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He served as the Scribe of the CSP for several years until his passing. He will forever be remembered for his immense contributions to the movement.

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Germline Gene Editing Applications and the Afro-communitarian Ubuntu Philosophy

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Abstract

Germline gene editing has many applications or uses. This article focuses on specific applications. Specifically, the article draws on a moral norm arising from the thinking about the value of communal relationships in the Afro-communitarian *ubuntu* philosophy to interrogate key issues that specific applications of germline gene editing – for xeno-transplantation, agriculture and wildlife – raise. The article contends that the application of germline gene editing in these areas is justified to the extent that they foster the capacity to relate with others and to be communed with by others. The article grants that our today's decisions about germline gene editing will likely affect future humans, but will attempt to justify how this may be ethically permissible.

Keywords: Germline gene editing; Afro-communitarianism; Ubuntu philosophy; Morality

Introduction

Germline gene editing raises several ethical questions. For example, there is a risk of harm. Will germline gene editing harm individuals and their future generations? In what ways? Does the potential for harm render it always immoral? If we decide to edit a trait; for example, if we edit a child's IQ, give the child green eyes and dark skin colour because these things tend to be preferred today, are we not imposing present-day values on future generations? And would this be ethical?¹ There are other ethical issues. However, in this article, I draw on a moral norm that is grounded in the Afro-communitarian *ubuntu* philosophy to reflect on the issues that some applications of germline gene editing raise. The Nuffield Council on Bioethics describes gene editing

as the practice of making targeted interventions at the molecular level of DNA or RNA function, deliberately to alter the structural or functional characteristics of biological entities. These entities include complex

¹ Chris Wareham - at the Steve Biko Centre for Bioethics, University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg - has given a lecture on different ethical issues that different uses of germline gene editing (in the military or agriculture) raise. I draw on that lecture, as well as go beyond the same to consider the implications of an African moral theory for different uses of germline gene editing.

living organisms, such as humans and animals, tissues and cells in culture, and plants, bacteria and viruses. (BIOETHICS 2016, 7)

In other words, gene editing is a form of engineering that allows professionals to insert, change, modify or customize a DNA anywhere. Professionals can replace a bad DNA or modify a defective one with gene editing. They could also enhance an existing gene that is not necessarily defective. There are important questions the preceding raises. For example, should gene editing be used only for therapeutic purposes like curing a condition, or should professionals use the same *only to* alter traits such as increasing intelligence? The reader should notice the crucial difference between germline gene editing and somatic gene editing. Somatic gene editing is the editing of cells in a human in a way that is not passed on to future generations or impacts the individual's reproductive cells. In contrast, the edited traits are passed on to the future progeny in germline gene editing. Precisely, the latter entails a change in the human species.

Germline gene editing has many controversial applications in different fields like agriculture, wildlife/ecosystem, health, and the military, to name a few. For example, one controversy germline gene editing raises in the military is the ethical permissibility of creating super soldiers. Is this justified? Gene Ethics is the field of enquiry that studies ethical issues related to these applications. This article is situated within this field of enquiry since it describes how a moral norm arising from the thinking about dominant values, particularly communal relationships, in the Afro-communitarian philosophy of *ubuntu* can enhance our thinking regarding applications of germline gene editing. The question this article asks is, "how can the moral norm arising from the thinking about communal relationships in the Afro-communitarian *ubuntu* philosophy inform our view about specific applications of germline gene editing?" This work is essential since it contributes toward adequately echoing an African voice on the ethical discourse on germline gene editing. The work is also vital for epistemic justice by responding to the call to inform the development and deployment of emerging technologies with dominant values in Africa.

Herein, it is important to acknowledge that several scholars have explored key questions concerning germline gene editing by drawing on African philosophies and values. For example, Bonginkosi Shozi, Donrich Thaldar, Marietjie Botes, Beverley Townsend, and Julian Kinderlerer have all reflected on different ethical and legal issues (like when is germline gene editing permissible for humans? Should the public be allowed to access gene editing? What gene editing technologies should be researched or used?) that genome editing technologies like the Clustered Regularly Interspaced Short Palindromic Repeats (CRISPR) and germline gene editing raise, *mostly when they are used for therapeutic purposes in human beings* (SHOZI 2020; THALDAR n.d.n 2020; SHOZI 2021). However, the specific ethical questions this article interrogates are unique and have not been explored *by drawing on values from the Global South*: "should an animal be enhanced for the purpose of organ transplantation in humans? Is controlled extinction of certain species permissible? Is it permissible to use germline gene editing for agricultural purposes?" This article does not claim that these questions have not been explored at all since there are, in fact, some

scholars who have explored these questions (TRIPATHI n.d.n 2022; OGAUGWU n.d.n 2019; CHIMAKONAM & AKPAN 2012; CHIMAKONAM 2013). However, the author is unaware of any study that has explored these *ethical questions* by drawing on *the dominant value of communal relationships in Africa* or at least interrogates these questions in this way to a significant degree.

Equally, the reader should notice that the use of the expression *dominant value in Africa* does not intend to essentialize Africa. It is difficult, if not nearly impossible, to find a value all Africans share in common, given the heterogeneity of the continent. However, some values are more common and frequently drawn on to think morally (EWUOSO & HALL 2019). This is how the article uses the expression, dominant values in Africa. Equally, it is important I clarify that I use Afro-communitarianism and African ethics interchangeably to refer to the moral philosophy informed by key values salient in Africa. Broadly, these values include fellowship, communal relationship, harmony, solidarity and interdependence. As previously stated, the reader should notice that I have not claimed that these values *can only* be found on the continent or that *all Africans* believe this to be true. Instead, the moral judgments and practices around these values and their intuitions have not come to Africa from other continents. In this regard, something can be called African even when it is not unique to the continent. Thaddeus Metz expresses this point well in the following way,

Despite the lack of something utterly geographically distinctive, it is apt to call the moral theory I develop 'African' because the ideas that it expresses and that inform it are much more salient there than in not only the West, but also the major Islamic and Hindu traditions. (METZ 2010, 50)

Additionally, the reader should notice that *ubuntu* is only one African ethic and thus cannot be said to represent *all* African ethics. To this end, the thinking – grounded in *ubuntu* philosophy – about specific applications of germline gene editing ought not to be taken as representing the views of *all* Africans.

To realize the objective of this article, I will proceed in the first section to outline the *ubuntu*-inspired moral norm I consider relevant to the aim of this article. In the second section, I demonstrate the implications of the moral norms for specific applications of germline gene editing. In the third section, I address potential objections that might contend that my exploration of germline gene editing applications is shallow and has not addressed more significant issues around the rights of the future generation.

Defining Ubuntu

Many scholars have clearly articulated the moral duties entailed in the Afro-communitarian *Ubuntu* philosophy. For example, in one systematic review, Cornelius Ewuoso and Susan Hall describe common aspects that are found in many, and sometimes competing, formulations of the same (EWUOSO & HALL 2019). This article advances these descriptive studies by providing *evaluative* arguments that defend the usefulness of the core aspects of the *ubuntu* philosophy.

Ubuntu (generally translated as humanness) has something to do with what it means to be human, its very essence. The opposite of humanness is *into*,

meaning a thing. In the scholarship and published works on *ubuntu* philosophy, scholars generally identify acting in ways that prize interdependence and other-regarding behaviours as the core aspects of humanness or developing personhood. This view is best expressed by the Late Archbishop Desmond Tutu in the following way:

When we want to give high praise to someone we say, '*Yu, u nobuntu*'; he or she has *ubuntu*. This means that they are generous, hospitable, friendly, caring and compassionate. They share what they have. It also means that my humanity is caught up, is inextricably bound up, in theirs. We belong in a bundle of life ... I am human because I belong, I participate, I share. A person with *ubuntu* is open and available to others, affirming of others, does not feel threatened that others are able and good, for he or she has a proper self-assurance that comes with knowing that he or she belongs in a greater whole and is diminished when others are humiliated or diminished, when others are tortured or oppressed, or treated as if they were less than who they are. (TUTU 1999, 34f)

In the scholarship of many scholars of the *ubuntu* philosophy, a common view is that communal relationships and other-regarding behaviours are at the centre of being a human or person. A common maxim that expresses this idea is the claim, 'a person is a person through other persons.' The maxim has both descriptive and prescriptive implications. Descriptively, it implies that one is metaphysically dependent on the community for one's identity. Prescriptively, the maxim expresses the moral principle that one ought to prize other-regarding behaviours since this is how one becomes human and/or a person (EWUOSO & HALL 2019). One ought to affirm others, seek goals that do not undermine their well-being, share a way of life with them, and act in ways that will more likely promote their good.

The *others* whose good one ought to seek are not limited to living humans but include non-human species like animals and plants in the broader environment on the horizontal line and spirits and ancestors on the vertical line. In other words, the community with whom one must relate comprises other humans, animals, and the wider environment. These are the entities on the horizontal line. The vertical line consists of spiritual entities like ancestors and spirits. Humanness and personhood tend to be in a symbiotic relationship with the physical and spiritual worlds in the African philosophy of *ubuntu*. In light of the preceding, Cornelius Ewuoso and Susan Hall (2019, 93) describe *ubuntu* philosophy as:

an essentially *relational* ethics, which prizes [communal] relationships of interdependence, fellowship, reconciliation, relationality, community friendliness, harmonious relationships and other-regarding actions such as compassion and actions that are likely to be good for others, in which actions are morally right to the extent that they honour the capacity to relate communally, reduce discord or promote friendly relationships with others, and in which the physical world and the spiritual world are fundamentally united.

The view that ubuntu is an essentially relational ethics is also supported by Muxe Nkondo (2007, 91), who contends,

If you [ask] ubuntu advocates and philosophers: what principles inform and organize your life? What do you live for...the answers would express commitment to the good of the community in which their identities were formed, and a need to experience their lives as bound up in that of their community.

Equally consider the following remark by Jonathan Chimakonam and Uchenna Ogbonnaya(2022, 7) concerning humans from this Afro-communitarian perspective, "humans do not exist in isolation; they exist in a community." These and other remarks about *ubuntu* prove that *ubuntu* philosophy is an essentially relational philosophy. It grounds morality in relationships. As Jonathan Chimakonam and Uchenna Ogbonnaya (2022, 8) remark, "[in *ubuntu* philosophy], one can only become moral within [communal relationships]." The normative implication of the scholarship on *ubuntu* philosophy (or the moral norm that arises from this description) is that actions are right "to the extent that they promote social integration and interconnectedness, honour communal relationships or the capacity for the same and reduce discord or promote friendly relationships with others" (EWUOSO & HALL 2019, 100).

Notice that the preceding moral norm does not imply that individuals who *fail to* showcase *ubuntu* in the relevant sense are *literally* no longer humans. Instead, it means they have been unable to showcase what is valuable about human nature. In subsequent sections, I will demonstrate the implications of this norm for specific applications of germline gene editing in subsequent sections.

Specific Applications of Germline Gene Editing and Ubuntu Philosophy

In this section, I explore the implications of the moral norm for the specific applications of germline gene editing in medicine, agriculture and wildlife. It is not always possible to explore the implications of the moral norm I described in the previous section for all the possible applications of germline gene editing. However, given the limited space, this article will restrict its discussion to these three common areas of human endeavours.

Xeno-transplantation

There are several gene-editing technologies in existence. Some include recombinant DNA technology and CRISPR, which allows segments of genes to be removed and added. In fact, CRISPR is an exciting new technology, allowing scientists to undertake necessary research (at reduced cost), most of which may have taken years and cost millions of dollars.

These technologies may be used to realize various objectives. For example, they could be used to study specific conditions and diseases. In the past, they have been used to modify animal organs so that they (animals) become more suitable for transplantations in humans (xeno-transplantation). Specifically, Jonathan Chimakonam and Chris Akpan (2012, 3) describe xeno-transplantation as "organ transplantation between members of different species." There are utilitarian arguments justifying xeno-transplantation. There is a massive shortage

of organs like the liver and kidney, and many people will die on the waiting list. Xeno-transplantation promises to be a game-changer by cultivating scarce organs in animals (KRISHNA & LEPPING 2011). In fact, there has been real progress in this regard. Transplant surgeons have been harvesting and transplanting pig heart valves and kidney transplants into humans for years. Geneticists have found a way to alter the DNA of pigs. Specifically, they have found a way to make a hole in pigs, implant human stem cells into the pig's embryo, use the human stem cells to grow new organs in pigs, and finally, transplant the new organs into a human body. However, is this morally justified? Could humans use animals as means of realizing their health needs? The reader would observe that these questions have also been raised by Jonathan Chimakonam and Chris Akpan (2012). Unlike these scholars who draw on the thinking about individual's right to self-determination to interrogate these questions, I draw on a moral theory from the Global South. Notably, from the point of view of *ubuntu* philosophy that morally requires individuals to prize other-regarding behaviours, this is justified since it can advance human relationships. Illness undermines fellowship with other humans since it reduces one's opportunity to enjoy a deep communal relationship with them. Contrarily, freedom from disease can increase one's opportunity to enjoy a deep communal relationship with others (EWUOSO 2021).

However, the reader should notice how the moral norm I draw on differs from the utilitarian philosophy that has been used to justify xeno-transplantation. Since *ubuntu* emphasizes right relationship with both humans and animals (horizontal line), how one treats the animals also matters. Unlike the utilitarian philosophy that merely emphasizes overall happiness, in the *ubuntu* philosophy, the animal's good must also be considered since this is essential for acting morally and becoming a person from this positionality. Equally, the reader should notice that in the *ubuntu*-inspired justification, xeno-transplantation is moral because it enhances communal relationships, and is different from the utilitarian-inspired justification that emphasizes maximizing happiness. In utilitarianism, it does not matter whether an action produces happiness at the expense of some individuals or entities. In contrast, in the deontological interpretation of the *ubuntu* that this article draws on, one ought *not* to realize a good end however one can. Mary Carman (2023, 3) articulates this point aptly in the following way, "[in *ubuntu* philosophy], we have a duty to promote and respect [relationships], not to maximize them" since maximizing them can conflict with some intuitions we hold about relationships. Certain ways of relating with others are immoral in themselves, even if they produce overall happiness. For example, forcing an individual to have a sexual relationship with oneself. Part of respecting animals as objects of relationships requires that they should not be subjected to unnecessary pain and hardship to foster human good, or they should not be used merely for this purpose.

In light of the above, xeno-transplantation raises one ethical question worth considering, even if briefly. Does having a part of an animal in oneself make one less of a person/human? Does it undermine or decrease one's identity? While Jonathan Chimakonam and Chris Akpan (2012) feel it does – and they call this the "YU[C]K FACTOR". As they remarked, "Having an animal's organ in one's body has the potential to decrease one's self image despite intense counseling on the neutrality of this occurrence. We feel that this possibility, referred to as the

"YUK FACTOR" [sic]...is a strong ethical opposition to the domain of xeno-transplantation on the level of the individual involved" (CHIMAKONAM & AKPAN 2012, 6). However, the reader should observe that in the modal account of the Ubuntu philosophy that I draw on, the capacity for communal relationships is what matters for being a person and not *merely or solely* some biological factors. Suppose that capacity is not significantly undermined, that is, suppose xeno-transplantation does not make one more of an animal than a human in ways that imply that the individual is no longer able to commune or be communed with in the appropriate ways. Suppose the individual could still relate with others and be related with, in relevant ways. In that case, they remain a person/human. Given the importance that is placed on communal relationships, in the rare event that xeno-transplantation undermines one's capacity to relate; in such event, it would be immoral.

Agriculture

Germline gene editing could also be used in agriculture to increase animal and plant efficiency, safety, and productivity. For example, germline gene editing could make animals and crops more resistant to diseases. To reduce environmental waste, enviro-pigs have been developed by modifying the pig's gene structure. Equally, scientists have succeeded in increasing yield so that there are more corns. In the same vein, scientists have also improved the environmental adaptation of certain plants like grapes to survive more scorching weather or season (KARAVOLIAS n.d.n 2021; MALLAPATY 2022).

Yet, the application of germline gene editing to realize various ends in agriculture raises critical ethical questions worth addressing from the Afro-communitarian *ubuntu* philosophy perspective. There are questions about food safety. Is genetically modified food safe for humans? For example, Jonathan Chimakonam (2013) has argued that genetically modified food could have unforeseen health implications. A more recent systematic review has also confirmed some adverse effects associated with consuming genetically modified food. They include low fertility, cancer and mortality, to name a few (SHEN n.d.n 2022). However, as the authors observe, these adverse effects are common in genetically modified foods that were not safely developed. Will these modified genes be passed on to the human germline and affect humans in ways we cannot imagine now? These are scientific questions, which nonetheless have moral implications.

For this reason, ethics must be integrated into science. The reader should notice that many scholars have attempted to defend how ethics can be integrated into the use of germline gene editing in agriculture. For example, Nicholas Karavolias and colleagues (2021) have explored the various ethical issues gene editing for agriculture raises and in the process, explain how these ethical issues may be addressed. Similarly, Fatma Ayanoglu and colleagues (2020), as well as Mara Almeida and Robert Ranisch (2022) have also explored questions concerning how ethics can be integrated into germline gene editing for various agricultural purposes.

However, I am not aware of a study which has explored how the ethical questions that germline gene editing *for various* agricultural purposes may be addressed from the Afro-communitarian *ubuntu* philosophy perspective. I

acknowledge that there is always the probability of scientists going too far, implying that their reason for using germline gene editing may not be to enhance human good but increase profit or realize ideologies. The Nazi eugenic view is an example. The philosophy that morally requires one to act in ways that promote one another's quality of life demands that the goal of editing within the field of agriculture should not merely be to grow profit by *safely* increasing yields. Science ought to be *primarily* concerned about plant and environmental safety. In other words, scientists ought not to be merely concerned about making profits or increasing agricultural yields only for human consumption. Germline gene editing within the field of agriculture is morally permissible from the *ubuntu* perspective, if it is safe and does not harm the environment.

Wildlife

Germline gene editing could also alter insect species or eradicate pests like locusts that cause colossal damage to humans and plants. For example, scientists have been able to control the extinction of anopheles mosquitoes that cause malaria in some regions of the world (WISE & BORRY 2022). Some *controlled* eradication of plants and insect species raises specific ethical questions from the perspective of the Afro-communitarian *ubuntu* philosophy. First, what would be the impact on the ecosystem of causing the extinction of insects like mosquitoes? This question is important from the point of view of the predator-prey relationship of the ecosystem. Are there predators of anopheles mosquitoes that will die out if there are no more anopheles mosquitoes? Are there preys of these mosquitoes that would likely overpopulate the ecosystem because anopheles mosquitoes have been completely eradicated? Are there other humans who consider these mosquitoes objects of communal relationships and whose relational capacities would be undermined if these mosquitoes are eradicated? Second, the *intrinsic value of biodiversity* queries the permissibility of causing the extinction of particular species. Suppose we believe – as I have defended in this article – that biodiversity is intrinsically valuable and species in the wider environment are part of communal relationships. In that case, it would be immoral to directly cause the extinction of particular species since this will violate the intrinsic value of biodiversity itself.

To reiterate, the Afro-communitarian *ubuntu* philosophy mandates other-regarding behaviours, where the *other* in the other-regarding behaviours include all entities in the physical and spiritual world. Although entities in communal relationships have intrinsic values, most scholars of this philosophy accept that we do not have *equal* moral duties to all entities. Our moral duties to others depend on their moral status, whether full or partial. African conceptions of moral status have been discussed to a significant degree by Thaddeus Metz (2012). Nonetheless, note that to have a moral status is to be an *object of direct duties*. Entities that have full moral status are those that can be subject and object of relationships. Entities that have partial moral status are those that can only be the objects of relationships. One is a subject if one can *in principle* "share a way of life" with others, and an object if others can share a way of life with oneself. Humans are generally in a position to share a way of life with other humans. In this regard, they have full moral status. Animals have partial moral status since they cannot be subjects of relationships. However, other humans can have a relationship with them – as

objects of that relationship. This is also true of plants and insects. Entities with no moral status can neither be subjects nor objects of relationships, such as a pen or a stone.

The theory of moral status grounded in ubuntu philosophy suggests that there is a greater moral obligation to seek the well-being of entities with higher moral status. In this case, there is a higher moral duty to seek the well-being of humans through the controlled extinction of insects that undermine humans' well-being. Here, the ethical basis for the controlled extinction of anopheles mosquitoes is that they undermine the well-being of agents with a higher moral status. Accordingly, it would be immoral to cause the extinction of entities with partial moral status when they pose no significant threat to entities with higher moral status.

Objecting to the Ubuntu-Inspired Germline Gene Editing Applications

One objection to the *ubuntu*-inspired thinking about germline gene editing application that I described in the previous section is that it is shallow and has not considered to any significant degree more important ethical concerns raised against germline gene editing. One crucial ethical concern is the risk of harm to future generations or the risk of off-targets. It is currently difficult to understand or comprehend the potential harm associated with germline gene editing and how far-reaching the harm will be to undertake a proper risk-benefit calculus of the same. What also makes germline gene editing problematic is that it cannot be reversed if there are harmful modifications. Any germline gene enhancement is permanent. These technologies are imperfect, and there are likely to be off-target alterations. As a result, modifications, including enhancements later found to be harmful or dangerous, cannot be reversed. How does the Afro-communitarian *ubuntu* philosophy respond to this issue?

Additionally, we intuitively believe that parents have a right to make decisions on behalf of their children. But germline gene editing raises fundamental questions regarding informed consent and whether it is justified to make life-changing decisions about how the life of our children will go. These questions are important because there will likely be cultural changes in the future. In the same way our preferences today are significantly different from what used to be the case. What today's people prefer might be different tomorrow. So, is it ethically permissible to make this type of change on behalf of non-consenting offspring, given that the changes we consent to now will endure throughout their lifetime?

The critic is correct to observe that I have focused primarily on the beneficial and therapeutic applications of germline gene editing for transplantation, agriculture and wildlife. However, should germline gene editing be permitted since it is nearly impossible to outline all the harm that can result? From the *ubuntu* perspective, it does not seem necessary to know all the harm that can result from germline gene editing, including the future ones. It is sufficient that germline gene editing does not harm one's capacity to share a way of life in the present. In the ethics of relationships grounded in *ubuntu*, our present and longstanding relationships have moral priority over future and potential ones (METZ 2007; METZ & GAIE 2010). In other words, we are more obligated to foster present and actual relationships than future ones. Whilst this philosophy acknowledges the moral right of future

generations; nonetheless, it considers the right of the present and actual humans as more important. This thinking does not jeopardize future lives. Specifically, lives matter regardless of *where* they live or *when* they are lived. Though our present relationships are more morally important, *ubuntu* requires individuals to consider the long-term impact of current actions *when they* are known. In other words, though *ubuntu* privileges current lives, it does not thereby systematically neglect future lives. There is a general duty to use current information to ensure that life goes *as well as possible* for all humans, including future humans, over the long term. Future generations may be far away in time, the risk of harm to them equally ought to be accounted for in our decisions in the present. This, in fact, is the basis of various agitations for political governments to make firm decisions against climate change. Many climate change activists intuitively believe that we have a moral duty to ensure that no civilization ends up in a worst state owing to our current actions. This is equally the conviction of the Afro-communitarian *ubuntu* philosophy.

In addition to the preceding, I also acknowledge that other non-therapeutic applications would raise important questions, like using germline gene editing to give more cognitive capacity to the recipient or characteristics like the capacity to run faster. These are less urgent applications of germline gene editing (METZ 2022). The preceding contrasts more urgent purposes for using germline gene editing. These more urgent purposes include using germline gene editing to prevent illnesses or treat adverse conditions that an individual and/or their future generation may suffer. Germline gene editing for more urgent purposes is always moral since illness undermines one's capacity to be the subject and object of communal relationships (EWUOSO 2020). From the point of view of the Afro-communitarian *ubuntu* philosophy, less urgent applications of germline gene editing would be moral or immoral to the extent that they advance sharing a way of life. For example, suppose that by granting greater cognitive capacity, an individual is better able to relate and be related with – or seek to increase the quality of others – this would be justified from the perspective of the Afro-communitarian *ubuntu* philosophy. Contrarily, germline gene editing *for less urgent purposes* like making a beautiful girl downright gorgeous will be immoral from the point of view of the Afro-communitarian *ubuntu* philosophy, suppose these less urgent purposes undermine relationships. To understand how, the reader should notice that the basis of morality is relationship. Moral actions are those that foster relationships or at least, do not undermine the same, whilst actions are immoral, suppose they undermine communal relationships.

