-edged sword though: on the one hand it reinforces the stereotypes related to transgenders and transsexuals; on the other hand it presents queer bodies as funny and likable. By way of conclusion, the body and its treatment has gained importance in Malagasy culture. It reflects the changes brought by globalization to Malagasy values and society in general. Through the *Torak'Hehy* phenomenon, we can say that body modification is not just an art, it has become a powerful tool for the country's "Others" to become visible, and probably later to claim their rights to diversity, justice and tolerance.

Notes

1. *Torak'Heh*y is a prime-time humorous program broadcast on the National TV channel since the mid-1990s. Performed in Malagasy by 4 male star humorists, the episodes generally deal with everyday situations and hot topics such as corruption, poverty, politics, adultery and homosexuality in a satirical way.
2. Fifteen can be considered as a large number if compared to other tattoo salons in the city.
3. Highlands is a term which refers to the mountainous central regions of Madagascar. The central regions encompass Antananarivo, Fianarantsoa and Ambatondrazaka. The populations of these areas are mostly the Merina, the Betsileo and the Sihanaka.
4. Those same acts are not condemned by the law if done with individuals over 21 years of age. It is moral law that it against homosexuality.
5. The term grotesque here is not used to refer to the bodies of transsexuals and transgenders in general. It refers to the body of the transsexual and transgender as represented by the comedian.
6. The term carnivalesque does not refer to transsexuals and transgenders as a group of population. It refers to the show performed by the queer characters in the sketches.
7. Put simply, psychic release or relief theory is based on the idea that laughter is a mechanism by which psychological tension is reduced. Thus, humor facilitates relief of the tension caused by one's fears. Also, according to relief theory, humor is used mainly to overcome sociocultural inhibitions and reveal suppressed desires. The two most prominent relief theorists are Herbert Spencer and Sigmund Freud.
8. Old here means older than him

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