Furthermore, the reader should also notice that the objection I address, raises key questions not only about the importance of undertaking *full* risk-benefit calculus but also about whether it is ethical to make life-altering decisions on behalf of future generations. In other words, is it ethical to behave paternalistically towards the future generation? Paternalism is not always immoral and may be justified if it advances relationships (from the perspective of the Afro-communitarian *ubuntu* philosophy). Particularly, such paternalistic acts are justified if the anticipated benefits – including benefits to future generations – outweigh any harm that may likely result. Moreover, part of our responsibility to future generations includes ensuring that there is a *future*. This may entail passing on healthy genes and ensuring a reasonably good habitat or environment for future

lives. For this reason, though values and preferences of individuals may change in the future, whereas germline gene editing is irreversible, germline gene editing undertaken for more urgent purposes (like eliminating bad genes or developing environmentally friendly animals) could be long-term actions we can take in the present to protect future generations or ensure that there is indeed a future. In other words, suppose we believe that our present actions could indirectly improve the lives of future humans or enhance their capacity to share a way with others. In that case, this ought to be done.

Bonginkosi Shozi and Donrich Thaldar (2023) provide a different justification for why we have an obligation to foster future generations' health, which is worth highlighting here. Conceptualizing community as a metaphysical entity encompassing the past, present and future humans, they contended that taking the interest of all humans seriously will include acting in ways that [honour past memories and] foster future humans' well-being. The preceding thinking about community echoes the description of ubuntu by Cornelius Ewuoso and Susan Hall (2019) – which I described in a previous section as encompassing all lives in the physical and spiritual worlds. Reasonably, this could imply – as Bonginkosi Shozi and Donrich Thaldar (2023) rightly remarked – requiring present humans to undergo human heritable genome editing that results in the birth of children with modified (good) genome. Although not a uniquely African maxim, one saying that adequately captures the preceding is "we do not inherit the Earth from our ancestors; we borrow it from our children" (MAWLONG 2020).

Conclusion

In this article, I have outlined the implications of the Afro-communitarian *ubuntu* philosophy for specific applications of germline gene editing. Specifically, the philosophy that grounds moral status and morality in communal relationships would permit germline gene editing on the condition that it fosters one's capacity to share a way of life with others. Furthermore, germline gene editing will be impermissible if it causes division among individuals. Nonetheless, many choices we make in the present are based on current values and preferences, which may indeed change in the future. Importantly, we would not likely know our future generations' preferences. Future humans are better positioned to describe their own interests and preferences. Although I have justified the permissibility of paternalistic decisions on behalf of future humans, nonetheless, I believe that studies are still required to interrogate how we can ensure that our present decisions concerning germline gene editing do not significantly limit future generations' capacity to make choices by locking them firmly into our present values and preferences.

Declarations

The author declares no conflict of interest. There are no ethical issues or data usage for this research.

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Post-development Thesis and African Intercultural Theory of Development

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Abstract

The aim of the paper is to address the question: is the end of development possible? Post-development theorists declare the end of development. They insist that the problematisation of poverty by development theory is one of the key defects of development. The irony in this problematisation is that development practice as an offshoot of development theory does not actually alleviate poverty, particularly in colonial spaces. Rather, the agents of development have perpetuated underdevelopment at the fringes of the colonial metropolis. Given this perpetuation of underdevelopment, post-development theorists argue, the idea of development has run its course and is no longer efficient; it should be put to an end. We assess this declaration of post-development theory from the perspective of Agbakoba's intercultural philosophy of development. Using the philosophical methods of analysis and critique, we argue that Agbakoba's intercultural proposal for a transition to development in Africa holds more prospects and is more feasible in addressing the concerns of post-development scholars. This is because, Agbakoba's intercultural philosophy of development does not insist on the end of development, but on hybridity as the end of development.

Keywords: Development, Hybridity, Interculturality, Post-development, Responsibility and Self-determination

Introduction

Post-development is the view of development that insists on the 'end of development' (PARFITT 2002, BROOKS 2017). Proponents argue that development 'makes and unmakes the third world' (ESCOBAR 1997, 85-93). Others opine that 'development is planned poverty' (ILLICH 1997, 94-102), and some ask 'is development the devil we know' (NUSTAD 2007, 35-46). From these dispositions, post-development thinking challenges the idea of development and its quest to end poverty as well as to make more wealth available to humanity. The major argument of development theory is not just the concept of economic growth but ways by which such growth can translate into tangible goods in the lives of men. It is for this reason that efforts are made to track wealth and its

spread all over the world. The data from some of these efforts are not encouraging. *The Changing Wealth of Nations 2021* is a United Nations document which assesses the world's wealth using data gathered from 146 countries. This document released in October 2021 assesses the world's wealth from 1995 – 2018. In this document, “global wealth (as measured by natural, human and produced capital) grew significantly...” (WORLD BANK GROUP 2021, xxi). Despite this growth, the document further indicates that “inequalities between countries persists.” (WORLD BANK GROUP 2021, xxi). The situation in terms of wealth per capita is even worse. “In 26 countries, wealth per capita stagnated or even declined between 1995 and 2018, and almost half of these were in Sub-Saharan Africa” (WORLD BANK GROUP 2021, xxi). The projection is that “if the trend continues, future generations will be materially worse off” (WORLD BANK GROUP 2021, xxi). Prior to this, *The 2020 Credit Suisse Global Wealth Report* released at the end of October 2020 revealed that the top 1% of households globally own 43% of all personal wealth, while the bottom 50% own only 1% of all personal wealth globally (SHORROCKS, DAVIES & LLUBERAS 2020, 29). These statistics are grim. They testify that even though the world's wealth is increasing, the expected impact of this increase on the wretched of the earth is not as rapid as the growth rate. In spite of the plenty, poverty still abounds. Despite all the vigour of the rhetoric of development, the squalor of the earth continues unabated. This reality seems to be vindicating the claims of post-development that development has run its course.

Relatedly, there have been recent practical challenges to western modernisation, particularly in China. Nathan Gardels refers to this in the article “China's Defectors from Western Modernisation.” So also does Jacob Dreyer refer to it in an article titled “Back Down to the Countryside” published in the online magazine, *Noema*. The basic argument in these articles is that “the alienated children of prosperity favour harmony with nature and each other over competition” (GARDELS 2022 Online). And that “young people all over China, fed up with city life are searching for new ways of life amid old traditions in undeveloped rural parts of the country” (DREYER 2022 Online). These Chinese folks are beginning to experience the desolation and meaninglessness of work consequent upon the developmentalist ideology. They are afraid that after having taken in the world economy, it now threatens to swallow China and eventually deprive it of its soul. The remedy to this is in the current switch to rural life. This could be another point of vindication for the post-development aspiration. But are these pieces of evidence enough to suggest that development is no longer a useful aspiration?

Africa is one region of the world that has continued to suffer the lack of development despite all efforts to stem the tide of underdevelopment. In the quest for alternative frameworks for development, African scholars have also interacted with post-development. Some have quite positively appraised it and advanced ways by which some of its ideals can be implemented in the continent. On a general note, Eris Schoburg thinks that one of the points of relevance of post-development is the ‘local developmental state’ (2016, 18-19). It is within the context of the local developmental state that some argue that the Local Government System in Nigeria could be one way to implement the ideas of post-development (ISA, 2016). While other views show the downsides of post-

development, they also identify ways to make post-development workable. Stefan Andreasson, for example, argues that “to offer something more appealing and attractive than what has manifestly become a primary pursuit of the societies worldwide in the era of Development remains the challenge for development’s detractors” (2017, 21). However, he proposes *Ubuntu* as one way to make post-development ideas realisable in Africa (2007: 18-24). In a similar vein, Sally Matthews is of the view that NGOs, particularly Enda Graft Sahel and their activities in Senegal could be one way to implement post-development in Africa (2007, 131-144, 2017: 2650-2663). This is after she has identified some of the shortcomings of post-development. But some opinions reject post-development outrightly in Africa. Felix Olatunji and Anthony Bature insist that post-development theory is inadequate to the discourse of development and social order in the global south (2019: 236-242). Maduka Enyimba proposes conversational thinking as an alternative theory of development and post-development in Africa. In specific terms, Enyimba refers to his proposal as Conversational Theory of Development (CTD), and it operates on the laws of: constructive mutual benefit, recognising the peculiarity of entities, and sacred cow (2021, 31-37). While these efforts make cogent claims with regard to post-development in Africa, they have not been able to assess post-development within the context of its understanding of development, the place of agency in development and the priority of hybridity as the end of development. The intercultural theory of development as espoused by Agbakoba, with which this paper assesses post-development, is unique in that it addresses these concerns as they relate to the development of Africa. Therefore, this essay's original point is to assess post-development based on the above points from the intercultural theory of development. The argument is that the intercultural proposal for a transition to development in Africa holds more prospects and is more feasible in addressing the concerns of post-development scholars. This is because, intercultural philosophy of development does not insist on the end of development, but on a proper conceptualisation and implementation of development.

In making our case, we proceed in the following order. The first section considers what post-development is, and it closes with an assessment of some of the ways post-development has been deployed in Africa. The next section exposes the basic elements of Agbakoba’s intercultural theory of development. Following the intercultural theory of development, attention is given to three issues within post-development theory. The following section addresses the issue of the lack of a proper definition of development in post-development theory. This is addressed using the intercultural idea of development as self-determination. The next section focuses on the question of responsibility in development, which ties up with the question of agency in development. The last section attends to the end of development as hybridity. We conclude that it is obviously impossible to end development and it is difficult to accomplish post-development aspirations, generally and in Africa particularly.

Post-development Thesis

One unifying thread in all post-development literature is that - post-development declares the end of development. This declaration of the end of development is premised on the idea that development has failed. It has not succeeded in

accomplishing its aim of eradicating poverty. As Wolfgang Sachs puts it “it did not work” (1992, 1). Post-development scholars insist further that the failure of development is not the case of a bad implementation of a good idea. Rather, it is the case of a bad idea which no measure of informed implementation can salvage. For post-development scholars, the idea of development is inherently flawed. Development is standing on faulty foundations. In the first instance, the idea of infinite progress, which grounds development is flawed. This is because progress is not infinite (MATTHEWS 2018). Development is also problematic because it works with false labels – developed and underdeveloped. These labels give the impression that a developed state is desirable and an underdeveloped state is undesirable. But in actual living, the underdeveloped way of life cannot be dismissed as undesirable, and the developed way of life cannot be completely embraced as desirable. The case of China presented in the introduction, is a good example of this. Besides, these labels engender a kind of reverse-mirroring, where people understand themselves based on how others perceive and construct them. In this case, the underdeveloped do not see themselves as such; they only come to such understanding because others have categorised them as such. Another faulty fact in this regard is the alignment of the essence of development with westernisation, such that to be developed is to be westernised. For Sachs, this makes the success of development dangerous (1992, 3). These flaws are some of the basis for the declaration of the failure of development.

Furthermore, post-development theory insists that aside from the failure to solve the problem it has mapped out for itself, development has also resulted in more problems with greater magnitude (RAHNEMA & BAWTREE 1997, 378). Foremost among these new problems is that of environmental degradation. Some post-development scholars opine that if the industrial (development) model is to be extended across the world, “five or six planets would be needed to serve as mines and waste dumps” (SACHS 1992, 2). Meanwhile, underdeveloped life can be “generally self-reliant, self-sufficient, sustainable, and far less destructive to humanity as well as nature” (SHRESTHA 1995, 276). Another problem that has evolved in the wake of the development ideology is sociocultural in character. Experiences like “spiritual desolation, meaningless work, (and) neglect of the aged are dubious examples” (MARGLIN 1990, 3) of the downside of development. The sociocultural defects of the developed region have led others to describe such regions as “an impersonal machine, devoid of spirit ... Characterised by desolation, numbness, and insecurity” (LATOUCHE 1993, 11-13). Also, the developed form of life is inherently parasitic. It survives by preying on and sustaining underdeveloped forms of life. The “permanent victimhood” (ALVARES 1992, 145) of others is an undeniable requirement for sustaining the developed form of life. On the basis of these problems, post-development scholars embark on a “frontal attack on the ideology of development... there is no such thing as developed or an underdeveloped person” (ALVARES 1992, 108). Majid Rahnema and Victoria Bowtree declare that they “have come to the conclusion that development was indeed a poisonous gift to the populations it sets out to help” (1997, 378, 381). Perhaps, some post-development scholars insist, we should “write its obituary” (SACHS 1992, 1).

Consequently, post-development scholars insist that it is now pertinent to come up with a new approach to understanding human progress and improvement.

Perhaps this approach could help us understand that some problems are not problems at all. This new approach will have to underscore that being poor does not mean being underdeveloped. Poverty, though discomforting, does not signal a deficit of human dignity and integrity (SHRESTHA 1995, 268). Rahnama opines that in vernacular societies “(convivial) poverty is a blessing and never a scourge. This kind of poverty is used to describe a mode of life based on the ethics of simplicity, frugality, conviviality and solidarity” (1991, 44). Such kind of poverty is based “on the notion of moral economy, general to all peasant societies, an economy based on the recognition that needs and resources cannot be delinked” (RAHNEMA 1991, 44-5). The rise of development ideology is what turns poverty into a curse (the problematisation of poverty (ESCOBAR 1995) and subsequently the need for a grand solution to this problem. Post-development is suspicious of grand solutions to problems of improvement and this is where the destiny of post-development meets that of postmodernism. It rather favours local or grassroots approaches to human improvement. Arturo Escobar insists that, “there are no grand alternatives that can be applied to all places or all situations... one must resist the desire to formulate alternatives at an abstract, macro level” (1995, 222). The ultimate point here is that, “...different societies need to find different ways to cope with the problems they face – and that the problems, too, will differ from place to place” (MATTHEWS 2018 Online). In pursuing local visions for human progress, it must be understood that post-development does not favour *alternative development*, rather it seeks *alternative to development*. Serge Latouche expresses this sentiment in the following words, “the opposition between alternative development and alternative to development is radical, irreconcilable and one of essence, both in the abstract and theoretical analysis” (1993, 159). Post-development is basically about challenging the prospects of development in general.

Post-development has come under criticism in the form described above for some reasons. Three of these will be the focus of this paper. The first weak point of post-development identified here is that, post-development is inattentive to an alternative to development because it was never poised to be attentive; it was rather posed to deconstruct and fragment the development idea. This is part of the reason post-development has no clear understanding of development. At the second level, post-development downplays agency in the development quest. This is what some refer to as discourse-agency conundrum in post-development thinking (LIE (2008). In this line of thinking, development becomes “a particular discourse which does not reflect but actually constructs reality...” (KIELY 1999, 31). As a result of this emphasis on discourse, post-development underplays agency, freedom and responsibility in the quest for development. Thirdly, attempts to bring Africa into the post-development equation have not been comprehensive enough. There has been an attempt to develop an alternative to development using the Senegalese model in which A gives to B from his/her excess and expects nothing in return (MATTHEWS 2004). This Senegalese approach is not comprehensive because, giving in the context of development carries more the sense of justice than that of charity. To give in a certain quantity and expect in the same quantity is justice, but to give and not expect back is charity. What guarantees the success of development is justice. Alyson puts it quite succinctly in discussing charity and development “Charity and development

are entirely different. One keeps the patient comfortable, and the other tries to cure the disease. Theoretically they can co-exist. More often, they are opposites, sometimes enemies” (ALYSON 2021, para 3). Justice is a more worthy companion to the development quest. The lack of justice in this African Senegalese paradigm makes it incomprehensive as a development perspective.

Even the approaches that evoke the Ubuntu model in the quest to accomplish an alternative to development in the African context also exhibit the incomprehensiveness described above. Andreasson is of the view that Ubuntu is one reliable way of instantiating post-development in Africa. Ubuntu, as used here translates into humanity, humanness or even humaneness. Here, a person is person through other persons (2007, 20). There are questions as to the extent of personhood inherent in the idea of Ubuntu; is the person in this context any and everybody? Or the person is limited to a member of the community? When advocates of this ideal stress that this model emanates from the communal life of the village, they also fail to see that the definition of a person is limited to the community within which such a person is native. This means that the solidarity Ubuntu advocates can only fully operate when it is dealing with members of the same community. That is, community solidarity is strong when dealing with members of the in-house. The solidarity decreases as the community spread gets wider; when it gets to the realm of the out-house members, cordiality and hospitality as core elements of Ubuntu, decreases (AGBAKOKA 2008; FUKUYAMA 2005). This is the reason ethnicity is endemic on the African continent. In adopting such a model as alternative to development, no effort has been made to address the narrow radius of brotherhood in the Ubuntu model. Such a narrow radius is not comprehensive enough to address the defects of development. In what follows, we will first expound on the African indigenous intercultural philosophy of development before discussing how it addresses some of the downsides of post-development theory. In so doing, we will be working towards demonstrating that development cannot end, rather the end of development is hybridity.

African Intercultural Philosophy of Development

Joseph C. A. Agbakoba in his [Development and Modernity in Africa: An Intercultural Perspective], published in 2019, attempts to create an African perspective to intercultural philosophy and relates this to the problem of African development and development in general. This perspective is what we describe as ‘African intercultural theory of development’ (and we use it interchangeably with interculturality in this paper). This approach to development is a refinement of the modernity theory of development bearing in mind African specificity and the demand of intercultural theory, which include “comprehensive mutuality, reciprocity and equality” (SWEET 2014, 2). The sense of modern which is germane to this perspective of development refers to modern as “commitment to reason and its supremacy, which is the characteristic element of European modernity; however, supremacy here does not require or imply exclusion of emotions, the intuition, drives, desires, humanness, respect for persons, empathy, beneficence; but these must not contradict reason; must be compatible with or derivable from reason in-itself, including especially transcendental reason or reason in itself” (AGBAKOKA 2019, 27). This understanding of the modern

demonstrates the alignment of this theory of development with a robust understanding of reason. Robust in the sense that reason in this context is not cold, calculative and instrumental reason, but one which is tamed by the elements of emotions, intuitions, empathy and most importantly, beneficence, for “reason without beneficence is inhuman (in the form of inhumanness and wickedness) while beneficence without reason is inhumane (in the form of self-indulgent, nihilistic, self –destructive or weakness – the operation of the law of self-preservation bound by reason and morality would have taken leave here)” (AGBAKOBA 2019, 92). Here, we have a form of reasonability which has beneficence – in fact, ontological-beneficence (which includes those things that would make self-realisation possible) – as its hallmark.

In line with this understanding of reason as consistency-beneficence, this theory understands development as “the unfolding of reasonability in the sphere of human activities, relations and institutions as well as states of consciousness generally” (AGBAKOBA 2019, 93). The idea of state of consciousness brings to the fore the place of agency in the quest for development. In fact, this approach to development is organicist on the basis of agency. As an organicist approach, it is internalist; that is, it is based on agency and “holds the view that the internal state of a society initiates and directs the development of a society by responding constructively to internal and external stimuli and/or by adopting or rejecting such stimuli” (AGBAKOBA 2019, 65). Agency, as used here, refers to the entire capabilities of a person or group (both natural and acquired capabilities; including the underdetermined and indeterminate capacities for spontaneity, creativity and freedom) and their dispositions, that is, arrangements or alignment, focus and orientation, in so far as these are determined and determinable given the indeterminism in creativity and freedom (AGBAKOBA 2019, 155). An agent that bears these features properly is said to have agential integrity. This integrity is what interacts with external circumstances, creatively and energetically to produce the spectra of development we have in the world. This means that development may never be accomplished if human agents are not properly formed, no matter the level of circumstantial conduciveness. But a properly formed agency will guarantee development no matter how inhibiting external circumstances are. This is because such agents have the proper firewall that insulates them from debilitating external influences. Thus, such agents are able to keep focus and creatively work towards development. Such agents will properly utilise the positive freedom which they have, as against loathing over the negative freedoms which they lack (AGBAKOBA 2021, 24ff). These agents take responsibility seriously, and such responsibility could be either objective or subjective.

In the face of the various levels of irresponsibility that inhibits development in Africa, this theory of development identifies initiative justice/pro-active solidarity as an intercultural means of beginning to foster development (reasonability-beneficence) in Africa. This is an intercultural means because, its details are a product of an intercultural hybrid between that ideas of justice in the Igbo (African) context and the Western model. This idea highlights how the operation of positive justice in the African context can help foster a more pragmatic disposition to justice and to development on the African continent and even the world at large. The expression of this form of justice can be seen in how the African (Igbo) execute numeric equality, as an aspect of justice, especially in

property and wealth distribution. In the event of the loss of a propertied man who is polygamous (with two wives, for example), the Igbo, in distributing the man's wealth to both wives will do so equally, not minding the fact that one of the wives has just one child and the other has more than one. The sense in this is that, the wife with numerous children may suffer in the present because her inheritance may not be enough for her and her children; in the long run, at her old age, these children will translate to numerous pair of hands at her service. For the wife with a single child, she will have just a pair of hands to see her through the advanced stage of her life. This means that, the flow of temporality has a way of balancing the inconsistency of numerical equality. At a deeper level, it behoves on the wife with a child to assist the wife with numerous children from her abundance so that these can in turn render her services when old age takes its toll. In Agbakoba's specific words, "she (wife with one child) should be pro-active and expect compensatory justice in the form of reciprocity – this is pro-active solidarity, especially regarding vulnerable, exploitable, relatively weak persons or groups outside one's circle of responsibility (specifically, outside one's circle of subjective responsibility but within the scope of one's objective responsibility)" (2019, 352).

This model of justice can apply transculturally. In the first instance, the colonial master failed in initiating pro-active solidarity. This is because the colonial master was only out to exploit the weakness of the colonised (even though the colonised has a large share of the blame too). Even today, advance capitalist nations have not been able to refrain from exploiting the weaknesses of developing nations, knowing fully the consequences of the global system on these communities in terms of poverty, poor living standards, violence, displacement of people and forced migration. In the end,

the point is that pro-active solidarity and initiative justice on grounds of enlightened self-interest could have averted some of these problems because a more developed Africa and Middle East would have been more secure economically, politically and thus make migration less necessary or attractive to many of the people in these regions." (AGBAKOKA 2019, 363)

From the African standpoint, the Africanisation policy, favoured at independence did not demonstrate pro-active solidarity or initiative justice in any way. At best, it was retributive and only helped to plant ill-prepared Africans in the public service and the result is the high level of insensibilism and apathetic-beneficence prevalent in Africa today. Pro-active solidarity would have required that African governments create a just environment that would encourage foreigners with more experience in administration to stay back and Africans can understudy them for optimal performance. This is what Lee Kwan Yaw did in Singapore; and Sereste Khama did in Botswana. But the indigenisation policies of Nigeria and Ghana failed. Even today, the indigenisation policy continues to rear its head in the form of 'ethnicisation' and 'tribalisation' of the public service in many parts of Africa.

In summary, intercultural philosophy of development (interculturality) understands development as an intercultural phenomenon related to the consistent unfolding of reasonability-beneficence in a social setting. Reasonability-

beneficence in this context points at those elements required to accomplish positive freedom or self-realisation. It is a combination of reason with elements of intuition, emotion, empathy and respect for persons. Tenacity to this form of reasonability, is to a large extent, responsible for the ideological edge of modernity. Reasonability-beneficence is attained in cultivating agents with sufficient integrity with cultural firewalls that selectively react to and receive influences. This kind of agent is attentive to the demands of responsibility at both the subjective and objective levels. These agents also accomplish the unique task of actualising pro-active solidarity and initiative justice in a transcultural setting. Such an agent is a hybrid; a product of the hybridity between native elements and features of ideological modernity.

Development as Self-Determination

By understanding development as self-determination, interculturality is already poised to remedy a fundamental defect of post-development theory. This defect is its lack of a definition of development. Can development be accomplished without a working definition or basic understanding of what it is? This is what post-development attempts to do by fragmenting the development experience space. Matthews attempts to explain the lacuna at the heart of post-development thinking. Her thought is that post-development is only averse to the post World War II understanding of development. Quoting Rahnema and Bawtree she submits that post-development thinkers "... want change that would enable them to blossom 'like a flower from the bud' that could leave them free to change the rules and context of change according to their own culturally defined ethics and aspirations" (1997, 375). The phrase, 'to blossom like flower from the bud' is curious. This makes development a natural and largely accidental phenomenon, which does not require planning but depends on the whims of nature. Such an analogy for development is quite inappropriate. Setting goals and putting regulations in place to accomplish those are integral to what development is. Besides, the idea that development is all about the post-World War II version of it, is reductionist. Efforts to develop were always there before the post-World War II era. In beginning with a definition of what development is, interculturality is demonstrating an understanding of the fact that development is beyond the natural unfolding of things and that there was the idea of development before the post-World War II era.

Interculturality understands development as a type of change. This type of change is positive and it is not haphazard or accidental. It is rather a purposeful and goal-oriented change. The change of development presupposes a knowledge of the goals or end-state to which the change aspires. Beyond this knowledge of the end-state, this kind of change also requires value choices. That is, some values need to be upheld in the process of accomplishing this kind of change. With regard to human beings, the end-state of this kind of change is self-realisation. Thus, development can be understood as the "process by which human beings seek the maximum realisation of themselves..." (AGBAKOBA 2019, 55). It is a positive and progressive transformation of capacities and capabilities as well as the freedoms thereof. This is a sense of development as positive freedom which is central to Amartya Sen's idea of development as freedom. This idea of development as self-realisation through positive freedom has universal and

particular dimensions. Its universal dimensions are the values, orientations, attitudes, ideas, practices, and objects for the realisation of people across the globe. The modification and adaptation of ideas and practices of universal interest of development to suit particular geographical and/or socio-cultural situations refer to the particular dimensions of development. This balances out the inability of post-development to grapple with universality in development. This balancing addresses post-development's extreme and unrealistic option of wanting to do away completely with development.

From all of the foregoing, development can be understood as positive freedom for self-determination and self-realisation. The centrality of freedom in this regard is that freedom is both an end and a means for accomplishing development. By this definition, the understanding of development is at two levels. Development is first in terms of the satisfaction of basic everyday stuff, such as a dignified existence free of hunger, unemployment, and disease. Secondly, and more importantly, it could be deliberate efforts at fulfilling political imperatives such as freedom of the individual, equal and fair treatment before the law and freedom from being victimised by the state (MATOLINO 2018, xii). In this understanding of development as self-determination through positive freedom, development is not about what you are prevented from doing or what others can do for you or how/what others will allow you do for yourself. It is rather about what you can do for yourself within the confines of the means and resources available to you. In rejecting development because of its constraining elements (negative freedom), post-development only tells half of the story; the passive side of the development story. By understanding development as positive freedom, interculturality projects the active phase of development. That is, in spite of the constraints, we can still do good things for ourselves.

Re-fixing the Face of Responsibility in Development

Since post-development places so much emphasis on the passive side of development, it cannot comprehensively account for development responsibility. The agency conundrum which was identified as one of the setbacks of post-development is directly related to this. Since agents are presented as completely passive and are under the power of discourse in post-development thinking, they cannot be brought into the sphere of responsibility in development. The responsibility for development has to be squarely at the feet of the framers of the development discourse. The recipients of development have no responsibility. This continues the old trajectory of blaming others for the dearth of development in the world. In this way, post-development exonerates the complicity of agency in the perpetuation of underdevelopment, especially in underdeveloped places. The poverty of the Third World is exclusively a result of the irresponsibility of the First World.

This point where post-development places the responsibility for underdevelopment only tells half of the story for the culpability in underdevelopment. In line with the centrality of agency in the intercultural perspective to development, responsibility is a very fundamental factor in development. It is not only the intercultural perspective that centralises responsibility in development. On the question of collective responsibility in development, using the Ubuntu model, some defend the thesis that, the collective

responsibility of developing societies in relation to development is grounded by the imperative to care about the humanity of people (OKEJA 2017). This thesis of Uchenna Okeja is a laudable ideal in the quest for responsibility in development. But this sounds more like the case for objective responsibility in the intercultural perspective. In the intercultural perspective, agential integrity is key to development and agents with such integrity are very alive to responsibility, which can be at both the subjective and objective levels. Given the understanding of development as purposeful and value-driven positive change (in which all the elements of value are couched in rational consistency-beneficence and the aim is to accomplish self-realisation through positive freedom), when the framers of development do not guarantee the conditions for the accomplishment of this kind of change, their complicity in underdevelopment is at the level of objective responsibility. In this sense, objective responsibility is all about ensuring proper treatment for people who are not connected to the significant self in any way. It is about giving fair treatment to those who are members of the out-house community. Okeja's case for giving care to humanity falls conveniently at this level. The recipients of development are also part of humanity, thus there is every need to show them care as well. There is every need to be fair to them. Thus, Trans-Atlantic Slavery, Colonialism, neo-colonialism, coloniality all represent objective irresponsibility on the side of the Europeans nations that master-minded these. The victims of these experiences were not members of the in-house group of the perpetrators (European nations) of these acts. Responsibility, in terms of apportioning blameworthiness, is obvious in this regard and it is objective.

But post-development does not acknowledge subjective responsibility in terms of apportioning blameworthiness to the agency of the recipients of development. It does not highlight the fact that development also failed because the recipients of development were subjectively irresponsible. They were unable to show responsibility to the significant self and the in-house community. In Africa, for example, Slave-Trade was quite successful because blacks helped in capturing and organising slave raids within their communities. Indirect rule of colonialism was successful because Warrant Officers/Chiefs were handy, from among the people, to help accomplish the aspiration of colonisation. The Apartheid in South Africa could not have been successful if not for the ways the natives aided and abated the process. Even today, in the aftermath of colonialism, African nations are degraded politically, economically and socially because her leaders (and even followers) have refused to be subjectively responsible for her development. Part of the reason for this kind of complicity in the under developing of Africa is in the fact of the improper constitution of agency. Two key elements of agential integrity in the intercultural perspective to development are agential reactivity/receptivity and cultural firewalling. These are paths through which agency is formed and the particularistic nature of African Traditional Religions makes cultural firewalling and agential receptivity weak. Thus, it is difficult to easily resist negative influences and Africa has continued to blame others for her unfortunate situation.

In summary, the division of responsibility into its subjective and objective sides, properly narrows down the question of responsibility in development. Post-development only tells half of the story of responsibility in development. It attends only to the objective irresponsibility of the framers of development to the course of underdevelopment in the world. By highlighting the

powerlessness of agents in the face of discourse, it also wipes clean the subjective irresponsibility of the recipients of development in the cause of the failure of development. In this situation of only partly determining responsibility to development, it is difficult to construct a response to underdevelopment that is comprehensive enough. This partial understanding of the responsibility for development is why post-development is quite reductionist in its understanding of development and it can even envision the end of development.

Hybridity and the ‘End of Development’

Following the understanding of development in the above and the levels of responsibility for development, one can begin to understand that ‘the end of development’ is not possible. This is because, by its very nature development is desirable. Once the pursuit of development is attentive to the dictate of rational consistency beneficence as identified in the intercultural perspective above, development will be a more fruitful experience for humanity. The instrumentalization of reason in the pursuit of development is part of what has created the impression that development is something to be avoided, something flawed and something poised to give the very opposite of what it claims to offer (that is, it has produced more poverty and more problems for the world than it has solved). Understanding development as rational consistency beneficence in the quest for self-determination through positive freedom represents some of the universal values and attitudes engrained in development. Adapting and expressing these values and interests in various contexts refers to the particular dimensions of development. Agbakoba submits in this regard that, “... the universal and particular dimensions of development, are interlocking, forming a functionally integrated whole within which the individual can realise himself/herself” (2019, 64). Thus, the end of development is a fruitful combination of the universal and particular dimensions of development; a hybrid of a sort.

The idea of hybrid is very germane to the intercultural approach to development. Prior to the operationalisation of the concept of the hybridity in interculturality, it was already functioning in the works of Homi Bhabha. First mentioned in [The Location of Culture] (1994), it “is one of the most vital concepts in cultural criticism today. Along with his other ideas such as ‘sly civility’ and ‘colonial non-sense’, by the late 1990s it had passed into the currency of theoretical debate and has remained influential ever since” (RAJAN 1998, 496). In Bhabha's works, the concept of hybridity of cultures carries the sense of mixedness or impurity of cultures knowing that no culture is pure. According to Bhabha, every culture is an original mixedness within every form of identity. Thus, the development of the concept is an attempt at diffusing the essentialism that there is in the conceptualisation of culture and identity (IDACHABA 2020, 46). On this question of the non-essential nature of culture and identity, Bhabha writes that, “the very idea of pure ethnically cleansed national identity can only be achieved through the death, literal and figurative, of the complex interweavings of history, and the culturally contingent borderlines of modern nationhood” (1994, 7).

Interculturality takes this discussion further by drawing a distinction between a hybrid and a mongrel. In the words of Agbakoba:

Ordinarily, a hybrid means the same as a mongrel, namely, a product, especially biologically, of the breeding or union of two different stocks. However,...a mongrel represents the product of a forcible union or fusion of two different cultures in which the element from one of the cultures is very significant and brought about at the instance of the more powerful of the two cultures as could be seen, for instance, in colonialism and imperialism... the hybrid on the other hand, is a product of a more consensual union of two different cultures in which a very significant element of such a product is from one of the cultures – a hybrid is a product of conscious, constructive efforts at a fusion of cultures. (2019, 19)

Agbakoba further buttresses his point when he concludes that, "... a colonial people could be cultural mongrels and a postcolonial people would be cultural hybrids" (2019, 20). Furthermore, hybridity could result in heterosis or heterolysis. Heterosis (hybrid vigour), refers to "the superior energy and vigorosity displayed in a hybrid relative to its parents" (AGBAKOBA 2019, 31). Simply put, heterosis suggests that the production of the hybrid between two cultures should exhibit superior positive qualities over and above the initial cultures from which the hybrid came (IDACHABA 2020, 46). In the case of Heterolysis, the hybrid is enervated or devitalised relative to its parents on account of the enormity of the total effects of negations and negative effects in the hybridisation processes and their consequences (AGBAKOBA 2019, 32). From the nature of heterolysis, the end product of the hybrid is inferior to its parents.

While it has been noted that development is the product of the hybrid between the universal and particular dimensions of development, it should be underscored that the idea of hybridity in development also carries that sense that development is always constructed, not given. This construction can only happen from the rubbles of cultural items available to us. In this world of heavy cross-cultural contact, to want to construct development solely on local cultural items is not only retrograde but parochially utopic. Thus, this construction can only be through a combination of cultural items from diverse backgrounds. This is hybridity. Societies seeking development must construct themselves based on the cultural items available to them. The hybrid outcomes of heterosis and heterolysis in the intercultural perspective to development further points to the kind of outcome such construction should have. Development as has been experienced as a result of the effects of instrumental reason and as a result of the subjective irresponsibility of the recipients of development have all been cases of heterolysis. They are cases of hybrid devitalisation. A better construction of development in reaction to this should aspire to a form of hybrid vigour (heterosis). A situation in which the outcome has to be more or less as strong as the parents even if it cannot be stronger. This is why development cannot end, rather its end is (or has to be) hybridity (hybrid vigour or heterosis).

Conclusion

The arguments in the foregoing have been simple. The position of post-development is not tenable because, it does not espouse a clear position of what development is or rather, reduces development to the post-World War II

understanding of development; it is unable to account for agency in the development quest properly; and some of the efforts of African voices with regard to it are not comprehensive enough. We have argued that interculturality addresses these defects by: defining development bearing in mind its universal and particular dimensions; insisting on properly re-fixing the face of responsibility in development; and pointing to hybridity as the end of development. Following this trend of thinking in the African indigenous intercultural theory of development, the final word is that the end of development is not possible, rather the end of development is hybridity (heterosis or hybrid vigour).

Declarations

The author declares no conflict of interest and no ethical issues for this research.

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Abstract

Techno-colonialism, which I argue here to specifically mean the transfer of technology and its values and norms from one locale to another, has become a serious concern with the advancement of socially disruptive technologies¹ of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR), like artificial intelligence and robots. While the transfer of technology from one locale, especially economically advanced countries, to developing countries comes with economic benefits for both regions, it is important to understand that technologies are not value-neutral; they come with the values, cultures, and worldviews of their designers. However, despite the nonvalue-neutrality of the technologies of the 4IR, they are still relevant for sub-Saharan Africa's development. Thus, using a phenomenological approach, especially the sub-Saharan African experiences of past histories of colonialism, I prescribe cautionary measures that sub-Saharan Africans ought to take in approaching the current industrial revolution and its technologies.

Keywords: Techno-Colonialism, Sub-Saharan Africa, Fourth industrial revolution, Values, Technology.

Introduction

An industrial revolution can be defined as a movement from traditional ways of production (such as human-sourced labour) to new ways of production using new technologies (RASHIED AND BHAMJEE 2020). The Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) (which proceeds after the Third Industrial Revolution (3IR) (the information technology era), and that goes back to the First Industrial Revolution (1IR) (the steam engine era) (XU, DAVID, AND KIM 2018), is said to be characterized by intensified production and use of cybertechnologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), robotics, Internet of Things (IoT), 3D Printing and others (XU, DAVID, AND KIM 2018).

Theorists like Spyros Makridakis (2017), Klaus Swab (2017), and Xu n.d.n. (2018) variously argue that the 4IR comes with sophisticated technologies that are said to improve production across countries. In line with these views, thinkers like Wim Naude (2019) and Ayentimi Tutu & John Burgess (2019) claim

¹ Socially disruptive technologies means technologies that are unpredictable, as a result, they constantly distort our norms, values, and how we engage with each other in our societies (HORPSTER 2021)

that the application of technologies of the 4IR in sub-Saharan Africa can eliminate pressing social issues like poverty in this context.

On the contrary, Moses Oketch (2014) and Benjamin Ogwo (2018) argue that sub-Saharan Africans lack the requisite skills to engage with the technologies of the 4IR. In addition, and most relevant to the theme of this paper, Ibekwe Chinweizu (1975), Naiefa Rashied and Muaaz Bhamjee (2020), Willem Gravet (2020), and Edmund Ugar (2022a) all maintain that technologies of industrial revolutions are guilty of perpetuating colonialism and/or neo-colonialism. As a result, these theorists problematize the idea that sub-Saharan Africa's current social issues, like poverty and inequality, can be solved by embracing the technologies of the 4IR.

Contrary to the view that the technologies of the 4IR may be problematic in solving sub-Saharan African social challenges, in this paper, I agree that the current socioeconomic challenges of sub-Saharan Africa can be solved using the technologies of the 4IR, such as AI, robots, and big data. However, I argue that sub-Saharan Africans must be critical of its use and engagement with the technologies of the 4IR. This is because the technologies of the 4IR, like any other technology, are not value-neutral or value-free. These technologies are embedded in them the norms, cultures, and values of the society where they are designed. For instance, technologies like sex robots carry with them what is considered "appropriate" sexual relations in the locus where they are designed. Additionally, technologies like autonomous weapon systems reflect their designers' conception of warfare. This view is exposed more clearly by Langdon Winner (1989), Don Ihde (1993), Manuel Aviles-Santiago (2015), and Ugar (2022b).

For example, Winner (1989) argues that technologies are created by their designers to facilitate the convenient establishment of power dynamics and relations by the authorities of a given locale. In this sense, Winner contends that technologies tend to adapt to how they are used in an environment. To further this view, Aviles-Santiago claims that technologies come with "intractable properties that are unavoidably linked to the institutionalized patterns of power and authority in which they were initially embedded" (AVILES-SANTIAGO 2015,2). Given the embedded politics, patterns of power, and societal relations that are embedded in technologies, Ihde (1993) and Ugar (2022b) argue that when a technology is transferred, the technologies also come with these dynamics and the cultural worldviews of the designers, as in the case of the aforementioned examples which could also be extended to other technologies. Ihde specifically sees technology transfer as the "introduction of some set of material artefacts out of their original context of human praxes or techniques, into some other cultural context" (IHDE 1993,32).

In the context of this paper, technology transfer means the transfer of technologies of the industrial revolution, specifically the 4IR, such as AI and robots, from their original context, which is Euro-America, the United Kingdom, China, and Japan, to solve sub-Saharan African issues². Undoubtedly, sub-Saharan

² In this paper, I focus specifically on technologies that are designed and transferred from Europe and America.

Africa has so much to gain with the technologies of the 4IR in solving their socioeconomic challenges, especially in mechanizing their agricultural sector and building infrastructures. However, I argue that sub-Saharan Africans should not be oblivious to the non-value-neutrality of technologies and their implications. One of the implications of the nonvalue-neutrality of technologies is that these technologies may be guilty of being used to perpetrate techno-colonialism, understood here as the transfer of values and/or norms from one context to another through technology. This transfer implies that the recipient society, sub-Saharan Africa, may begin to adapt to the values/norms that come with the technologies.

Given the past experiences of colonialism in sub-Saharan Africa and the aftermaths of colonialism, which resorted to the distortion of the social, political, and cultural worldviews of sub-Saharan Africans, this paper aims to challenge the region to think critically of its engagement with technologies of the 4IR in solving their socioeconomic challenges. Furthermore, the paper prescribes some cautionary measures to circumvent the possible techno-colonialism in sub-Saharan Africa that may arise from its usage of the technologies of the 4IR.

I structure this paper in the following way. In the first section, I briefly expose the 1IR, 2IR, and 3IR and the colonialism that came with these industrial revolutions. The second section discusses the issue of techno-colonialism in the 4IR. I begin by first discussing what technology means. Second, I show how technologies replicate the values of their designers. Third, I discuss how the technologies of the 4IR can be used to advance my conception of techno-colonialism. In the third section, I prescribe some cautionary measures on how Africans ought to engage with technologies, especially those of the 4IR.

Exploring the Colonialism of the First, Second, and Third Industrial Revolutions

In the simplest form, an industrial revolution is a radical deviation from traditional ways of goods production, service rendering, and governing society by improvising and bringing new factors and their combination into the current system (ONWUGHALU & OJAKOROTU 2020, 78). The simplest explanation in describing any industrial revolution is to view the industrial revolution as a transition of any current labour force that uses human energy to machines. In addition, industrial revolutions aim to transform society with technological innovations. As a result, the First Industrial Revolution (1IR), which allegedly began in the mid-18th to 19th century, lasting about a century, 1750-1850, saw the invention of the steam engine (PRISECARU 2016, 57). The invention of the steam engine created a transition into a manufacturing era by applying machines in production and replacing manual labour (AYETEMI & BURGESS 2019). The dominant aspects of manufacturing which played a very important role in the 1IR were textile and steel (PRISECARU 2016).

Building on 1IR, the Second Industrial Revolution (2IR) began between 1850 and 1914 (PRISECARU 2016). The 2IR saw the invention of the combustion engine, which led to an advanced level of industrialization using oil and electricity to power mass production, communication technology, and advanced transportation (PRISECARU 2016, 58; MAKRIDAKIS 2017; XU n.d.n 2018). The focus of the 2IR was on the invention of electricity, normalizing the use of steel, and the advancement of the method of transportation, which began with the

introduction of the steam engine in the 1IR (PRISECARU 2016). The invention and use of electricity for communication, motors, and lighting eased the production and distribution of goods. Additionally, this industrial revolution witnessed the building of internal combustion engines for air and ground transportation (PRISECARU 2016).

The 3IR began in the 20th century (PRISECARU 2016). The major drivers of the 3IR were digitalization and the advancement and growth of electronic technologies (AYENTIMI & BURGESS 2019; ONWUGHALU & OJAKOROTU 2020,78). Electronic technologies, here, also include digital technologies. Digital technologies of the 3IR were not only computers and communication devices but also materials that powered these devices, such as semiconductors, faxes, emails, electronic documents, the internet, e-commerce, personalization of devices, mobile telecommunication, and the automatic teller machine (ATMs).

The developments and innovations of the industrial revolutions are the transformative catalysts that transitioned humans from the Stone Age to the modern era characterized by modern technologies. However, despite the developments and inventions stemming from the industrial revolutions and the benefits that human societies have enjoyed from the advancements of technologies of the industrial revolutions, these revolutions, especially the 1IR and the 2IR, have been guilty of being used to staged colonialism in some parts of the world.

The advent of colonialism is tied to the advent of the 1IR and 2IR in the global North, which brought significant changes in production and industrialization (OCHENI & NWANKWO 2012). The colonization of Africa was Europe's response to provide themselves with raw materials for production to cater for the continent's growing population (CHINWEIZU 1978, 35). The technologies of the 1IR and 2IR made Europe's exploitation and search for raw materials for production realizable. However, there were adverse implications of European exploration. One of the implications was that their exploration led to exploitation. Their exploitation also led to domination by colonializing places like sub-Saharan Africa and creating systems that valorized their worldviews over the African way of life (OCHENI AND NWANKWO 2012). Consequently, colonialism benefited Europe as it helped the continent economically and politically. On the contrary, colonialism distorted sub-Saharan Africa's cultural, epistemic, moral, and economic systems. How so?

The West benefitted from colonialism at the expense of sub-Saharan Africa by looting the colonies they colonized and using their resources to build colonial empires (FIELDHOUSE 1965, 382). Second, the colonizers extracted gains from the colonial territories by establishing transnational companies that used their colonies' indigenous labourers and provided them with low and stagnant returns (AMIN 1972). Third, food and finances were transferred from the colonies to the metropolis to sustain the metropolis while leaving the colonies poor (AMIN 1972). Last, there was a high disregard for the native cultures, belief systems, language, and heritage; these aspects of the colonized were seen as primitive and of low standard (UGAR 2022a). I focus on this last point in the third section of this paper.

On the contrary, here are some of the implications of the arrival of the colonialist to sub-Saharan Africa. First, upon arrival in sub-Saharan Africa, the colonizers provided Western education, imposed a Western belief system, changed the production method, and altered the political landscape of sub-Saharan Africa. As much as these provisions were subtly and seldom beneficial to the African people, it was not built on African epistemic and cultural systems; thus, when the colonizers left, the colonized were still dependent on the colonizer's ways of life in Africa. Through this dependence, Africans have mirrored the Western way of life. This is evident in how sub-Saharan Africa has been "unable" to develop African-centred technologies to participate in the drive of the 4IR but depends on the colonizer's technologies.

However, the region does not realize that when they consume the colonizer's technologies, they also consume the values, norms, and cultures embedded in these technologies, as I will show in the next section. What is worth knowing is that there is an uneasy tension between values from the West and those of sub-Saharan Africa. While the West believes in individualist value systems, such as individual human rights, autonomy and freewill, the dominant worldviews of sub-Saharan Africa gravitate towards communal rights and responsibility (IKUENOBE 2016). The tension between Western individualist and sub-Saharan African communitarian value systems is evident in how technologies, such as sex robots and autonomous weapons designed in the West, mirror individualist values and cultures. However, before I show this tension in technologies such as sex robots and autonomous weapon systems, it is necessary that I show how technologies reflect the values and norms of their designers. This is because this current paper is more concerned with the technologies, rather than the mindsets, of the industrial revolutions, especially the 4IR.

An Exposition of the Concept of Technology as a Value Placeholder

The meaning of the term "technology" has been engaged with through the works of Herbert Marcuse (1998), Verbeek (2001) and Heidegger (1993). Marcuse (1998) alludes that technology is "a mode of production, as the totality of instruments, devices and contrivances which characterize the machine age" (MARCUSE 1998, 41). Marcuse's definition reveals the relationship between humans and technology (UGAR 2022b). To this, philosophers of technology who take the instrumentalist view argue that technologies are just tools that can only be judged by their usage (VERBEEK 2001,143). Contrary to this view, those who take the substantivist view, especially Heidegger (1993), see technologies as that which are not mere tools but things that can change a people's culture.

In this paper, I take a middle ground between the instrumentalist and the substantivist, a stance similar to Don Ihde (1999). I consider technologies to be artefacts that assist humans in carrying out tasks. However, at the same time, these artefacts are bearers of values and norms. Here, I focus primarily on technologies of the 4IR, such as AI and robots. I focus on these technologies because of their disruptive nature; their ability to constantly disrupt our norms, values, and cultures due to their unpredictability (HORPSTER 2021).

Ibo van de Poel defines the above technologies as "sociotechnical systems" that are dependent on "technical hardware, human behaviours and social

institutions” (VAN DE POEL 2020, 391) to function properly. These technologies are sociotechnical because they are technical artefacts designed to function in technical ways with a specific intention (VAN DE POEL 2020, 391). Second, the technologies are designed to have some form of agency, such as autonomy, adaptability, and the ability to interact with other agents in their environment (VAN DE POEL 2020). Last, these technologies are designed to follow certain rules (VAN DE POEL 2020, 392). However, they follow technical norms rather than human institutional norms; the latter requires some form of intention, while the former requires “causal-physical” interaction with rules (VAN DE POEL 2020).

Drawing from Van de Poel’s contention, sociotechnical artefacts such as AI and robots are expected to mirror human intellectual processes, carry out tasks, possess a certain form of artificial agency by interacting and learning from their environments, and follow certain rules prescribed by the social institutions of their designers. Furthermore, these technologies are also expected to mirror their designers’ peripheral and internal appearances, thinking, and being. Catherine Botha (2021) advances this point further.

Botha (2021,119) contends that social technologies, such as humanoid robots, are designed to replicate “human bodies that are consistent with their own cultural norms” (BOTHA 2021, 119). The designers of these robots make their designs align with their cultural norms as well as their gender and race. One can then draw from Botha’s contention that technologies are instruments of the cultures and societies where they are designed since they mirror the actions and appearances of their designers. This view has been advanced by Winner (1989), Ihde (1993), Aviles-Santiago (2015), and Ugar (2022b).

According to Winner (1989), technologies are not value or culturally neutral. Technologies tend to assume the relations in the context in which they are designed. It is Winner’s (1989) contention that technologies are designed for economic purposes and to foster the establishment of power dynamics and relations within the environment where they are borne from. These technologies possess “intractable properties that are unavoidably linked to the institutionalized patterns of power and authority in which they were originally embedded” (AVILES-SANTIAGO 2015, 2). The point Winner (1989) and Aviles-Santiago (2015) are trying to drive home is that the designers of technologies design their artefacts to replicate their values and norms; they may do this either consciously or unconsciously. I briefly make this point clearer by discussing two examples of technologies that mirror the locus of their design.

Sex Robots

Technologies like sex robots have become better with the advancement of the 4IR. Sex robots, understood here as humanoid robots with human appearances, intentions, and moves, are technological designs that aid human sexual stimulation and release (DANAHER 2017, 4). Sex robots are creations of Douglas Hines of the TrueCompanion company and Matt McMullen of the RealDoll company in New Jersey and Las Vegas in the United States (DANAHER 2017, 6; UGAR 2022c, 7). The technologies are designed to assist individuals in exercising their liberty of living out their sexual fantasies with robots that replicate human sexual

behaviours and appearances (UGAR 2022c). Within the locus where sex robots stem from, people have the liberty to engage in sexual activity with whoever and whatever they desire to have sex with. In addition, they can choose to marry whoever and whatever they desire.

This is because people in America, by extension, the West, operate within an ethical framework which allows individuals to choose their sexual desires and fantasies. Americans see the human person as an individual with dignity. Their idea of dignity is characterized dominantly by freewill, rights and autonomy- the ability to choose one's desires in life as long as it does not threaten another person's life. Because American society operates within the above ethical paradigm, technologies of the 4IR, from America or the West, are designed to advance the Western value system of individualism chiefly characterized by autonomy and rights (CANTWELL-SMITH 2019).

However, contrary to the Western view, sub-Saharan Africans operate within communitarian value systems with community-centred norms (MBITI 1969; MENKITI 1984; IKUENOBE 2016). Within the sub-Saharan communitarian setting, individuals do not make decisions that are contrary to the norms and values that the community has stipulated. In this sense, the values prized by the community take precedence over individual values. In the case of sex, sub-Saharan Africans consider sex pleasurable for men and women, but at the same time, the primary importance of sex is for procreation (KELBESSA 2017, 375). It is not the individual's responsibility to prescribe how sex should happen but the community's responsibility. The point I am trying to foster here is that humans engaging in sexual relations with robots do not fall under the African normative conception of sexual activities. This is primarily because, on the one hand, the robots are not humans, and sexual activities within the sub-Saharan African locale are prescribed to happen between humans (OKYERE-MANU 2021,113-4; MOYO 2021; UGAR 2022c). Sex with robots cannot lead to the primary goal of sex, which is procreation, on the other hand (UGAR 2022c).

Furthermore, the very appearance of sex robots³ as a replica of the human body objectifies the human body, especially the body parts, from a sub-Saharan African perspective (UGAR 2023). From a sub-Saharan African perspective, the human body is considered sacred (TEMPLES 1959; MBITI 1969; BUJO 2009), including the body parts (NZEKWU 2011). For instance, recurrent sub-Saharan African cultures conceive the female vagina as sacred because it brings life into existence. Nkiru Nzewu (2011), a Nigerian philosopher on African sexuality, discusses what the Igbo tribe in South-eastern Nigeria conceives the vagina to be. She writes that:

[T]he positive conception of the vagina derives from its vital role as a conduit through which all people come, regardless of sex, class, and social status. Because of its importance in the continuation of birth and

³ The research field of humanoid robotic design is a research area that is emerging in the 21st century. Humanoid robots mean artificial beings with human-like characteristics, representation, and appearances designed "to interact closely with humans in social contexts" (BOTHA, 2021, 119)

the expansion of families, the vagina becomes the seat of women's power. It is a cavernous chamber that works with the uterus to incubate life and later delivers it into the world. (2011, 262)

Given the above exposition, it is evident that the very representation of sex robots and what the technology is used for goes against African beliefs as opposed to the Western belief system. These differences and disparities can be explained from the perspective that technologies are designed to replicate their designers' worldviews, bodies, norms, and values. I strengthen this claim by providing another example, using a lethal autonomous weapon.

Lethal Autonomous Weapon System

Lethal autonomous weapons are smart weapon technologies used by the military. The smartness of these weapons comes from their ability to make critical decisions autonomously. The robots use AI algorithms to enable them to identify, select, and eliminate their targets without the intervention of human actors. The development of autonomous weapons has been more reliant on sensor technologies, robotics, AI facial recognition system, information technologies and other technologies (ETZIONI & ETZIONI 2017, 72). One of the main aims of developing an autonomous system is to supplement and/or replace human combatants on the battlefield.

Roboticians like Ronald Arkin (2010, 332) argue that autonomous weapon robots are morally acceptable and ethically preferable to human combatants. For Arkin (2010), there are several reasons why these weapons are preferable. One reason is that they are not programmed with self-preservative instincts; as a result, emotions like fear do not cloud their judgments. In addition, the systems are programmed to process more information faster than humans. Contrary to the above view, some theorists consider the technologies unethical (ETZIONI & ETZIONI 2017; UMBRELLO 2019). Some concerns are that the technology depends on algorithms to make decisions. However, one cannot trust algorithms to comprehend the value of human life by empowering such systems with the decision-making capability to choose who gets to live or die.

In the context of this paper, I am more concerned with the "worldviews" of these technologies. For example, the very nature of an autonomous weapon system is that the technology replicates Western values/norms, such as autonomy. The technology is designed to have the primary capacity to make decisions autonomously without human interference. However, this is contrary to African communitarian norms and practices. Within the sub-Saharan locale, a decision, such as who gets to live or die or a decision that may have a possible adverse impact on the community, like warfare, cannot be abdicated to a single individual to make. The community makes such decisions through deliberation with all the stakeholders involved. Thus, it is safe to say that the very nature of an autonomous weapon system contradicts sub-Saharan African views of shared rather than autonomous decision-making.

However, a critic might say Africans also prize individual autonomy, just like in the West. For instance, the critic may argue that African theorists, such as Kwame Gyekye (1996) and Motsamai Molefe (2017), variously pointed out the

individualist thinking in African societies. For instance, Gyekye (1996) believes that even though individuals are members of their society, they can still express their *individualness* through making personal choices. However, as much as the theorists mentioned above point out some form of individualist thinking in sub-Saharan Africa, it must be understood that individualist orientation is secondary within the African context. Sub-Saharan Africans' recurrent values and norms are community-centred and characterized by interpersonal relationships and communal good (GYEKYE 1996; METZ 2011; MOLEFE 2017). Given the tension between Western values and norms, which are primarily individual-centred and sub-Saharan African values and norms, which are community-centred, the next section discusses the possible problems that may arise from the Western design of technologies when used in sub-Saharan Africa.

Techno-Colonialism: A Case of Cultural Colonialism through Technology

As previously outlined, colonialism is “a practice of domination involving the subjugation of one people by another through military, economic, and political means” (MIGNOLO & WALSH 2018, 116). In this sense, colonialism can be further explained as a form of control of one nation or region over another by possessing and occupying its land with settlers, extracting its resources during the period of settling, and exploiting the region economically, socially, mentally, and otherwise (MIGNOLO & WALSH 2018, 116). Techno-colonialism also takes this approach.

The term techno-colonialism came into light with its first usage by Randy Bush in 2000. Bush conceives techno-colonialism as “the exploitation of poorer cultures by richer ones through technology” (2015, N.P.). However, in this paper, I take another approach to techno-colonialism. I narrow the meaning of techno-colonialism to mean value colonialism through the use of technology. This form of colonialism may occur during technology transfer.

As Ihde (1993) contends, technology transfer comes with cultural transfer. He defines technology transfer as the “introduction of some set of material artefacts out of their original context of human praxes or techniques, into some other cultural context” (1993, 32). As I have outlined in the previous section, technologies replicate their designers' values, norms, and worldviews; as a result, when technology transfer happens, the culture, norms, and worldviews of the designers' societies are also transferred.

Consider the following extract from Ihde:

(a) When a “technologically advanced” people-with steel axes-come into contact with, say, people using only Stone Age tools, there will be an initial flow of artifacts from the advanced to the indigenous people. They will simply adapt and even covet steel axes, (b) The reason, the standard analysis usually holds, is that the steel axe is obviously more efficient, and functional-it cuts down trees faster and with less effort. Never mind that this reason is also ipso facto already an assumed value within the “advanced” culture, (c) But, then, at first unknown to the recipient people, more is being received

than a steel axe. What, underneath, is being taken in is a new set of relations, primarily economic, which will eventually result in dependency relations for the indigenous people. Thus, because the indigenous people, now accustomed to the steel axe, cannot produce one- they do not have the technological praxis- they must enter trade and other relations...which eventually make them dependent upon the “advanced” culture. (IHDE 1993, 32)

Cultural transfer hidden in technology happens through fascination. For example, technologies of the 4IR, such as sex robots and autonomous weapon systems, may fascinate sub-Saharan Africans because of their representation and operation. As a result, they might want to purchase these technologies. However, it is pertinent to understand that technologies are not abstractly designed but based on the experiences of human relations in the society where they are designed, as pointed out in the extract from Ihde. For Ihde, these experiences and relations are multidimensional in that they include economic productivity and expose their designers’ cultures, values, and norms (1993, 34). It is multidimensional because of the interwovenness of the cultural, economic, and existential exchange that happens when technologies are used. My notion of techno-colonialism, understood as culture/value/norm transfer in technology, becomes a possibility through this transfer. When this transfer occurs, it disrupts the values of the recipient’s culture, values and norms. This is because the recipients of the technologies begin to replicate and live by the cultural norms and values of the designers of the technologies they use. Technologies of the 4IR can advance this form of colonialism because of their disruptive nature. The paragraphs that follow discuss the possibility of techno-colonialism, specifically in sub-Saharan Africa, through the technologies of the 4IR.

The expression “4IR”⁴ comes from Klaus Schwab (2016) in his World Economic Forum address, where he spoke about the world’s movement to a new technological era. As he explains,

Like the First Industrial Revolution’s steam-powered factories, the Second Industrial Revolution’s application of science to mass production and manufacturing, and the Third Industrial Revolution’s start into digitization, the Fourth Industrial Revolution’s technologies, such as artificial intelligence, genome editing, augmented reality, robotics, and 3-D printing, are rapidly changing the way humans create, exchange, and distribute value. (SCHWAB 2017, NP)

The 4IR (which proceeds after prior Industrial Revolutions) is characterized by intensified production and use of cybertechnologies such as AI, robotics, the Internet of Things (IoT), and 3-D Printing (XU n.d.n 2018). Thinkers like Wim

⁴ The 4IR began in the second half of 2017 and is still ongoing (LEE n.d.n 2018). It is a “cyber-physical production system” driven by new technologies determining and defining the speed of development within and amongst nations, creating new jobs and eliminating old jobs through automation, creating impacts on governmental regulations, and putting humans as consumers.

Naude (2019), Ayentimi Tutu and John Burgess (2019) are optimistic that the technologies of the 4IR are economically beneficial to sub-Saharan Africa. I partially agree with Ayentimi and Burgess (2019) and Naude (2019) on the view that 4IR technologies have some economic benefits for sub-Saharan Africa if deployed to the region. For example, technologies of the 4IR can be applied to healthcare, such as electronic health data, to carry out state-of-the-art clinical diagnosis. Furthermore, the agricultural sector can benefit from 5G networks and the application of machine learning technologies to advanced crops and allow farmers to carry out e-commerce. Thus, sub-Saharan Africa stands a chance to benefit from the technologies of the 4IR and should not be left out in the pursuit of 4IR technologies.

However, despite the importance of AI technology to the sub-Saharan African economy, sub-Saharan African states should not be overzealous in the simple wholesale import of AI technologies and robots that do not reflect the values and norms of their region. This is because the wholesale importation of these technologies comes with the importation of the underpinning values, norms, and cultures that are embedded in these technologies by their designer, like the case of sex robots and autonomous weapons discussed above. I contend that the transfer of these technologies may lead to the value colonialism of the recipient societies, in this case, sub-Saharan Africa. For example, in the case of sex robots, sub-Saharan Africans may begin to abandon their conception of sex, as prescribed by the community, to visualize sex in whichever way they individually deem fit. Here we can see the individual freewill and autonomy overshadowing communal norms. To circumvent this problem, I prescribe some cautionary measures that ought to be taken by sub-Saharan Africans to allow them to enjoy the benefits of the technologies of the 4IR.

Cautionary Prescriptive Measures for the Deployment of 4IR Technologies in Sub-Saharan Africa

One of the characteristics of colonialism, which I have stressed in this paper, is that the minds of the colonialists are geared towards domination and control. Here, I juxtapose my idea of control and dominance with Heidegger's (1993). *Bestand*, as used by Heidegger (1993), means "standing reserve" or turning everything that exists into raw material for production (1993, 325). I read the implication of Heidegger's (1993) *Bestand* to mean a situation where human beings lose touch with their essence, given how they are being reduced to mere objects without dignity (FEENBERG 1998, 9). Since human dignity is defined and shaped by cultural identity, values, and norms, it follows that human beings could also be said to lose their culture, values, norms, and everything that makes their identity when they begin to embrace a culture that is not theirs. This embrace can be made possible through technology transfer. Here, the receiving culture begins to consume the technology and the culture, values, and norms embedded in the technologies. In doing so, they begin to self-annihilate their values, norms, and cultures while they assume the norms, values, and cultures of the designers of these technologies. In this way, they become passively controlled by another society without realizing it, thereby losing their identity.

Given sub-Saharan Africa's past histories of colonialism, it is pertinent that they are cautious of how they use technologies of the 4IR to deal with their

socioeconomic challenges because of the nonvalue neutrality of these technologies. Failure to use these technologies cautiously will put sub-Saharan Africans at risk of losing their identities, norms, values, and cultures while using deployed technologies, especially from the West. To circumvent this possible annihilation of African values, norms, and cultures through technology transfer, I provide relevant cautionary measures the region should follow.

First, sub-Saharan Africans must understand that technologies are not value-neutral. Technologies come with the values of their designers and the cultural orientation of the locus from which they are designed. Understanding that there may be contradictions in values and norms embedded in deployed technologies within the region is a prerequisite to knowing which technologies should be deployed into the region. For instance, technologies of the 4IR, such as the internet, are important in conducting business in sub-Saharan Africa. However, the internet has also made sub-Saharan Africans less socially engaging with each other through face-to-face conversation, given the advent of social media technologies, which are dependent on the internet. Nonetheless, because the internet has economic importance for sub-Saharan Africans, it can still be deployed into the region but with the awareness of the above-mentioned challenge. On the contrary, technologies like sex robots, as I have spelt out, are not necessary in sub-Saharan Africa because they do not fit into the cultural worldviews of those in the region. Thus, they should not be deployed.

Second, and most importantly, sub-Saharan Africans must begin to develop their technologies rather than consume technologies from other regions. Sub-Saharan Africans must start a new history of technological mindset and innovation. To achieve this technological production mindset, sub-Saharan Africa must generate ideas on developing technologies that fit into their reality and challenges. To begin with, they must first create the conditions for a suitable technological ecosystem to develop the technologies they can call their own; that is, technologies that replicate their values, norms, and cultures.

This can be achieved through the continent's investments in the "craftshumanship" of Africans. Furthermore, to enjoy the benefits of the current 4IR technological era and future technological advancements, they must develop policies that allow for the independent production of technologies within the region free from the coloniality of the West and its propriety measures. Finally, they should look into the abundant resources in their indigenous knowledge systems and combine these knowledge systems with acquired modern technical skills to produce novel technologies. For example, I have argued elsewhere (UGAR 2022a) that they can use their relational system of thoughts to create relational technologies. However, I leave this aspect to African developers to figure out how to create these technologies. My intuition is that if technologies can replicate their designers' values, cultures and norms, it is feasible to create technologies in whichever way we envisage. However, this can only be figured out by engineers and software developers.

Concluding Remarks

In this paper, I have argued that technologies are designed to replicate their designers' values, worldviews, and norms. Given this view, when a technology is transferred from one environment to another, the cultural norms and values of the

designers are also transferred. In most cases, these values sit in an uneasy tension with the recipient values and norms, like the case of the West and sub-Saharan Africa, as I have shown in this paper. The implication of this technology transfer might lead to techno-colonialism, understood here as the transfer of cultural values and norms, through technology, from one locale to another. Given the past histories of colonialism in sub-Saharan Africa, on the one hand, and the apparent need of the region to tackle its current socioeconomic challenges using technologies of the 4IR, on the other hand, I spelt out some prescriptive cautionary measures that can enable the region to leverage the benefit that comes with 4IR without being recolonized. These measures are that the region must understand that the values embedded in technologies of the 4IR are not value-neutral. As a result, it is important to be careful regarding the technologies they choose to deploy in the region. Second, the region must create an enabling environment to become producers of technologies that speak to its realities rather than just consume external technologies.

Declarations

The author declares no conflict of interest and no ethical issues for this research.

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Limited Communitarianism and the Merit of Afro-communitarian Rejectionism

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Abstract

Limited communitarianism is presented as an alternative to classical communitarianism in African philosophy. Bernard Matolino, the proponent of this view, argues that personhood can be attained with the constitutive features of the self leading the process, as against the historical, classical communitarian view that prioritises the sociality of the self. He posits that it is a personhood conceived through such view as limited communitarianism that can guarantee individual rights and prioritises the claims of the individual in African philosophy. Matolino's claim is grounded on the view that Afro-communitarianism, as presented in the classical account such as the radical and moderate communitarianism of Menkiti and Gyekye, respectively, emphasises community essence in African philosophy and hinders the expression of rights. The claim of the classical view informs the nudge to question the relevance and compatibility of Afro-communitarianism with the complex, multicultural modern African societies. As a result, limited communitarianism rejects the mechanism of Afro-communitarianism – essentialism. While limited communitarianism appears a rejection of what is known as Afro-communitarianism, which has earned it non-communitarian labels such as being liberal and individualist, I argue that it is simply a well-argued form of moderate communitarianism that avoids the conundrum of community.

Keywords: Afro-communitarian rejectionism, Matolino, limited communitarianism, individual rights, personhood, moderate communitarianism.

Introduction

The question of individual rights in Afro-communitarianism has significantly challenged its relevance in modern African societies. As a social and political idea, Afro-communitarianism is confronted with tension between its two components – the individual and community. This tension, owed to primacy, generates the conflicts between duty and rights in African political thought. The tension between individual rights and communal duties in Afro-communitarianism has led to different conceptions of persons in African philosophy. Matolino's limited communitarianism is a reaction to this tension. Differing from the classical maximal account of persons that references community primacy, Matolino presents a minimal account of persons that emphasises the metaphysical aspects of the self and takes individual rights seriously by shunning the primacy of community. What is known as a minimal account is demonstrated in doubt and the consequent rejection of what is known of the workings and mechanism of Afro-

communitarianism, before the advent of limited communitarianism from the scheme of personhood and social ordering, a claim which rides on the evidence of the facts of the urbanisation and modernisation of African communities. While the rejectionist thesis has earned limited communitarianism the liberal and individualist labels (OYOWE 2015), I demonstrate that taking limited communitarianism as an intellectual pursuit seeking a shift in the conception of the self; de-essentialising African thought; and achieving individual rights in African political thought, it does not appear mainly as a rejectionist thesis in the light of a non-communitarian critique of Afro-communitarianism, but a well-argued form of moderate communitarianism.

I structure the paper as follows. I begin with Matolino's charge against classical Afro-communitarianism and its idea of persons. In the second section, I followed it up with Matolino's alternative idea of personhood grounded on the metaphysical approach. I illustrate how the metaphysical approach aids a kind of communitarianism where the community retains a secondary status in the conception of persons. While limited communitarianism appears non-communitarian because of its stance on community, in the third section, I show that an evaluation of it gives the understanding that it is a developed version of moderate communitarianism. This identification is important for tracing the nature and pattern of the development of Afro-communitarianism from the classical account to the contemporaries.

Matolino's disagreement with Afro-communitarianism: Essentialising community and the personhood of the classical accounts

In this section, I discuss Matolino's argument against Afro-communitarianism. Matolino carried out conscientious assessments of Afro-communitarianism as a foundation on which social and political ideas in Africa are grounded. His conclusion suggests a rebuff of the idea as the essence of African philosophy. Matolino's rejection of Afro-communitarianism can be located in some of his writings (MATOLINO 2008, 2011a, 2014, 2018), where he expresses doubt about the functions of the idea in the African quest for a viable and inclusive social and political arrangement. In particular, Matolino's works have been directed to the question of community essence in African philosophy and how traditional norms of Africa define individual identity, occlude difference, and hinder the expression of rights. More especially, his works have been concerned with how earlier Afro-communitarians have reacted to the questions of personhood as a critical subject in African philosophy. He believes that the classical Afro-communitarian account of Ifeanyi Menkiti and Kwame Gyekye does not differ in its rights placement and conception of persons. In both accounts, the weight of community is heavy in the relationship between individual and community and, consequently, trivializes the individual interests and rights (see MATOLINO 2009).

Matolino's (2011b) disagreement with communitarianism is about how it continues to be the ontology of African philosophy, despite its obvious incompatibility with modern African societies. In his words, he is committed, philosophically, to exorcising the communitarian ghost from African philosophy. However, he advises not to be misunderstood as discarding the entire project of communitarianism, but he points out that the arguments of classical

communitarians on the community or communal essence of African thought and experience are false.

Matolino admits that community dominance in traditional African societies is unavoidable because of the nature of the life of the period. He argues that “facts of human existence in traditional communities necessitated tightly knitted relations that ultimately gave rise to notions of African communalism and subsequently communitarianism with an emphasis on collectivist understandings of life that prioritize communal reality over individual reality” (MATOLINO 2018, 115). However, he argues that these understandings of the community were valid insofar as they were relevant in the interpretation of life when they were conceived. Therefore, it is implied in Matolino (2018) that this understanding is contested in modern African societies that do not have the same facts of human existence as traditional African societies. These contemporary facts may include economic ones that inform the experiences of migrant labourers, ordinary people trying to make a living as vendors, seasonal workers, and those confined to shantytowns (MATOLINO 2018, 117).

In connection, the essentialists' claim, argues Matolino (2011a), that sees community as the overall good of the individual, is not compatible with the above-mentioned modern realities. Such conception of the good has become obsolete due to the social and economic changes that have taken place in most African communities. It is difficult, perhaps impossible, to conceive of the individual whose notion of good is only derived from the shared communal good and having their conception of the self, defined by the community. Outside the claim of social change, Matolino adds that the notion of community that traditional African societies created has been altered by the outcome of colonialism, which includes the breaking down of communal unity.

Furthering the disagreement with essentializing Afro-communitarianism is the social legislation of who qualifies as an ideal African. This criterion is usually set around the notion of community and its appreciation. One is an African insofar as they embrace community life. Matolino (2011a) argues that though some Africans living in urbanized African cities may have a weaker sense of community than those in less sophisticated communities, we cannot claim that they are less African and, consequently, non-persons. Here, we can smell a suspicion as to how being an African is the same as being a person. The question that arises from this would be as follows: Is the criteria for community life that characterizes personhood the same as being African? Are essentialists; that is, classical communitarians, of the view that being African is being persons? I think not, insofar as some such as Menkiti argues that an individual (African) can fail personhood, and we can imply from there that a non-African who subscribes to such normativity may count as a person in the Afro-communitarian scheme. Therefore, I do not think that the issue classical Afro-communitarians have concerned themselves with, which I think Matolino should be interested in, is about who is an authentic African but, if you may call it, an authentic person.

Part of the worries Matolino has with classical communitarians is their presentation and use of communitarianism as a theory to service and influence many ideas and themes in Africa. Nonetheless, this may not pose as great a danger as Matolino thinks. One may argue that such an effect is necessary for ideas that may be regarded as social philosophies. It is not hard to see communitarianism and

communalism as social ideas. Matolino, in fairness to communitarianism, argues that the idea can be limited to a social or ethical theory. Unknown to him, social ideas that inform a way of life can influence other areas of people's lives, vis-à-vis the political, economic, and religious, to mention but a few. Therefore, this effect should not be seen as overstressing the functionality of communitarianism or overuse, as Matolino would argue. Such functionality is not peculiar to the idea of Afro-communitarianism; the focus on the individual dominates political, social and economic theories and discourses in societies where individualism is the guiding mode of social ordering. However, given the influence of communitarianism, one point that may be relevant in that assessment would be the likely hegemonic nature of communitarianism. This, of course, can be curbed through critical interrogation of the idea and not withdrawal from the spheres of ideas in modern African thought and practice.

In furtherance of the disagreement with Afro-communitarianism, Matolino criticised the personhood account of classical Afro-communitarianism. Matolino's assessment of classical Afro-communitarianism on personhood can be summed up in two broad arguments. One is the claim that the community is solely responsible for the personhood and identity of the individual. The second is how the notion of the rights of individuals has been neglected in the Afro-communitarian scheme.

Matolino (2008) queries Menkiti's (1984, 2004) claim on the denial of the personhood of certain individuals by their communities based on moral ineptness. In Matolino's assessment, the significance of such denial by communities is difficult to fathom. He posits that the ideas of moral achievement and rituals of incorporation in determining the personhood of individuals raise serious difficulty in Menkiti's communitarian view. Matolino queries the notion of virtues, which seem to be the key ideal communitarians subscribe to, as the standard for personhood. According to him, ideal moral conduct and virtues are usually heavily contested, and there exists a variance in what counts as virtuous in all societies. Even within the same society, there is the plausibility of contention of what is morally worthy of doing in certain situations.

Gyekye (1997), argues Matolino, does not fare better than Menkiti in his treatment of rights. Like Menkiti, "Gyekye explicitly commits his definition of persons to moral achievement" (MATOLINO, 2008,114). It appears, like Menkiti, Gyekye gives attention to the dominance of the community in the conception of personhood in African political thought. It is, therefore, not controversial to conclude the sameness of Menkiti and Gyekye's account of Afro-communitarian personhood with their weak notions of individual rights.

Matolino reacts to this gap created by the classical Afro-communitarians by developing the idea of limited communitarianism, which he believes best captures the notion of persons and gives the right place for individual rights in modern African political thinking. Afro-communitarianism's inability to contribute to the rights discourse fully renders it irrelevant in rights-driven modern African societies. As a result, the idea of limited communitarianism is to function as a replacement for the existing ideas and concepts of Afro-communitarianism. It is an account that sheds Afro-communitarianism off his responsibility and relevance. In what follows, I discuss this alternative idea.

Matolino and the personhood of limited communitarianism: Promoting the constitutive features of self

In this section, I move to Matolino's alternative conception of personhood in African thought. Matolino (2008, 2014, 2018), drawing on the failure of Gyekye (1997) and Menkiti (1984) to provide a convincing argument for the place of individual rights in Afro-communitarian conceptions of person, attempts a restructuring of the conversation on the communitarian arrangement of African life. He argues for a conception of the persons in African thought in which the community's role is limited. While acknowledging the Afro-communitarian conception of the person, he argues that a weightier conception precedes the generally accepted normative communal conception. This conception of persons he labels the 'metaphysical account'.

The metaphysical conception of persons, Matolino argues, stresses the constitutive human features, without which the normative communitarian conception, which he labels the "social identity of a person", is impossible. The metaphysical conception draws some strengths from Kwasi Wiredu's Akan account of persons and Segun Gbadegesin's Yoruba account of persons.

In Wiredu's account, a person is composed of *nipadua* (body), *okra* (a life-giving entity), and *sunsum* (that which gives a person's personality its force), as well as the *mogya*, which is the blood that is derived from one's mother, and *ntoro*, which is inherited from one's father. Both *mogya* and *notoro* are necessary requirements for clan identity and membership. Referring to the bloodline of individuals in constituting personhood affirms the metaphysics of persons in African thought, which confirms a link between the individual and others, in this case, the clan, without concern for any form of moral demands. The relational nature between the individual and the parenting clans and kins, and what we can take from that understanding in determining individual personhood, is the criterion that every individual cannot fail (MATOLINO 2008, 80-1 cited in WIREDU 1995, 132).

Matolino's metaphysical theory of persons also draws strength from Gbadegesin's (1991) Yoruba account of persons. Persons in the Yoruba thought, according to Gbadegesin, is not only normative but also descriptive. While the descriptive account illustrates the various bodily aspects of the individual, including its physical-material and mental-spiritual categories, the normative is the communal aspect that gives meaning to the existence of the bodily parts. The normative communitarian nature of personhood is emphasized when Gbadegesin adds that the individual's destiny is linked to the destiny of other community members. Though individual destiny holds its own uniqueness, it cannot be fulfilled outside of community relations. The standard for judging the quality of an individual's destiny as either good or bad is by nature communal. These criteria involve communal membership and responsibility (see FLIKSCHUH 2019, 85).

Like the Akan account of Wiredu, a link is established with the 'others' in the details of personhood. Gbadegesin adds that the individual is not fully complete without sociality. Also, the individual is incomplete without a quality reciprocity gesture to the community that produced him. It, therefore, shows that the ontology of the self in African thought in both Wiredu and Gbadegesin does not leave out the communally oriented features and the determinate constitutive

properties of the individual, with the constitutive properties understood beyond their ordinary meanings.

Despite the reference to the normative aspect of persons in Wiredu and Gbadegesin, Matolino finds these scholars' reference to the metaphysical characteristics of persons noteworthy. It confirms that a metaphysics of persons exists in African thought that does not necessarily appeal in totality to the sociality of self, defended by the communitarian view; that is, an approach to personhood exists that is not fully informed by normative criterion. This metaphysical approach must be heard.

Matolino's bid for a non-communitarian definition of self in African thought, despite the acknowledgement of the communal presence, can be defended in what Olufemi Táiwò (2016, 82) refers to as ontological communalism.¹ This sense of communalism holds that "being-in-communion is the natural way of being human". Insofar as we can naturally think of humans as ontologically in communion, we can affirm a sense of communalism. Táiwò notes how scholars like Menkiti have used this communal reference as a ground for some prescriptive theses. However, he adds that there exists no need to attach value preference to this description of humans.

In light of the above, Matolino's metaphysical thesis makes sense as a single defining framework of the self. Though it is different from the communitarian approach, it admits the recognition of community only as a framework within which an individual realizes the relational aspect of their personhood – the relationship between fellow individuals and between individual and collective.

Matolino must have been perturbed by the bodily aspects of the self, not having been given the credits it deserves in the criteria that make a person in African thought. I think extending this relevance in literature is his aim, especially how doing that, philosophically resolves the questions of individual rights in African political philosophy. One may object that the Yoruba and Akan allusion to this part of the human self, captured by Gbadegesin, Wiredu and Gyekye should be sufficient (see OYOWE, 2015).² Two reactions may be presented against this objection. One is that Wiredu and Gyekye do not emphasize the role of the blood

¹ See Táiwò (2016, 82-86) for an analysis of the three sense of communalism he identified. They include ontological communalism, methodological communalism and axiological communalism. He adds a possible fourth sense, known as epistemological thesis, identified in Polycarp Ikenobe's (2006) idea of 'epistemic authoritarianism'. However, Táiwò is of the view that these senses should not be lumped together in literature to make it clear on how one can embrace the theory of communalism. One can either subscribe to one or a combination of two, without subscribing to all of them. Current literature on the subject is lacking in creating this awareness.

² Oyowe (2015, 505) admits that what sets metaphysical and communitarian theories apart is the further requirement that personhood is achieved in a social and cultural space, with its accompanying high moral premium assigned to the community. However, this does not apply in reverse for Matolino's metaphysical account. The metaphysical theory of persons can stand alone as a theory of persons without recognizing any form of normativity. However, the defence of Matolino here is simply a reaction to the novelty charge, it is not a defence of the communitarianism of Matolino's theory of persons or an acceptance of the same.

and semen of both mother and father, respectively, in creating the individual, and how that physical component holds a normative principle that is not tied to morality. They stop at the roles of the individual's biological and psychological components, and in the case of Gbadegesin, what spiritual meaning the body parts hold. This may be because of the desire to emphasize what they consider the important parts of the account, which is the normative communal.

Two, their commitment to the primacy of the sociality of the self-conceals any form of relevance the metaphysical aspect may offer. The metaphysical features identified in Akan and Yoruba philosophical traditions are, unlike in Matolino's account, engulfed in the normative claim. As a result, even if every human possesses the constitutive features of personhood, those lacking in the normative communal criteria would not qualify as persons. Non-persons then become disadvantaged in societies where members that have attained personhood are prioritized in the allocation of rights and benefits. This seems to be one of the foundations for Matolino's insistence on the constitutive features of personhood. The metaphysical sense guarantees access to rights. To avoid concealing the significance of the metaphysical features, Matolino steers clear of any form of communal relevance over the metaphysical component. Unlike Gbadegesin, Gyekye and Menkiti that could not defend the place of individual rights, Matolino's account offers such defence.

Limited communitarianism: moderate or non-communitarian

Having identified and discussed the rationale behind Matolino's contention with the classical Afro-communitarian accounts such as moderate communitarianism, and his proposal of limited communitarianism, I show, in this section, that a reading of limited communitarianism gives the understanding that it appears as either a non-communitarian rejectionist intervention owing to its deconstruction of the classical Afro-communitarianism or a version of moderate communitarianism. I argue that the latter describes it appropriately. Despite the differences, limited communitarianism shares certain commitments with moderate communitarianism. Limited communitarianism seeks to keep an aspect of the communitarian and the core benefits of the metaphysical accounts.

While Matolino believes he is making communitarianism more flexible and receptive, it becomes evident that he maintains a position that weakens communitarianism and community. Matolino overstretches the function of limited communitarianism and, consequently, takes it out of the realm of community discourse. Bearing that community is the hallmark of Afro-communitarianism, restricting community from the demand of persons is rejecting what may be known as Afro-communitarianism. At this level, Matolino is assumed to have crossed the communitarian threshold or the communitarian boundary.

In his review of Matolino's view appears to be the position of the individual, towards the community (Oyindis (2015), 14) passage that what is claimed here, and the metaphysical and normative status Matolino assigns to the community in relation to the individual is very much consistent with many liberal theorists' stance on the matter. To put it differently, if personhood is,

unlike the conceptions Matolino rejects, to be characterised independently of community, and there is a secondary normative status for community in his scheme, perhaps, then, the choice of describing it as a form of communitarianism is misleading. Why cling to the communitarian designation in spite of the obvious liberal commitments about the status of the individual and the secondary normative place of community?

Oyowe's position shows that the 'communitarianess' of a communitarianism idea is missing in the 'limited' version Matolino proposes. Matolino considers this accusation unjustifiable. He corrects that his rendition of communitarianism is communitarian in that it takes the facts of the community seriously. Limited communitarianism, he posits, is simply one of the various models of communitarianism in African philosophy, however different in its placement of the community (MATOLINO 2022, 101). The relocation of community in Afro-communitarianism by Matolino's limited version confirms that he did not reject Afro-communitarianism as an idea but its workings, which of course, is its forte as a theory. While Oyowe would agree to a communitarian conception of personhood that primes community or social recognition (OYOWE 2022), it is not to be assumed that he would insist Matolino's idea give the primary place to the community in defining personhood to be communitarian.

The challenge limited communitarianism faces here arises because the thought of personhood has mainly dominated communitarianism in contemporary African philosophy. It has been preoccupied with setting the standard for the ideal identity of the self, making the discourse of personhood all we know of Afro-communitarianism. This is why it is easier to label a communitarian account as non-communitarian because its notion of personhood does not fully appeal to the claims of communitarianism. Among other things, communitarianism can set the standard for defining selfhood. One can also use it to develop the framework for social relations and arrangements. Both should not be taken as wholly the same. Nonetheless, the implication of neglecting the community/communal values in the scheme of personhood in communitarian thought would have on limited communitarianism would be the test of its qualification as a theory of persons in African thought. It is corrupt enough that the discussion of persons in the metaphysical approach avoids any sense of morality³ that individuals ought to engage in applying their rationality to, but to qualify a thing as African without respect to values, at least cultural values, does not sound authentically African, as Matolino think it is.

One may object that the metaphysical conception of persons will be African if we agree with Matolino that we should not essentialise what is termed 'African'. Consequently, accounts of personhood and what would produce

³ Earlier, Matolino (2008) queried the classical Afro-communitarian personhood for subscribing to the dictates of morality and virtues. He argues that moral judgement, the standard of rightness and wrongness of actions, is contentious even within the same society. One cannot conceive of community without a sense of morality, even if one conceives of the community as a metaphysical entity, like the classical communitarians, or as a social phenomenon of Matolino.

individual identity may be shaped by factors that are not necessarily communal. One may reply that we can only make sense of the communal essence if we periodise the conversation on Africa. We may have numerous reasons to term traditional African societies as essentially communal, where all phenomena are defined in reference to community. Only in the talk of modern African experience can we begin to evaluate the monolithic understanding of 'African'. Here, the concern would be on what ought to be and not what is in the African philosophical traditions. However, limited communitarianism is not making a claim only on modern African thought. It is preoccupied with the modern, with some notes on questioning what was the case in traditional African thought and practice.

However, even if Matolino account would not count as an African account of persons, it does qualify as an account of persons in the general sense of the term, one that seeks to claim personhood for more people, compared to the classical Afro-communitarian accounts that have polarised ideas of individuals, where some are seen as persons and some non-persons – a class structure that has its roots in moral perfectionism. In connection, Matolino's limited communitarian personhood can be captured as an idea of human or individual rights, one that places human rights on the dignity of human nature and one that places rights on individual possession of the physio-psychological aspects of being human.

I note, however, that while the metaphysical conception of personhood is assumed to be a label that does not prioritise the communitarian aspect, the goal of individual rights was achieved at the cost of the communitarian aura of the theory. This I consider a link towards a non-communitarian account of personhood. I am unsure if Matolino would be bothered about his theory losing the flavour and aura of communitarianism, as Gyekye. Recall that it is implied in Matolino that the persistence of communitarianism and his account of the person in modern African thought is worrisome and should be contested. This is because Matolino believes that the demand of traditional African societies that allows for the flourishing of communitarianism does not exist in modern African realities; realities that exist for modern African societies are different and should inform our review of community.⁴

The call for review and the implicit intention to do so affirms why I think limited communitarianism extends some of the claims of moderate communitarianism. Both moderate and limited communitarianism are driven by the intention to reconstruct Afro-communitarianism to accommodate rights. Both could be best classified as a review of Afro-communitarianism. It is a review of the community primacy and the assumed docility and insignificance an individual may become as a political subject under a political structure resting on such theory promoted by the radical communitarians.

⁴ From what we see in most rural African spaces, the reality of communalism as a mode of social ordering and living is evident that African thought is communal. However, some have argued that the Western world and its individualistic social order is a transformation from a historical communal society (Táiwò 2016). Therefore, the traces of individualism we experience in Urban African space is a testament to what will hit Africa. They might be a tsunami of a social order driven by ideas of individualism. As individualism fully evolved in Africa, shouldn't we regard such a mode of social ordering as African? This seems to capture the position of Matolino on the communal essence of African thought.

Gyekye sought an argument that defends the equal-worth status of individual rights and duty in Afro-communitarianism. Hence, he identified the need for recognising features associated with the individuals and the reappraisal of Afro-communitarian idea of community to be flexible to accommodate that intention while being part of what makes a person. For his part, Matolino sought an account of communitarianism that gives the primary status to individual rights. Like Gyekye, he identified features associated with the individuals for personhood. Since social relations is essential to communitarianism, community, for Matolino, only regulates individual interaction with others, not selfhood. I consider their works as a call to review and restructure what Afro-communitarianism before them is known for – an Afro-communitarianism that unequivocally declares the primacy of community and the secondary status of rights. The challenge with Gyekye, which Matolino also points out, is the inability to push his proposal to a logical conclusion due to some contradiction (MATOLINO 2009; see also FAMA KINWA, 2010). However, analysis and interpretation of some of the claims of moderate communitarianism show that the unclear intention in Gyekye's moderate communitarianism and the process that is designed to drive its claim finds expression in Matolino's limited communitarianism.

Gyekye's recognition of the physio-psychological components of the individual as features not created by the community and essential for selfhood finds similar expression in the attention Matolino gave to the metaphysical features of the individual. The undoubtedness of human rationality, self-assertiveness, and the autonomous nature of the individual worries both Gyekye and Matolino as to why Afro-communitarianism should deny the expression of individual rights and their status. The presence and functions of these features reflect the claims of individuality and show the individual capacity for self-determination, self-expression, and autonomy, consequently affirming the place of individual rights and their primary status.

Moderate communitarianism sought a kind of relations where both the community and individual partially influence the constitution of human personhood. For its part, limited communitarianism emphasises the withdrawal of the rights of dominance from the community in what constitutes persons in African thought. As a theory of persons grounded in the metaphysical features of individuals, it seeks to limit the presence of community, its demand and its influence on individuals' formation and how they perceive themselves (MATOLINO 2018, 111). It is concerned with the need to give greater room to individual inventiveness (MATOLINO 2022, 96).

Like limited communitarianism, the proposal to deflate the community in the conception of persons undergird the intention of Gyekye's moderate communitarianism. Gyekye is aware that the challenge with expressing individual rights is the Afro-communitarian conception of community. This is what moderate communitarian seeks to correct by arguing for a community that will acknowledge the importance of the ontological nature of the individual and allows its features to flourish. Gyekye sought a moderate involvement of the community in the conception of persons and made it flexible to accommodate the significance of other features of the individual. However, Gyekye did not pursue that to a logical

conclusion. Aside from alluding to a notion of human dignity granted by the community as part of the criteria for individual rights, Gyekye seems to be under the assumption that the identification of the physio-psychological components of the individual suggests an equal status of the same with the role of community in the conception of personhood. Unlike Gyekye, Matolino resolved to a form of community that appreciates the ontological features of the self and would not meddle with the decision and process of attaining selfhood. Limited communitarianism admits the recognition of community only as a framework within which an individual realises the relational aspect of their personhood – the relationship between fellow individuals and between individual and collective. At the end of their analysis, what distinguishes their commitment is what they do with the idea of community. While Gyekye, like Menkiti, submits to a notion of personhood committed to moral achievement, Matolino does not see the need to commit personhood to value preference (Matolino 2008, 114; see also Táíwò 2016, 82-86).

However, both were influenced by a commitment to promote the recognition of the significance of both liberalism and communitarianism in the formation of the modern African person, which is arguably rights-focused. Gyekye's idea came at a time African culture was perceived to be lacking in the idea of individual rights, where it is assumed that Africans only think in the lens of the collective. Following that, moderate communitarianism is a reaction to the primacy of duties over rights in Menkiti's duty-based theory. Gyekye worries that Menkiti's system of thought and those of the thinkers before him would endanger the individual in society. It will deny the advancement of self-actualisation and the expression of rights, especially in modern African societies characterised by a new reality of rights demand. Avoiding this tension informed Gyekye's moderate communitarianism that defends the foundation of individual rights and the primary status it shares with duties. In the same vein, if the claims of limited communitarianism are correct, Matolino notes that the political structure or theory that would emanate from it would recognise the equality of the facts of individuality and community. However, unlike Gyekye, the form of responsibility such political structure may accommodate, I argue, would be one in which the individual willingly decides what their commitment is to the community in relation to self-concerns; that is, a community's needs that affect the existence of such an individual. Matolino's limited communitarianism is an account of the concern of rights in the modern African experience and how evolving African modernity can embrace the liberal values of rights in its socio-political thought and arrangements.

The general scepticism about how traditional ideas will operate in modern societies may inform apathy. If those ideas do not promote human rights, the element for individual flourishing, they may not be worth pursuing. This doubt demonstrates the significance of the claim to reject traditional ideas that are difficult to make sense of modern realities. However, critically interrogating and not withdrawing these ideas from the spheres of ideas in modern African thought and practice may be more productive in thinking about unique modern African (political) theories.

Like other normative ideas in African philosophy, Matolino interrogates Afro-communitarianism to seek clarity of intents and purpose. The logic behind the double appearance of limited communitarianism as moderate and non-communitarian is that the underlying idea behind it is the commitment to interrogating existing commitment to Afro-communitarianism while still being persuaded by its prospect. While the interrogation takes the shape of deconstruction and denial, the outcome produces a kind of communitarianism that places personhood as individual qua individual affair and community as what is only relevant for individual interactions with others, hence retaining the importance of community for social relations.

In his review of ubuntu, in joint work with Kwindigwi, chief among their worries with the idea is that it is deployed to interpret the authentic mode of being in Africa - setting the appropriate form of identity for Africans through its conception of personhood defined by adherence to certain obligations and conformism to certain values. They also contend that reviving communal concepts like ubuntu due to the architectural spaces that have shaped the means of livelihood and social relations in modern African societies is difficult, if not impossible. The actions and motives behind the idea affirm why they argue it is difficult to revive. They claim the ideas it possesses are missing in ethical actions in contemporary African societies. While this claim is seen as mainly a rejection of the ideas of ubuntu, which has attracted reactions by scholars such as Metz (2014); Koenane and Olatunji (2017); Chimakonam (2016); Praeg (2017), I argue that the epistemic strategy is mainly for the purpose for strengthening defence for the acceptance of ubuntu and its functionality in contemporary African societies. The strategy of outright denial and rejection of ideas is an epistemic endeavour that aims to attain conviction and certainty on things we have partial or complete reasons to believe. Therefore, we may interpret Matolino's rejectionism as an exercise in scepticism (ADEATE 2023, 9). Perhaps, some of the contested claims of Afro-communitarianism, community and ubuntu such as being the essence of African philosophy and personhood can be deemphasized, noting that other modes of thought compatible with African philosophy and ways of attaining personhood in African philosophical tradition exists. This approach is similar to Gyekye's attempt to deconstruct the community claims in Afro-communitarianism.

If limited communitarianism is a rejectionist thesis, it will be a rejection of an account of communitarianism and not the entire project, as Matolino also cautioned. Most ideas are developed because of a gap in existing ideas. While this is common in literature, Matolino does not take his rejectionist claim beyond the point of seeking the relevance of the ideas we put forward as discourses in contemporary Africa. While this is important, it is arguably that the similarities of intention and process in both limited communitarianism and moderate communitarianism further strengthen the claims that there is no rejection of communitarianism in the system of limited communitarianism; what exists is a development or a better version of one of Afro-communitarianism classical form - moderate communitarianism, one that escaped the conundrum of community Gyekye could not avoid.

The classification and identification of the family of ideas are essential for discourse and the history of ideas in African philosophy. Identifying the

similarities in both Gyekye and Matolino is vital for developing Afro-communitarianism for engagement.

Conclusion

In this article, I showed that limited communitarianism could be interpreted as a well-argued form of moderate communitarianism. Its rejectionist appearance emanates from its critical review of the mechanism of Afro-communitarianism as presented in the classical accounts. While Matolino's limited communitarianism emphasises the metaphysical approach as an alternative proposal for personhood, it shares specific commitments and moods with moderate communitarianism in that the latter is also worried about the denial of the role of the physio-psychological components of the individual in personhood and seeks to introduce the ontological. However, the classification of limited communitarianism as moderate communitarianism does not suggest a lack of novelty in limited communitarianism, neither does it reflect the whole picture of moderate communitarianism in so far as both differs in their final commitment to individual's standing in relation to rights and autonomy. However, what could be taken from this classification is that models of personhood in the literature have not gone beyond the Menkiti and Gyekye mappings, with scholars knowingly and unknowingly influenced by either the thought of Menkiti or Gyekye.

Declarations

The author declares no conflict of interest and no ethical issues for this research.

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This issue is dedicated to our Assoc. Editor and a second-generation member of the Calabar (Conversational) School of Philosophy (CSP): **Prince. Prof Mesembe Ita Edet (1965-2023)**

Establishing Connections with the Ancestors through *Umxhentso* Dance

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Abstract

Through the ages, ritual dances have been part of human culture. Although artistic, the *umxhentso* dance is a ritual dance performed by the Xhosa *amagqirha* (traditional healers) to establish connections with supernatural beings. During the dance performance, the *amagqirha* enter a state of trance and connect with the spiritual realm. During this state of trance, they seek guidance and vision from their ancestors. The *amagqirha*, in all the Xhosa communities, perform these dance rituals at initiation and healing ceremonies. The objectives of this study were to examine the religious and social purposes of *umxhentso* dance in *amagqirha* rituals and determine how it assists *amagqirha* in establishing connections with their ancestors during ceremonies. This study adopted the naturalistic research approach in studying the *umxhentso* dance during the *amagqirha* ceremonies. The researchers examined, evaluated and assessed the research participants' actions and behaviours in a natural setting within a societal and cultural framework.

Keywords: *umxhentso* dance, *amagqirha*, Xhosa, ancestral veneration, culture

Introduction

Dance is a part of world cultures, and dance traditions sustain and restore civilisations, despite their artistic nature (STEVENSON 2019, 2). Dance traditions also mirror humanity's journey to unify with the power and awe of existence (STEVENSON 2019, 5). The ability of dance to function as a conduit to the afterlife allows people to express and work through emotions in sublimated forms without putting themselves at risk. The emotions conveyed through dance and other cultural traditions are thus easily accessible and explorable through the purposeful action of dancing (KIEFT 2014, 1; MONTEIRO AND WALL 2011, 239).

People dance for various reasons, including hunting, childbearing, worship, harvest, rituals and cultural rites. Each dance expresses a people's culture and has unique roots. As an essential aspect of tradition, dance contains elements of people's cultural traditions and transmits them from one generation to the next.

As a result, dance significantly strengthens cultural identity and plays a critical role in society by preserving a people's way of life (LYKESAS 2017,104). Mlisa states that it is not only dance but also singing that remains a significant part of the religious aspect of African people's everyday activities (2009,43). Akunna highlights an additional element of dance by claiming that traditional African dances have a strong connection to spiritual customs and traditional healing practices (2015, 40).

In traditional African societies in which communities follow indigenous practices, the well-being of the community and individuals within those communities is determined by their interactions with their ancestral spirits. These rituals are widespread across different nationalities. An example of a ritual that connects humans to the spiritual realm is described in Achebe's novel *Things Fall Apart*. Achebe describes a Nigerian Igbo ritual in which the male patriarch pours a libation of a few drops of palm wine onto the floor or ground, which symbolically opens a portal in the earth through which the ancestors enter the physical world from the spiritual world under the earth. The gourd master then prays and uses chalk to draw lines on the floor that symbolise the safe passage of the ancestors to and from the spirit world. The kola nut is broken and served among the visible men (humans) and the invisible (spirits), after which the palm wine is served (1957, np).

According to Ngcobo, a ritual is an act that unifies more than just the people who live in the same world; it serves as a channel for communication between people who live in the physical and spiritual worlds (2020, 2). Here, communication is understood not only through verbal conversation but also through involvement in ritual activities. In such encounters, rituals offer a space where the human and ancestral realms can coexist while sharing a mythic experience over meals, drinks, music, handclapping and dance. It is believed that ancestral beings are directly involved in all the participants' endeavours (NGCOBO 2020, 2).

Communities that perform the rituals of connecting with the spiritual realm believe that if they do not obey social rules or anger the spirits or gods, they may suffer misfortune and/or afflictions (MONTEIRO AND WALL 2011, 236). They engage in rituals to connect with and appease the spirits and invoke them to purify community members and heal the sick. In these ceremonies or rites, music and dance are functional components used to summon the spirits (ISABIRYE 2020, 47). According to Nwafor, all communities have ancestors who provide guidance, healing and insight (2017, 37). Through interaction with their forebears, people gain a deeper understanding of the generational blessings and duties they inherit and a sense of purpose and connection with the non-human, spiritual realm. The link between humans and their forebears is not always harmonious, and disobeying ancestors' counsel may result in illness, restlessness and terrifying experiences (LEBAKA 2018, 5). The preceding statement sheds light on how people and their ancestors interact. Lebaka claims that ancestor veneration results from cultural practices connected by a common religious tradition and cultural values. Ancestor veneration has always been a fundamental aspect of human life in terms of religion, culture and society (2018, 5).

Ancestors are venerated based on the belief that they are still living and can still affect the fortunes of the living. This practice is founded on the idea that

the dead remain alive after physical death (NWAFOR 2017, 40; BOGOPA 2010, 1). Hence, respect and fear motivate their veneration (BOGOPA 2010, 1). For many nationalities, this practice serves as the cornerstone of traditional religion. In certain cultures, the aim is to ensure the ancestors' happiness and win their favour for the living. Ancestral veneration's non-religious or social purpose is to foster filial piety, family loyalty and lineage continuity (NWAFOR 2017, 40). To this end, Gelfand contends that reverence for the ancestors should be primarily focused on promoting familial harmony and respect, as failing to do so will make benevolent ancestors turn hostile (1969, 44).

According to Triebel, the ancestors' existence is not disputed in African communities because they are a component of the reality of life. Family members often receive guidance from their ancestors in visions and dreams that they must heed as if the advice was given by their living father or grandfather (2002, 188). The way to cope with the ancestors' influence and authority is through ancestor veneration. The only way to comprehend the concept of ancestor veneration is to understand this dependency — this reciprocal interaction between living people and their ancestors (TRIEBEL 2002, 188).

People's involvement in connecting with their ancestors is determined by the nature of the ritual and their specific, predetermined roles according to the communal practice. Isabirye states that participation in these rituals allows people to identify with the social ceremony and interact with others (2020, 47). These ceremonies often involve rituals and spirituality, with ancestral spirits summoned to intervene in community members' wrongdoing (LEBAKA 2014, 36). As a result, people's ties with the spirits have a role in their overall well-being. Invoking the spirits during these ceremonial rituals occurs through the spiritual performance of music and dance (ISABIRYE 2020, 48).

Lebaka contends that rituals, mythologies and taboos are essential cultural traditions that allow people to express their traditional beliefs through indigenous music, dance, tales, myths and storytelling and are used to foster social cohesiveness and harmony (2022, 92). Traditional healers in the Bapedi culture, like those in other nations, learn a variety of abilities during their rigorous training that helps them communicate with their ancestors through singing, dancing and playing musical instruments (such as drumming) (LEBAKA 2022, 92).

Kieft holds that ritual dance is often used as a technique for getting closer to spirits, encountering the divine and expressing a relationship that already exists in many cultures and spiritual traditions (2014, 1). Monteiro and Wall posit that traditional African dance is linked to ritualistic and traditional healing practices (2011, 247). The fundamental perception is that the mind and body need to be integrated into ritual proceedings to facilitate a connection with the ancestors and to transform and empower individuals. Rituals serve society on many levels due to their holistic structure; they are essential in establishing and maintaining a healthy relationship with the ancestors and providing an alternate, cathartic experience for individuals and the community (MONTEIRO AND WALL 2011, 238).

Monteiro and Wall opine that ritualised dance has long been used to invoke and connect with ancestors and people to reconnect with their animist roots (2011, 237). In this context, ritualised dance refers to being present in one's body while embarking on a spiritual journey, characterised by the apparent induction of a euphoric trance-like state through dancing.

The *umxhentso* dance is performed with singing and drumming accompaniment to invoke the ancestors' spirits and help them to attain a trance-like state during divination among the Xhosa in South Africa during the *amagqirha* ceremonies. May Thandokazi states that the *umxhentso* is a ritual dance used to invite ancestral spirits to participate in a ceremonial rite (2019, 97). Besides connecting with the ancestors, the *umxhentso* dance is also performed to bring people together, heal and celebrate the ancestors.

The *amagqirha*¹ are Xhosa traditional healers and are frequently the first ports of call for many people in South Africa should illness or misfortune befall them (MLISA AND NEL, 2013, 609). They are considered unique in that some traditional healers can identify everyday difficulties and understand the role of divinity in spiritual expression. During a consultation with the ancestors, the *umxhentso* dance provides an avenue for the *amagqirha* to connect with the ancestral spirits to help in their divination work.

Mlisa also states that the interconnection of ritualised dance, singing, drumming and handclapping builds a link to the stirring of the unconscious and develops contact with the ancestors (2009, 207). The mythical influence in the *umxhentso* dance arouses the performers' subconscious. Thus, the person ascends into a state of trance while dancing. Mlisa says that when traditional healers dance during *amagqirha* rites, they feel connected with their ancestors (2009, 214). The spirited state of ritual dance, according to Sandlana, is thought to increase the euphoria that elevates one to a state of consciousness (2014, 544). This is often considered an altered state of consciousness in which the individual enters a trance. The traditional healer is believed to connect with the ancestors while in this state. Emotional depletion or revitalisation, divination, foretelling and the ability to detect pain and solve problems occur (SANDLANA 2014, 544).

Although the *umxhentso* dance performance is highly connected to various aspects of the *amagqirha* religious rites, it has yet to receive in-depth scholarly attention. This study is pertinent in initiating a scholarly discussion about the importance of *umxhentso* dance in the Xhosa culture.

The role of the *umxhentso* ritualised dance in facilitating a spiritual connection with the ancestral spirits among the Xhosa *amagqirha* has yet to be widely reported. This article aimed to gain an understanding of how these connections are established and how the dance performance impacts the *amagqirha* divination work. The objectives of this study were to ascertain the influence of embodied and sounded knowledge through dance to gain and transfer information across time and space, explore the mystical and social functions of the *umxhentso* dance in *amagqirha* ceremonies in Xhosa society and establish how the *umxhentso* dance aids the *amagqirha* to establish contact with the ancestors and attain a state of trance during ceremonies.

Research methods

This ethnographic study was rooted in the naturalistic approach. According to Armstrong, the naturalistic approach is a way of researching social structures

¹ the singular form is *iqqirha* and the plural is *amagqirha*

whereby the researchers examine, observe, narrate and evaluate individual and group experiences and behaviours within a societal and cultural context (2010, 882). The researchers engaged in prolonged interactions with the participants, analysing their beliefs, practices and attitudes in their natural contexts (REEVES n.d.n. 2013, 1370). Data was collected through interviews, observation, participant observation and the study of extant photographs, videos and audio recordings of the *umxhentso* dance performed during *amagqirha* ceremonies and initiation rites. The study involved 20 participants, including eight *amagqirha*, six initiates and six attendees during the ceremony. During the interviews, the eight *amagqirha* were asked about their experiences, what they did, where, how and why (BABBIE 2013, 250; LEEDY & ORMROD 2016, 160). The *umxhentso* dance performances were also observed during the *amagqirha* ceremonies; they lived their experiences naturally without caring that researchers were in their midst. The benefit was the "naturalness" of participant behaviours instead of conscious actions that could have been performed for the researchers' cameras. As participants in other cultural events, the researchers brought their experiences as additional perspectives. This triangulation of sources, methods and sites brought multiple perspectives to the study and enhanced the obtaining of dense data (NEUMAN 2014, 166).

The researchers employed a transparent procedure to maintain reflexivity (BUTLER-KISBER 2010, 13) by seeking the participants' informed consent to participate in the study, ensuring their anonymity and avoiding any psychological harm befalling them. The researchers used pseudonyms in describing the participants' responses in this article (ALLEN AND WILES 2016, 150; MUKUNGU 2017, 2).

The data transcription and analysis processes were iterative, "working back and forth" (BUTLER-KISBER 2010, 31). Data analysis began during the transcription of materials as the selection of the most meaningful extant videos, audio and photographs involved scrutinising them to ensure they responded to the research questions before transcription (MCGRATH n.d.n 2019, 1005). The researchers then read and reread all the data gathered from the interviews, discussions, observations and extant sources, reflected on how they were connected and began to allocate themes (CASSELL, AND BISHOP 2019, 196). The emergent themes were then compared to determine their interrelationships and connections to the relevant literature, thus identifying major findings.

Findings, discussion and Reflection

Interviews, direct observation and a review of related literature yielded the findings of this study. The outcomes from analysing the religious and social functions of the *umxhentso* dance during *amagqirha* rites and its influence on the *amagqirha* attaining trance and connecting with the ancestors during rituals are described hereunder.

Establishing a connection with the ancestors through *Umxhentso* dance

The *amagqirha* who participated in this study have a long history of performing the *umxhentso* dance at healing, initiation and religious ceremonies and achieving a trance-like state aids them in performing their spiritual functions. During the fieldwork, one of the participants stated that he believes every gesture has a meaning; the dances, the beating of the drums and the invocations uttered by the

amagqirha. The ceremonies and rites entail lengthy stretches of singing, dancing and drumming and eating and drinking. The percussive, rhythmic music and singing are essential elements of the ceremony.

The *umxhentso* dance is undoubtedly the most well-known of the *amagqirha*'s abilities amongst the Xhosa. In personal communication, one of the participants in this study expressed the view that the *umxhentso* dance lifts the consciousness of the *amagqirha* and gets the ancestors' attention (SEPTEMBER 24, 2021). The *umxhentso* dance is a spiritual practice that moulds and transforms the mind, making it more susceptible to the hidden or abstract knowledge sought and relied on by traditional healers.

Amagqirha ceremonies are as much a way of transmitting the thoughts, beliefs and interpretation of the *amagqirha* calling as they are a means of establishing contact with the ancestors. The *umxhentso* dance performance is vital in arousing their intuition because intuition is the most important quality in their divination practices. According to Mlisa, singing and dancing are integral elements of the *amagqirha* way of life, and they employ the *umxhentso* dance to awaken and stimulate their inner being, intuition, religious experience and development (2009, 214).

The *amagqirha* also performs the *umxhentso* dance on ritual occasions, including when treating a patient or during an initiation ceremony. The dancers move around in a circle anti-clockwise, stamping their feet and contorting their bodies to the audience's singing and handclapping. To enhance the mystical, percussive effects of the handclapping, an *amagqirha* apprentice may also beat a drum. The *amagqirha* and their apprentices are occasionally spontaneously inspired to undertake ritual divination while performing the *umxhentso* dance.

Before undertaking divination, the *amagqirha* and their apprentices perform the *umxhentso* dance (HIRST 2005, 5), during which they experience an elevated level of consciousness. The *umxhentso* dance performance, according to Gamedze, becomes a centre of supernatural interaction with the ancestors and aids the diviner in finding healing inspiration (2019, 98). One of the research participants stated that the *umxhentso* dance is at the core of *amagqirha* ceremonies and plays a mythical or magical role in invoking supernatural powers and ancestral spirits. In an interview, Gogo Ximbaxi (pseudonym) stated that in performing the *umxhentso* dance, they walk in their ancestors' footprints. In this way, they feel transcended and united with their ancestors (PERSONAL COMMUNICATION, SEPTEMBER 22, 2021).

Gogo Athandwa (pseudonym) asserts that the "*Umxhentso* dance is the major factor during *amagqirha* ceremonies because it is the tool that we use to connect with the ancestors and, also, they are able to connect with us as well; they give us guidance in that particular ceremony that is taking place" (personal communication, June 16, 2021). Athandwa (pseudonym) states that sometimes while dancing the *umxhentso* dance, "the spirits take over your body as soon as you reach the trance phase. Then they are the ones who are dancing using your body as a medium. That is why you would find yourself *Uxentsa* (dance) in a different way than you normally dance. In that way, they are showing you that they are rejoicing with you and *banani kulomsebenzi* (they are with you/ present in the ceremony you are performing)" (PERSONAL COMMUNICATION, JUNE 16, 2021).

Athandwa (pseudonym) concludes by stating that the *umxhentso* dance is important to Africans, not necessarily only to Xhosa people. Each ethnic group has traditional dances they value, just as the Xhosa *amagqirha* value the *umxhentso* dance because “it shows you who you are, and you are proud of *ubuwenana* (self-concept)”. “*Umxhentso* on its own symbolises who you are. We have different types of dance: *imfene*, *uhubhe*, and then *umxentsho*, performed by *amagqirha ezintlombeni* (spiritual healers in ceremonies). *Umxhentso* by traditional healers is led by *Idlozi Eliphiwa Kuwe* (the spirit that lives in you) and the way *abafuna uxhentse ngakhona* (the way the spirits or ancestors want you to dance). To our Xhosa nation, it is very important to us to know *ubuwenana* (self-concept)” (PERSONAL COMMUNICATION, JUNE 16, 2021).

While commenting on why the *umxhentso* dance is the most important factor during the traditional healers’ (*Amagqirha*) ceremonies, Gogo Amyoli (pseudonym), a practising traditional healer, said during an interview that when performed by the *amagqirha* during ceremonies, it is referred to as “spiritual dancing” (PERSONAL COMMUNICATION, JULY 19, 2021). She also states that the *umxhentso* dance helps the *amagqirha* body and mind to reach a trance state; it is some sort of connection that opens the doorway to the spiritual world. While in a trance, the body, mind and soul connect with the spirits. Amyoli (pseudonym) continues that the *umxhentso* dance is regarded as a stir in the traditional healer’s world. This type of dance is self-taught with the help of your ancestors (PERSONAL COMMUNICATION, JULY 19, 2021).

Gogo Amyoli (pseudonym) shared that other traditional dance types are taught, and a dancer can make a living by being an entertainer and performing worldwide. Still, these dances do not stir the ancestral spirits like a traditional healer performing the *umxhentso* dance during rites and rituals (PERSONAL COMMUNICATION, JULY 19, 2021).

In a personal communication, Akhinzolo (pseudonym), another practising *amagqirha*, states that he has been involved in the *umxhentso* dance since he was young. According to Akhinzolo, the *umxhentso* dance is the main factor in the traditional healers’ (*Amagqirha*) ceremonies (PERSONAL COMMUNICATION, AUGUST 3, 2021). Akhinzolo opines that, as a traditional healer, the *umxhentso* dance connects the *amagqirha* with their ancestors during ceremonies and rituals. The *umxhentso* dance performance also symbolises happiness about the ceremony being performed. The *umxhentso* dance performance is the most important part of the *amagqirha* ceremonies because it facilitates a connection between the ancestors’ spirits and the *amagqirha* (AKINZOLO, PERSONAL COMMUNICATION, AUGUST 3, 2021).

The *umxhentso* dance performance stirs the ancestral spirits during the performance; it revives and connects the *amagqirha* with their ancestors. That is why Akhinzolo (pseudonym) says, “You find someone during the *umxhentso* dance performance blowing the whistle to call and connect fully with the ancestors” (PERSONAL COMMUNICATION, AUGUST 3, 2021).

Characteristics of *umxhentso* dance

Based on the research participant’s responses to the interview questions, the researchers identified characteristics of the *umxhentso* dance. The *umxhentso* dance is performed mostly by the *amagqirha* during ancestral veneration and

initiation rites to invoke the spirits of the ancestors to possess the *amagqirha*. The researchers observed two characteristic movements in the *umxhentso* dance that are described in the ensuing paragraphs.

During *amagqirha* ceremonies, there are diverse variations of the *umxhentso* dance. For example, a less energetic version in which the *amagqirha* rise on the balls of their feet, then descend hard onto their heels, remaining in the same spot but shaking fiercely, is one variation. Another less common version of the *umxhentso* dance is performed on the knees. During fieldwork, the researchers observed that one *amagqirha* kept this up for approximately eight minutes, seemingly without pain or discomfort. She attributed this to the fact that she had gotten away from everything while dancing. In other words, she experienced an altered state of consciousness.



Figure 1: An *igqirha* initiate performing the *umxhentso* dance in the kneeling position

Source: Authors

At the same celebration, one of the *amagqirha*, Gogo Langa (pseudonym), performed a solo dance. She made a stomping move followed by an upward and outward kick but did not bend on her haunches as the previous dancer did. These are individual variations of *umxhentso*, with the dancers improvising on the main *umxhentso* dance pattern with its distinctive steps and moves. During *amagqirha* ceremonies, one will observe numerous variations.



Figure 2: An *igqirha* dancing during an initiation ceremony
Source: Authors

In a personal communication (June 16, 2021), Athandwa (pseudonym) states that there is no set or predetermined sequence that must be used when performing the *umxhentso* dance in an ancestral performance. She opines, “*Uxhentsa ngokwedlozi lakho*” (you dance as your ancestor leads), you might be taught by your Gobela (spiritual leader) how to perform *Umxhentso* but “*xa kufikelwe lidlozi liyazigidela*” (when you are in a trance the spirit arrives and dances through your body), that is when you will notice that *awuwedwa* (you are not alone) in your body (ATHANDWA, PERSONAL COMMUNICATION, JUNE 16, 2021).



Figure 3: Group of *amagqirha* dancing during an initiation ceremony

Source: Authors

Another important characteristic of the *umxhentso* dance performance is the multi-layered atmosphere established during the rites. All the senses are aroused and become part of a combined experience for the *amagqirha*, apprentices and guests, from the colourfully dressed traditional healers and attendees to the incense, ornamentation and the introduction of the drum performance. The drummers execute complicated, polyrhythmic beats with *igubu* and *djembe* drums, played with the hand and a stick, blending seamlessly with the dancer's body, which may dance vigorously and gracefully.



Figures 4 and 5: *Amagqirha* beating the drums with sticks during a ceremony

Source: Authors

The structure, rules and norms associated with the *Umxhentso* dance performance

In accordance with the Xhosa custom, during the *umxhentso* dance performance, the *amagqirha* forms a circle. If the ceremony is observed within the house, it is performed around the *iziko* (fireplace) at the centre of the house. Mlisa says that the fireplace is the sacred spot where the Xhosa ancestors dwell, and it is also the spot where the *amagqirha* observe their traditional rites and rituals (2009, 207). The circle that the *amagqirha* form is equated to a full moon, which is a sign of completion and unity. Dancers are obliged to remove their shoes when performing the *umxhentso* dance to show reverence for their ancestors. The traditional healer's regalia also has various connotations, with the different colours in their outfit being interpreted according to how they are matched.



Figures 6, 7 and 8: *Amagqirha* dressed in their regalia
Source: Authors

Akhinzolo (pseudonym), in a personal communication (AUGUST 3, 2021), states that the *amagqirha* use different regalia according to their hierarchy and the levels in the *amagqirha* practice; the *amathwasa* (initiates) have regalia that differentiates them from the graduated *amagqirha*. The ritual or ceremony to be performed dictates the attire required to be worn by the *amagqirha* and initiates. Standing and sitting positions are assigned based on rank; the person with the highest status stands at the front, while the person with the lowest rank stands at the back. The hierarchy and the order of things are taken seriously and respected. *Amagqirha* are not permitted to perform the *umxhentso* dance simultaneously as the initiates. Each group takes a turn dancing while the other sings and claps hands with the audience to highlight the value of loyalty and respect.



Figure 9: An *igqirha* with her regalia during ceremonial rites
Source: Authors

According to one of the informants, everything at a ceremony has significance, including what the dancer wears, the colour and the symbols it contains, the words spoken, the instrument utilised and the direction the dancer faces.

From unconscious to conscious during the *umxhentso* dance performance

Dancing is one of the most acknowledged methods of inducing altered states of consciousness (KIEFT 2014, 31-32). One of the participants in the study described traits such as being completely present at the moment and absent in thought, as well as losing one's sense of self. In one of the ceremonies observed by the researchers, during the intense dancing of the *umxhentso* dance, some *amagqirha* (traditional healers) exhibited strange behaviour, for example, aggression and unusual body movements associated with fury. This has been referred to as "possession by ancestral spirits" (SANDLANA 2014, 545). Keift posits that through dance, people can experience and express the whole range of human emotions (2014, 29). Traditional healers consider this an indication that the ancestors' spirits were in their midst and had taken over their bodies.



Figure 10: *Amagqirha* dancing the *umxhentso* dance during an initiation ceremony
Source: Authors

This is an unintentional state, according to Stephen and Suryani, in which a "spirit entity or force is considered to have entered or taken over the body of the human host" (2000, 9). This is described by Woods Amberlee as a state in which one's personality is "taken over" by the personality of "another entity" (2009, 24). The person may "have visions, hear voices, find things with unique powers, divination, meditation, and visions" while in this state (STEPHEN AND SURYANI 2000, 9). *Umxhentso* dances allow the *amagqirha* to become voyeurs into the mythical world of the ancestors and, in turn, help the *amagqirha* to manifest supernatural powers they would otherwise not be able to manifest. The *amagqirha* would have to lose consciousness to connect with ancestors in the human form.

This study indicated that the *umxhentso* dance performance is part of *amagqirha* ceremonial culture and ritual proceedings. The performance of the *umxhentso* dance during the *amagqirha* ceremonies demonstrates the religious and cultural significance of ancestor reverence through dance. The findings also suggest that the *umxhentso* dance is performed to establish connections with the ancestors and serves as a link between the ancestors and the *amagqirha* divination efficacy. Through interviews and observations, it was revealed that the ritualised function of the *umxhentso* dance is not limited to establishing a link with the ancestors during rites. Still, it also fortifies the *amagqirha* divination potency by allowing them to communicate with their ancestors and attain a trance-like state to sustain contact with their ancestors.

Anticipated concerns and questions that might emanate from this study

Arguably, a study like this, which depicts how *umxhentso* dance serves as a conduit to the spiritual world and how the Xhosa *amagqirha* use it as a medium to connect with their ancestors, is bound to raise concerns, questions, and

misconceptions. The researchers have put some critical thoughts below to assuage some issues that may arise from the discussions and findings of this study.

Christians may find this study contrary to Christian doctrine and ask, how are cultural traditions linked to ancestral worship compatible with Christianity? Those who hold this point of view tend to forget that some Christian traditions, for instance, Easter and Christmas, contain practices that have roots in pagan rites. The veneration of saints can also be linked to ancestral worship. However, this has been part of Christian practice for so long that we tend to forget the origin. In Africa, missionary works, and the introduction of Christianity has been present since the 1800s. The long history of compromise to accommodate pagan Europe and the UK to convert to Christianity was forgotten by the missionaries who practised the erasure of culture. For them, it was all or nothing. Today, with the benefit of hindsight, we may hold more progressive views and seek ways to accommodate diverse perspectives and practices.

Another concern that may arise is the place of ritual practices in modern society. Cultural practices and the community of those who practice them foster a sense of belonging, provide focus, provide one with a philosophy of life, give one purpose, and give meaning to one's life. Many Xhosa people freely move between Christianity and indigenous tradition. This seamlessness evident in society is mirrored in television soap operas, where characters adopt traditional and Western identities. Hence, we should accept that people will adopt the identities they desire and take what they want from a culture in both their public and private life. To be part of different communities, one must participate in their rituals and practices. It is also likely that a Xhosa community could, in the future, continue with the dances as a cultural practice separate from the actual ritual of invoking the ancestral spirits.

Some people may also ask, why hold on to past indigenous practices? Vital components of culture are represented in the traditions of a people. They aid in building the core and backbone of our society. They serve as a reminder that the past, present, and possible future are all shaped by the history that we are a part of. When we disregard the significance of our traditions, we risk compromising the foundation of our identity. As with other cultural traditions the world over, *umxhentso* dance traditions are a unique expression of the Xhosa people. They illustrate a progression of knowledge and cultural norms across time. They provide a clear view of the *amagqirha* practice's originality.

Therefore, this study encourages Afrocentrism, which is the understanding and appreciation of African cultural practices as subjects of human experience and not as objects, as in the example of the *umxhentso* dance that Xhosa *amagqirha* uses to communicate with their ancestors.

Conclusion

Based on the research findings, we can conclude that the *umxhentso* dance is performed to establish and maintain contact with the ancestors during *amagqirha* ceremonies. The study revealed that in Xhosa society, ancestors play a significant role in people's daily lives and oversee their well-being. The interviews and observations highlighted that the *umxhentso* dance is a substantial factor in *amagqirha* ceremonies. The study also revealed that *amagqirha* and the *umxhentso*

dance, as spiritual experiences through dance, are firmly rooted in Xhosa culture and passed down to successive generations.

Finally, the outcome of this study indicated that research in this area should be considered a continuous process of presenting fresh interpretations of dance's social, religious and cultural significance in ancestor reverence. The researchers expect that scholars interested in ritual dances, African religion and spirituality will find this study worthwhile.

Declarations

The author declares no conflict of interest and no ethical issues for this research.

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This issue is dedicated to our Assoc. Editor and a second-generation member of the Calabar (Conversational) School of Philosophy (CSP): **Prince. Prof Mesembe Ita Edet (1965-2023)**

Hegel Against Hegel and His Lumbering of Reason on the African Race

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Abstract

One of the scholars that made sustained contributions to the development of philosophy of history is Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel. Hegel offers a dialectical conception of history in which the absolute spirit moves towards self-actualization. However, Hegel's idea of history appears prejudiced and misguided because he not only derided and battered Africans using his imprudent racial schemes, he even excluded Africa from historical considerations in his uncouth racial agenda. This paper uses the critical analytic model to deleted ultimately show that not only was Hegel uninformed to comment on the ontology of Africa and Africans, but that even the system was self-defeating. That is, it was a case of *Hegel against Hegel*. This is the novelty of this paper since a Hegelian system that is against itself cannot muster the necessary guts and logic to lampoon and destroy another system, worse still, thoughtlessly and irrationally too. The paper also argued that the disposition to colour-brand people using racial scheme is uncritical and inhumane.

Keywords: Africa, Geist, Hegel, Reason, History, Western, Spirit.

Introduction

In Negro life the characteristic point is the fact that consciousness has not yet attained to the realization of any substantial objective existence - as for example, God, or Law - in which the interest of man's volition is involved and in which he realizes his own being. This distinction between himself as an individual and the universality of his essential being, the African in the uniform, undeveloped oneness of his existence has not yet attained; so that the Knowledge of an absolute Being, an Other and a Higher than his individual self, is entirely wanting. The Negro, as already observed, exhibits the natural man in his completely wild and untamed state. We must lay aside all thought of reverence and morality - all that we call feeling - if we would rightly comprehend him; there is nothing harmonious with humanity to be found in this type of character. (HEGEL 2001, 110-111)

The above quotation disposes the mind about the drive of this paper which is about how Hegel modern philosopher relegated Africans and their rational model. Besides the uncritical and irrational disposition of Hegel vivid in his remarks above about Africans, another example of this lack of rational and critical culture is the submission of Hume below;

I am apt to suspect the Negroes to be naturally inferior to the whites. There scarcely was ever a civilized nation of that complexion, nor ever any individual, eminent wither in action or speculation. No ingenious manufacturers among them, no art, no sciences. On the other hand, the most ride and barbarous of the white, such as the ancient GERMANS, the present TARTARS, have still something eminent among them, in their valour form of government or some other particular. Such a uniform and constant difference could not happen, in so many countries and ages, if nature had not made an original distinction between these breeds of man. Not to mention our colonies, there are NEGROE slaves dispersed all over EUROPE, of whom none ever discovered any symptoms of ingenuity; though low people, without education, will start up amongst us, and distinguish themselves in every profession. In JAMAICA, indeed, they talk of one Negroe as a parts and learning; but it is likely he is admired for slender accomplishment, like a parrot, who speaks a few words plainly. (HUME 1987, 208)

The unfortunate submission of Hume fully accentuates the impression of Hegel and this goes to highlight the point that there were lots of irrationality in the modern era, the same era that boasts of the highest number of system builders of which Hegel was foremost. This paper concentrates on the rational imprudence of Hegel flowing from his philosophy of history. In his modern translation of Hegel's [Introduction to the Philosophy of History], Leo Rauch (1988) consciously and purposely omitted more than half of the text of Section Five (Geographical Basis of History) of Hegel's work.¹ This conspicuous omission by a contemporary authority on Hegel speaks volumes. Omitted are the twelve pages in which Hegel attacks Africa and excludes it as part of world history. Obviously, this section of Hegel has become an embarrassment even to his adherents. But such omission is no courageous response to Hegel's philosophy of history. This also informs the quest of this paper to examine the logic of the so-called 'rational' system of Hegel and how it affects the African race. This flows from the fact that some of these suppositions and submission of Hegel on Africa were quite debilitating, spurious and disappointing.

This paper critically interrogates Hegel's idea of universal history, it examines his disdain for Africa and also shows how at intervals Hegel's system was also self-defeating. Agreed that some of the above have been the topic of discourse over the years, considering insights from a scholar like Emmanuel Eze (1997, 2002) and some other scholars with the same impression. The concern of these scholars would not only be that Hegel and his likes were rationally jaundiced and cynical in their remarks about the African race, but the critical concern was the complicity of the Western tradition of philosophy towards this very gaffe. Obi Oguejiofor (2007 68, 69) calls this rational indiscretion "the grave errors of the enlightenment," because the history of philosophy presents these scholars without

¹ See G.W.F. Hegel, [The Philosophy of History], trans. J. Sibree (Dover: New York 1956), pp. 88-102. These pages are entirely omitted in G.W.F. Hegel: [Introduction to the Philosophy of History], Leo Rauch, trans, (Hackett Publishing Company: Cambridge, 1988).

reference to their scathing and irrational remarks on the African race in particular. Oguejiofor cites Chukwudi Eze who highlighted the fact that a recent work, [A Kant's Dictionary] (CAYGILL 1994) did not take account of the views of Kant on race even though the latter wrote five treatises on race matters (EZE 1997). Furthermore, even when Kurt Steinhauer wrote [Hegel: Bibliography] in 1995, which was a compilation of essays on Hegel in the past one hundred years, he refused to add one article of Hegel on Africa. The implication of these deleterious sophistry and pseudo-science is that the Western tradition is not sincere in its analytic endeavours and also wants to perpetrate the annihilation of other races through all forms of prejudices.

The above argument is hinged on the fact that the Western tradition prides itself as a rational tradition that takes logic and rational discourse more serious than other traditions and eras in philosophy(sic); but it is unfortunate that this same tradition will amplify the illogical, racist, irrational, inhuman and unscientific positions of Hegel and the likes, especially during the modern era of philosophy that was involved more with system building predicated on science, logic, humanism and rationality. However, this is what this paper is attempting to interrogate and that is why the novelty of this paper is in showing how Hegel's views are themselves self-defeating. The work has a simple structure. It discourses Hegel's idea about African history briefly in the first part. The second part discusses the idea of Hegel against Hegel. It examines how the schemes of Hegel were self-defeating. It also highlights how racism and colour-branding were uncritical, unprofessional, unhistorical, unsuccessful, and inhumane enterprise.

PART ONE

The ideas of Hegel about Africa and racism will be discussed very briefly under some sub-headings.

Ignorance, Irrationality, Savagery and Primitivity: Hegel derogatorily refers to Africans as Negroes and claims that they are ignorant beings lacking in consciousness of themselves and of any objective existence. In a dialectics that turns against him, Hegel claims that the Negro is unconscious and unaware of higher knowledge. Hegel counsels that the European must clearly give up normal Western categories and principles of deduction. Yet Hegel himself failed to remove peculiar categorical prejudices; and went on to judge the African as unconscious and ignorant. More significantly, Hegel acknowledged his ignorance of Africa when he claimed that Africa is shut-up and unknown to outsiders. He stated that Africa, which is a land of childhood, and is enveloped in the "dark mantle of Night." Consequently, it is isolated from the rest of the world (HEGEL 2001, 91). That is why the Upland has remained according to Hegel 'unknown.' For Hegel, that Africans lack self-consciousness means that they lack rationality. In this line of thought, Hegel is not alone. In his book, [Primitive Mentality], Lucien Lévy-Bruhl, after studying African peoples mainly through missionary reports concluded that the African race has a primitive, barbaric and pre-logical mentality (LEVY-BRUHL 1966). The argument here is that for Lévy Bruhl and Hegel, Africans lack rational power, they can only be judged as lower animals *vis-à-vis* the European who possess rationality. Hegel obviously posits that the African is a lower species of being than the European. But in Hegel's time, a Ghanaian

William Amo (1703-1753) studied and taught philosophy just as Hegel himself in Germany and even in Holland. Still, Hegel pursues his negative descriptions of Africans in this often cited remark:

These peoples have never emerged out of themselves, nor have they gained a foothold in history. In the sixteenth century, to be sure wholly known peoples irrupted from the interior; but these hordes were merely destructive and of no cultural significance. These bands displayed the most frightful savagery and barbarism. But encounters with them in peaceful circumstances found them to be as affable as any others. This Africa remains in its placid, unmotivated, self-enclosed sensuality and has not yet entered into history; its only further connection with history is that in darker days its inhabitants have been enslaved. (HEGEL 2011, 197)

Superstitious, Anthropocentric and Lack of Morality: African traditional religion for Hegel is nothing but fetish, magical and superstitious. Taking off from the Jewish historian Herodotus who called the high-melanated people sorcerers. Hegel contends that Africans do not have the idea of God or moral faith. He states that Africans are involved only in incantations and used images as they worship the dead (HEGEL 2001, 93). Hegel contends that Africans do not believe in the immortality of the soul, and that they manipulate the gods/spirits to do their will. Then humans become the highest being elevated over nature and above God. So for Hegel, the summit of all reality is the pure thought of the human's spirit and not the almighty God of religion. Hegel's critique of African religion is, therefore, on methodological grounds. For Hegel, among Africans, moral sentiments are weak or even non-existent. "Through the pervading influence of slavery all those bonds of moral which we cherish towards each other disappear, and it does not occur to the Negro mind to expect from others what we are enabled to claim." (HEGEL 2001, 96). Hegel presented Africans as those who live like beasts without self-control. Clearly on historical grounds, each people, including the Negroes have evolved and have continued to evolve before, during and after Hegel's day. Hegelian dialectics of history contradicts itself when it says Africans do not, or even cannot evolve. Hegel forgot Heraclitus (*omnia flux*; all is in flux).²

Lack of Political Organization: For Hegel, there is a total absence of political organization and, only fanaticism, which is due to the nature of the race itself. After writing this, however, Hegel immediately goes on to give a bitter account of African kings, chiefs, and their subordinates and how they rule and relate to the populace.

² For Heraclitus the ancient process thought metaphysician, everything is in constant flux. Constant and steady movement of things.

Contempt of Humanity: For Hegel; “the Negroes indulge...that perfect contempt for humanity which in its bearing on justice and morality is the fundamental characteristic of the race” (HEGEL 2001, 95). Exactly what Hegel means in the text by the ‘contempt’ that Negroes have for humanity is not clearly stated by him. But from his preceding statements, he most likely meant that, since Africans elevate themselves about God and nature, they have no basis for real reverence. This is because, for Hegel, what inspires reverence in humanity is the consciousness of a Higher Being. To miss this is to miss the status of humanity.

Africa as Non-historical: Africa proper (Hegel arbitrarily excludes some parts of Africa, all the North and Nile Delta including Egypt) is “the unhistorical, undeveloped spirit, still involved in the conditions of mere nature.” [Then Hegel concludes] “at this point we leave Africa, not to mention it again.” (HEGEL 2001, 99) That was the great Hegel’s dismissal of Africa. That was a direct positive rejection of the African people, by Hegel, whose professional duty is to seek, search into, and discover what other branches of science forget or neglect. If Hegel were consistent, however, he would have advised his European brethren, the slave-trading and colonizing Westerners to withdraw from this ‘empty’ continent. To do this would be consistent because Hegel’s history has nothing for African history. Of course, he allowed Europeans to stay and to exploit, perhaps because he knew that Africa had something for Western history. Though Hegel swore not to mention Africa again, he nevertheless continued to be haunted by the Africa, yea, Negro Vital *Spirit*, and Hegel continued to pour venom on Africa until the last page of his [Introduction to the Philosophy of History]. Charles Taylor, one of the authorities on Hegel entirely avoided this anti-Africa part of Hegel. However, while commenting on the self-positing spirit, that summarizes the entire Hegelian philosophy, Taylor accurately remarks “*Geist* is at the root of everything, and hence mediation becomes a cosmic principle.”

PART TWO: Hegel Against Hegel

In his philosophy of history, Hegel made a false take-off, which led him to erroneous judgements and which, in turn, resulted in a tragic landing that vitiated his philosophical account of Africa. We support this argument by drawing attention to several fundamental contradictory characteristics of Hegel’s thought. And it is these inconsistencies that gave rise to the position of this paper that it was basically a case of Hegel against Hegel; meaning that the submissions of Hegel were all dead on arrival. Some of the points that have been put up as juxtaposition of the Hegelian logic are stated below, starting from the method of dialectics that he propounded.

Non-dialectical Nature of Dialectics (Philosophical and Historical): Hegel started with the dialectical method, but ended not just without, but against dialectics. A genuine and visible philosophical method must be consistent. Hegel’s method is not. For when at the highest development of *Geist*, when the thesis of

Art joins in the antithesis of Religion to yield the synthesis of Philosophy. Consistency demands that Philosophy now becomes the new thesis toward another level of reality, perhaps in view of a universal communication or language, culture or a future global village. To end the dialectical process with philosophy contradicts the process itself, and so renders it suspect as a valid interpretative method. That is, indeed, a clear mark of Hegel himself ‘against Hegel;’ as he closes history, true novelty and further development. Reality must be open-ended, not closed as Hegel says. The same critique applies to historical dialectics. That world history is progressing there is no doubt. But to use dialectics to explain that progress is problematic when Hegel narrowly sees only the Oriental, Greek and Roman worlds which culminate, according to him, in his home-nation: the Germanic World. This is nothing short of German chauvinism!³ Falsehood obviously by history itself, the central stage of world events is no longer the old German European world. Not only have other European nations rejected the Hegelian imposition of Germany over them; but more generally the Americas are taking their turn as major actors on the world scene. Tomorrow, it may be other nations, other continents. It is open! Authentic philosophy of history must consider the whole of history and the entire world in their open-endedness. It is never closed as Hegel closes it in his historical dialectics. Hegels’ is a false start in the methodology of philosophy and the philosophy of history.

Divisiveness of Africa: Hegel divided Africa into unintegrated pieces in a way that smacks of a hatred of a whole continent. While he recognized the continent as one, he at once started to split the North from the rest of Africa south of the Sahara and called this southern part, Africa proper, or the Upland. In the North, which he calls European Africa, he excised the Nile delta from the rest of the North. The Nile delta or river region, Hegel links with Asia. It is also, Hegel writes, the only valley land of Africa (HEGEL 2001). Hegel’s geographical spite for Africa can be demonstrated from his caricature of the beauty of Africa’s mountain ranges, the thick green vegetation and the labyrinth of rivers that characterize the coastlands. Instead of seeing any beauty, hateful blindness pushed him to describe it as; “the home of ravenous beasts, snakes of all kinds, a border tract where the atmosphere is poisonous to Europeans, a zone lacking any union with the interior and whose waterfalls and torrents cross each other in wild confusion” (HEGEL 2001, 92ff). Hegel insinuates that as the people are wild, savage and disorderly, so also is their environment. Hegel’s Africa has nothing but dark, frightful characteristics. Where there are some positives, in Hegel’s sense (e.g. in Egypt and North Africa) these are not really Africa.

This negative treatment of the African continent reflects divisiveness. It is more than geographical, Hegel and some others have undertaken great geographical violence, but they also committed a historical injustice to mutilating

³ This is the idea that the German race is the best and should be the standard for all. This is in all spheres of human endeavours. At some point, it had imprints of racism and racial segregation and that was mostly during the time of Hitler and others. The German chauvinists drew strength from theories of scholars like Kant, Hegel and some others. It is a sort of *Deutschland über Alles* (Germany over all).

and un-integrating Africa as one continent. This geo- historical butchery by Hegel is the blackmail of indigenous Africans. The great African civilizations of Morocco, Alexandria, Algiers, Tunisia, and the rest are to be denied Africa; even Egypt and the Nile, the cradle of all world civilization, history, philosophy and culture is not insulated from this schism. As a matter of fact, it was long believed, that philosophy started in Europe, in Greece. Europe, even claimed, it was the first high culture, and Africa was nothing but (in Hegel's words) 'enveloped in the dark mantle of night.' But this falsehood has since been exposed. Africa is one continent that includes all North Africa, all of the Nile Delta, all of Egypt, Alexandria, and Ethiopia. "These with their flourishing ancient civilizations and philosophers are part and parcel of Africa. The truth has now been set out into the open and can no longer be denied" (OGUNMODEDE 2000, 28-9).⁴

Unhistorical Hegel: Although he gave a vehement account of the events and conditions in Africa, it is striking to note that Hegel took no pains to do any research about the true situation of things. Rather and unfortunately too, Hegel reports what missionaries have said and this is without any reference. Instead, he gratuitously described the reports he received as copious and veridical. Hegel for instance, adopts blindly and uncritically the attack of Herodotus against Africans, that Negroes are nothing but sorcerers. On this allegation of sorcery, our un-philosophical philosopher of history, Hegel, would hastily construct a philosophy of African Religion. In another instance, the testimony of a colonial Englishman, Hutchinson (real or imagined by Hegel), was used to support the claim of the practice of Negro carnage against fellow Negroes. "With no verifiable reference, Hegel, the cultural historian of African events, put the number of people massacred in Dahomey after the death of the (unnamed) king, in a year unknown to either Hegel or any other person at 3,333" (HEGEL 2001, 93 and 98).⁵ This Hegel affirms, is the constant state of affairs in Africa and that it is also in the crude nature of the Negro to be so.

It is blatant to state that Hegel's positions on Africa in his [LECTURES ON THE PHILOSOPHY OF WORLD HISTORY] are notorious among critics and even defenders alike. Particularly, his unfortunate position that the trans-Atlantic slave trade, while it is unjust, was superior to native African slavery and as a result should be abolished but only gradually. Flowing from this and aligning with the ongoing discourse on African studies about the status of freedom as a structuring desideratum of critical and political practice, this paper subscribes with the position of Andrea Long Chu (2018) that for Hegel, the European enslavement of Africans was essentially an emancipatory project that would rescue the Negro from his impenetrability to world spirit and introduce him to the long dialectical march of world history. Furthermore, this paper states that the

⁴ Ogunmodede, citing numerous scholars like Cheik Anta Diop, George James, Martin Bernal, Innocent Onyewuenyi and Joseph Osei, Ogunmodede defends the growing historical acknowledgement that Africa especially Egypt is the origin of Greek and thereby all philosophy.

⁵ One may retort that after all Hegel is not a historian. He only rationally interpreted the facts he gathered about Africa. We reply, however, that a philosopher worth his salt must verify his history before interpreting it. For false history yields false philosophy of history.

distinction between Atlantic and African slavery reinterprets his distinction between bad infinity and good in his [SCIENCE OF LOGIC]. But as the case of slavery demonstrates, neither distinction can stand and hold. This stems from the premise that Hegel could not envisage any freedom for Africans save for in the form of infinitely more slavery, and the implication is that Africans would never be free. And inappropriately, in such an endeavour, freedom remains forever on the dark side of a middle passage. These conclusions challenge us to consider what radical politics without a concept of freedom would look like [CHU 2018].

Foreign Categories: Hegel writes from his historical and cultural situation. But this is precisely the point; when it concerns judging others, a scholar would be cautious and aware of his limitations. Hegel has European lenses with Western categories of thought and one of the foreign categories that he imported and used to describe Africa is the word Negro. He imposed and was so comfortable with colour politics because it is part of the racist scheme, which gave rise to his theory and scheme, so there was nothing wrong in calling a people black, Negro. And this was used derogatorily and negatively. He did this unchallenged for decades till African scholars came up to interrogate and put the records right though without prejudice to some innocent misrepresentations by some African scholars like Aime Cesaire's *Negritude*, Steve Biko's *Black Consciousness Movement*, and Martin Bernal's *Black Athena* etc. One of the notable and most recent response was Kwasi Tsri's [Africans are not blacks: the case for conceptual liberations] (2016). The thesis of Tsri was further corroborated by Jonathan Chimakonam who in his review (2018) of the same work argued that irrespective of the three lapses in Tsri's text, which includes not putting up an alternative term for negro "the twenty-first-century individual should read this book if not to obliterate her belief on human differentiation or strengthen her resolve on the implausibility of such an idea; [but] to, at least, understand its bases on ancient history and Christian literature and the potentially damaging, silent, mental consequences." (CHIMAKONAM 2018, 368) This stems from the premise that it is not only irrational but uncharitable to use the term 'Negro' to describe Africans/Africa. The position of Tsri (2016a), which this paper subscribes to is that there is no human being in the world whose skin matches any of the colours commonly used for racial categorisation. And instead of talking about or referring to people as 'Negroes,' Hegel would have opted for the use of indigenous Africans or high-melanated people in general.

Tsri also stated that these colours have symbolic meanings and questioned why Africans should be categorised with a negative colour, and the unfortunate reason was that the likes of Hegel and other racists were attempting to humiliate and question the humanity of those so coloured and described and in this case, Africans. This prompted him to interrogate the evolution of this appellation. And his intention was to make sure that the use of the term 'black' was abandoned in the categorization of Africans (TSRI, 2016a). He contends that the term black employed to describe Africans is odious and racist and has invidious consequences. He further asserts that the semantics of colour has a direct connection with the use of colours to categorise humanity. It is the

submission of Tsri that it was and remains a racist strategy to humiliate, denigrate and dehumanise those segments of humanity and especially the Africans who the slave masters and eventual colonialist wished to portray as inferior human stock. And for W. E. Du Bois; “herein [the text of Tsri] lie buried many things which if read with patience may show the strange meaning of being black here at the dawning of the Twentieth Century...for the problem of the Twentieth Century is the problem of the color line.” (DUBOIS 1903/1989, 3)

‘Negroe(s)’ and the Morality of Colour-Branding and Racial Politics

Let me remark though unfortunately that Senghor seems to be comfortable using the word *negro-African* and/or *Negro* to describe Africa and Africans. This stems from his amplified usage of the term *negritude*. However, if he was around now and is still teaching and learning as an African scholar, he would not have used those words because more and more research and impressions have been expressed to demonstrate that the words were selfish, immoral, unreasonable and misguided and using it promotes the racist agenda of the likes of Hegel who were comfortable with it and employed it. It is based on the above that an African scholar troubled by this uncritical appellation was tempted to ask:

Is there any human in the world whose skin pigmentation could be described as black or white or yellow or brown or coloured or red? [and he said] The answer is none. [So, he asked further] Why then do some people categorise fellow humans with colours, even when they know that different colours have symbolic meanings, both negative and positive? [And he responded] The answer is simple; politics of division, discrimination and subjugation. (CHIMAKONAM 2019, 1)

The submission above explains why the theoretical disposition of Stokely Carmichael, Marcus Garvey Aime Cesaire’s *Negritude*, Steve Biko’s *Black Consciousness Movement* and Martin Bernal’s *Black Athena* is an uninformed, misguided and an unsuccessful valorization of blackness. And the fact is that any form of valorisation of blackness is reprehensible self-delusion created by deleterious politics. This is because, no human being is actually white, black, yellow, brown or even red. And if these two positions are tenable, the question then is why are people branded along colour-lines and called Negro/Negroes where supposed to say indigenous Africans or high-melanated people in general? If not that traducers like Homer, Hume, Kant, Levy Bruhl and in this context, Hegel are all just bent on using racism and colour-branding politically as a potent tool for oppression, exploitation, dehumanization and annihilation.

The baffling thing is that most if not all the literature on race states that race talk was not really a major concern in the ancient era, rather those in the ancient period compartmentalized and designated beings using their religion, language, culture and environment (HANNAFORD 1996). Meaning that the race-talk was only topical during colonialism. That is, race-talk and racism was predicated on the greed and desire of the European to covert and appropriate

the resources of others and gain more power and control, just because of the dwindling resources in Europe during the period. So, the politics of colour-branding was just a stratagem that they used to validate the inhuman, irrational and uncritical models and modes by Europeans to accomplish their goals of power/control and resources. But the fact remains that colour-branding in any guise is not only specious but quite appalling, this is sequel to the fact that these colours were symbolically used. Now, irrespective of the fact that people like Gay Byron (2002), and others consented to the non-existence of colour-branding in the ancient period, others scholars like Robert Hood (1994, 36) have it on record that the foremost poet in ancient Greece Homer, was indeed the first person to colour-brand Africans. He did this when he described Africans as *Aethiops* or sun-burnt-face or sun-darkened face.

The point here is that anything that has been burnt by fire, or anything under the blaze of the sun, is expected to appear dark or black. Therefore, one cannot say that the designation *burnt-face* is complementary within the race-talk, neither is it neutral. More still, it is even possible to go back in history around the 13th and 12th centuries BCE, some centuries even behind Homer, to have an idea of the initial artistic patterns of colour-brandings of human beings in the tomb paintings of ancient Egyptians. David Goldenberg in his work, [The Curse of Ham: Race and Slavery in Early Judaism, Christianity and Islam] (GOLDENBERG 2003), made reference to the tomb paintings of the ancient Egyptians and it was palpable that in Egypt there were representations of peoples with different colours. Although, as against that of Homer none of those artistic paintings on the tomb betrayed racial emotions or was geared towards colour-branding. As a matter of fact, the red-brown colour was what the Egyptian was painted with, which means that all they wanted to show was to identify nationalities rather than create any hierarchical structure of branding people with different colours. Flowing from the foregoing, Chimakonam (2019, 19) argued that the politics that stemmed from “colour-branding” have become a moral issue that produced three problems, namely:

1. The dilemma of colour-blindness and colour-consciousness.
2. Categorisation of human (attributes) with colour symbolism.
3. Categorisation of human (attitudes) with colour symbolism.

So, the issue is that there is a moral problem whenever human beings are branded and profiled with colour, especially when some positive colours are employed to profile some people and the negative colours are employed to profile others. And for Chimakonam (2019, 20), the former is just akin to a neatly printed notice “mind the glass,” and the latter is like a thickly painted warning signpost “danger, keep off,” this approach, which Chimakonam (2019) describes as “colour-branding” becomes a case of colour-conscious racism. Branding beings as either black, red, yellow, brown, or, white is the same thing as putting up a stay off sign around a person as he walks down the road. So, it can be said that colour-branding and racism, remain some of the most nauseating

creations of humankind. But unfortunately, the progenitors and sponsors of this repulsive act of colour-branding would want to create the impression that it is a mode of demonstrating the attributes of different variety of human beings. That is why some of the scholars who subscribed to colour-branding argued that those in sub-Saharan Africa are made of black skin (BRACE 2002). And others attempt to explain the above that the black skin was because of the heat of the sun (GOLDENBERG 2009). Another group posits that the blackness is only surface-deep (BLUMENBACH 1999). However, the ultimate question remains; are Africans really black? In response to this, Tsri (2016b) argues that Africans are not black as no human being has a black skin. He says:

... the use of the terms “black” and “white” as human categories, together with the symbolic use of these terms, help to sustain the perception of Africans as inferior, because their categorical use was accompanied by a long-standing set of conceptual relationships that used the terms symbolically to connote a range of bad and good traits, respectively. This set of associations creates an underlying semantic system that normalised the assumed superiority of those labelled white and the assumed inferiority of those labelled black. The use of this dichotomy as a human categorising device cannot be separated from its symbolic use. It is therefore incumbent on egalitarians to abandon either the symbolic or the categorical use of the dichotomy. (TSRI 2016b, 120).

This negative symbolism of the term black is vivid in the submission of an African philosopher, Tsenay Serequeberhan who stated that David Hume and the German scholar Immanuel Kant were of the opinion that Africans, because of their blackness, are excluded from the realm of reason and civilization” (SEREQUEBERHAN 1991, 84). Using any model, this is simply a moral judgement. But it was Hegel, the German philosopher, who really associated skin colour with human attitudes. In his [LECTURES ON THE PHILOSOPHY OF WORLD HISTORY] (1975) he says that:

Africa ... they behaved with the most unthinking inhumanity and revolting barbarity. The characteristic feature of the Negroes is that their consciousness has not yet reached an awareness of any substantial objectivity-for example, of God or the law-in which the will of man could participate and in which he could become aware of his own being. All our observations of African man show him as living in a state of savagery and barbarism, and he remains in this state to the present day. The Negro is an example of animal man in all his savagery and lawlessness. Thus, in Africa as a whole, we encounter what has been called the *state of innocence*. This primitive state of nature is in fact a state of animality. (HEGEL 1975, 147)

It is good to note that this mode of presenting peoples and branding them with colour is not tenable, as a result of the fact that in biology and in the sciences generally, there is no logic that has been used to establish that there is any form of character and intellectual differences among peoples and races (HOLLADAY 2000). The implication of this is that a racist disposition and attitude that creates a gulf between superior-inferior people, nations or races as a result of colour is mistaken, immoral and unprofessional. Although the likes of Theodore Allen (1994), in his work [The Invention of the White Race], and Browne (2016) in his text [The Retreat of Reason] argues that the ideology of race was meant to create, define and maintain hierarchical boundaries among humans, but those hierarchies that are been created are not real; rather they are just illusions and they are irresponsible and immoral models. Invariably, “the Western world feeds on illusion to sustain the perpetuation of the evil of racism on other peoples. The immorality associated with colour-politic is exactly the main reason colour-branding of humans should be discontinued...So, when one identifies as black, white or coloured, they are fostering colour-branding and perpetrating colour politics, which is the last frontier of racism” (CHIMAKONAM 2019, 18). Consequently, it is either the likes of Hume, Kant and, in the context of this paper Hegel are uncritical in creating and disseminating this disposition to colour-brand people as black or white, or they are just being out rightly immoral, unhistorical, unprofessional and inhuman.

Absolute, Yet Non-Absolute, Hegelian Geist: How can Hegel acknowledge that Africa is part, even the first part, of the (known) world and, at the same time, exclude that first part when it comes to the dialectical evolution of Spirit, from what Hegel calls “[The Classification of Historical Data]” (HEGEL 2001, 103). Prejudices, as usual, beclouded Hegel’s mind here. Either *Geist* explains all reality, including the African reality, and is therefore absolute as Hegel posits it to be, or *Geist* (because it is unable to include Negro identity and African history as part of history) loses its absoluteness. Hegel is free to choose anyone, but he cannot maintain both without self-contradiction, which he has done and that sets Hegel again, against Hegel. The *monistic* Hegel holds all reality to be one element, summarized in the word *Geist*. All that is, is *Geist*, but at differing stages of evolution. At the same time, Hegel presents a view of reality, which we know to be, not one, but plural. He proposes a dynamic dialectical process in the expression of reality. Yet, dialectics is replaced by closeness of development and continuous unfolding. This is obvious in Hegel’s methodological and historical dialectics.

Hegel states that freedom is central in reality, especially in human historical reality. Yet, he tries forcibly to comprehend the whole of history (outside the African one) within the *necessity* of the Absolute. While Hegel presents a very *individualistic* philosophical interpretation of reality and history, which led him to see philosophy as the end point of all knowledge and being (*Geist*), at the same time he ends up as an *absolutist*. No wonder he insisted that the true is the whole and the whole is the true. In the end, what counts is not the individual, not even Hegel himself, but the Absolute. This point is close to Hegel’s

spiritualistic rationalism. In the Spirit, Hegel sees everything, he sees everybody, and he sees every situation. Though he explicitly challenges Kant's critical approach, at the same time, Hegel is a victim of that critical tradition of Western philosophy. All reality is deconstructed with the hammer of rationality and, to an extent even greater than Kant, Hegel enthrones man's reason over all else, including the Divine Spirit, the God of religion.

In religion, man brings his imaginative and pious supernatural sense to bear on his life as a transcendent tending being. Yet the same Hegel does not see religion as anything higher than a construct of man. Religion remains the work of the lower reason when contrasted to pure thought, what Hegel calls self-thinking thought or Philosophy. The God of religion is, therefore, lower than the human most mature self, his reason. Hegel is seen by many to be *atheistic*, for a God that is below human reason is no God. The God of the believers, the God of faith, does not exist if one follows rigorously the Hegelian triad of Absolute Spirit: Art, Religion, and Philosophy. Also, religion with a supernatural God is precluded by Hegel's monistic view of reality already mentioned above. If all is one, then pantheism or panentheism is the result, in which case there is no transcendent. God, which constitute the subject of religion is one-sided and abstract and far from the realities of daily life. Hegel forgets the human qualities of will, love, intentionality and communications which, unlike a pure abstract Absolute Spirit makes the world go round. We recall the development approach given to knowledge and history of Hegel. One must acknowledge that Hegel had a very extensive knowledge of world history at least, of the world known in his time. Hegel's history of the world is universal history. Yet, he made that history serve a particular motive of an absolute history, culminating in the Germanic world. And when this is interrogated critically, it can be seen that Hegel's scheme is a philosophical justification for what German *authoritarianism* of the last century, *Deutschland über Alles* (Germany over all) is, and it stands as the political goal and culmination of the Hegelian theory of the absolute state.

The Uniqueness of African History and World and the Fallacies of Hegel's Racism

This paper argues contra Hegel that Africa is part of the World Spirit even on a higher level. This is because one would ask whether it really makes any historical, cultural and geographical, sense to tear Africa into three parts. Again, it is palpable that the ethnocentrism of the European wraps and traps itself in obvious contradictions by racially stating that the real Africa is south of the Sahara, while geographically asserting that Africa is a continent. Additionally, the word "European Africa" does not exist. As a result of the fact that Europe and Africa are two distinct continents. Thus, Egypt is neither connected to nor influenced by Asia. Since prehistoric times, Africans have existed at the territory north of the Sahara (DIOP 1974). For Senghor, science requires abstract thought and rigorous logic and he argued that Africans are more attached to concrete things. Although, Senghor, for the sake of validating blackness by affirming its specificity, did not hesitate to reproduce the prejudices of an era when Egyptology was in its infancy and thus, ignored the fact that Ancient Egypt, located in the northeast of the African continent, was peopled by Africans and that its impressive civilization

was the product of African spirit.⁶

In an attempt to further demonstrate Hegel contra Hegel, this paper employed Senghor's Négritude as a benchmark and as a portent scheme in refuting Hegelian racism. What Hegel saw as a lack is seen as an asset in Negritude. For Senghor, Negritude is an African theory that is a critical, thematic, coherent, existential and systematic collection of ideas that tend to react to the colonial past. It is also a form of humanism that transcends racial partitions and highlights the racial particulars peculiar to all Africans. He went ahead to talk about the African's unique culture, strong emotional scheme coupled with sensuality, and the African's natural disposition towards art and rhythm. To put his position into perspective, he used geo-climatic determinism, which he used to bring in a historical analysis, showing that psychology and race, when developed in well-determined geo-climatic contexts, are not temporal but rather historically situated. For him, this geo-climatic universe of the African Paleolithic explains African sensitivity. He says; "it is a joy to live, for all things are close by and easy, even all beings: air, water and wind, tree and bird, fish and animal. In the youthful vigor of his body, the elation of his senses, homo-sapiens is open to all objects, to all contacts, to all appeals, and even to the slightest whisper." (SENGHOR 1971, 50) From this interpretation of Negritude, it is quite obvious that nature's generosity, combined with the tropical climate, has shaped Negroes' souls and more particularly, their sensitivity, for "the Negro-African is a man of nature⁷. The abundant environment gave him a heightened sensuality." (SENGHOR 1971, 202).

He presets négritude as the totality of African values expressed in life itself, "permeating into the entire existence of the black man in his relation to the universe" (SENGHOR 1964, 9). Talking about the vision of Senghor, Kluback projects Négritude this way; "it is a culture...Négritude was intuitive reason, the embracing reason; it was not the eye of reason. To be precise, it was the communal warmth, the image symbol and the cosmic rhythm which did not sterilize by dividing but nourished by uniting" (2017, 10-11). Seeing Senghor's Négritude as typically an African model of thinking, it is apt to use its scheme then to confront Hegel's ideas. And our basic disposition stems from the fact that as Hegel sees life just from an idealistic and rational standpoint, Senghor, as an African was more interested in the actual reality. He even makes a general comparison between the Africans and the Europeans, exemplifying that faced with an object, the European

⁶ Senghor was well aware of the anteriority of Black African civilizations. He says, "Egypt founded the first of the historical civilization. Europe have tried in vain to refuse it this honour. In any event, it is the first of African civilizations" (SENGHOR, 1971, 88)

⁷ Let me remark that Senghor seems to be comfortable using the word *negro-African* and/or *Negro* to describe the being of African and Africans. That stems from his amplified usage of the term negritude. However, if he was around now and still teaching and learning as an African scholar, he would not have used those words because more and more researchers, information and impressions have been expressed to demonstrate that the words were misguided and using it now further promotes the racial schemes of those who are comfortable with it. An extensive reading of Kwesi Tsri (2016) and Jonathan Chimakonam (2018; 2019) among many others will be very significant and useful.

keeps the object at a distance, he immobilizes and fixes it; the African, on his part does not draw a line between himself and an object. He touches feels, smells and abandons his personality to become identified with it. He does not assimilate; he is assimilated. He lives a common life with the other; he lives in a symbiosis (SENGHOR 1964b). Wrapping up this point, Basile Sede Noujio notes that;

It is proven that Hegel, with his stereotype mentality, rebels against historical pragmatism, a theory stating that the historical experiences be taken seriously to learn from their strong points and evade their weaknesses. This is demonstrated in his rationalistic metaphysics which conditions him to consider Africa as a stagnant continent, doomed to remain in slavery. As a historical pragmatist, Senghor, without any intension of justifying slavery, considers it as a movement to freedom, in which nations contributed, though in a rash and inhuman manner to the development of other nations. (NOUJIO 2020, 61)

It is obvious that Hegel (2011) rather adopted a more idealistic approach. This is based on the fact that Hegel perceives every state as an end in itself, and as an external self-preservation whose internal development and evolution are on the path of necessary development and progression where the rational, i.e. justice and the consolidation of freedom, gradually emerges (HEGEL 2011). This same Hegel sees heroes like Napoleon and Caesar as world personalities whose disposition and structure was to become agents of the World Spirit. They do not have any calm enjoyment as their life was all about labour and trouble and their complete nature was naught else but their master passion (HEGEL 2007). This, however, is not in tandem with the position of Senghor, who subscribes to the conscious and responsible personalities of historical figures, Hegel perceives them as mere 'passive' instruments, only designed as passages of the spirit that is manifesting itself. For him, they were "managers of the world spirit." This implies that natural human consciousness has little or nothing to do with history. This Hegelian conviction seems to be the source of the greatest difficulty one may find in his philosophy of history. Firstly, assuming that people act from ideals or principles may be implausible. Secondly, it does not give any place to freedom, for if everything happens necessarily, then what choice do we have? Hegel conceives that the end of history; that is, the complete finality is the limit that the Spirit sets for itself: freedom (NOUJIO 2020). However, this is just a fallacy, especially against the backdrop that for Beisier, a freedom realized out of necessity cannot really be considered as freedom (BEISIER 2003). Therefore, the implication of this Hegelian gaffe is that the leader of people and even the world is the Idea, or Reason or Providence, or God, is only a real and candid expression of pantheistic thought laced with panlogicism and this ultimately leads to full-blown nihilism. So, it can be said that while Senghor can boast of a practical and phenomenological disposition towards reality, Hegel prefers to be idealistic and panlogistic. And it is blatant that this distinction remains the baseline of his anchor of the major difference between Africans and the European. And this also accounts for why he employed the term Negro to describe indigenous Africans and this is unfortunate.

Conclusion: Hegel Contra Hegel

Hegel set out to interpret world history philosophically. He identified the parts of the world known to him; Africa, Europe, and Asia. He also foresaw the New World, the Americas, as the land of the future. However, when he provided an account for those parts of the world that were important and thereby relevant to history, Hegel immediately went off track. Hegel intentionally excluded Africa. His reason was that indigenous Africa, still in the childhood of development, did not have the qualities of rationality, civilization, and material progress that he saw in Europe. Nevertheless, this paper argued that his account of Africa was false and was based on misguided eurocentrism, racism and economic greed. This is because, ignoring the contributions of Africa was in contradiction with dialectics. At least, this error makes Hegel irrelevant and at worst, noxious. And the implication is that his own models turned against him. And this makes him appear confused and complicated, as a working university academic with a career to make and an overriding desire to publicize his own thoughts and ideas on African studies. And interestingly, African scholars are still trying to come to grips with the long and enduring shadow cast by Hegel over both the past and present of the African continent (MCCASKIE 2019). Thus, given his very philosophical and historical method Hegel runs into a headlong philosophical conflict by refusing to give indigenous Africa, its rightful place in his philosophy of history and in the history and development of humanity, thought and philosophy.

Declarations

The author declares no conflict of interest and no ethical issues for this research.

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This issue is dedicated to our Assoc. Editor and a second-generation member of the Calabar (Conversational) School of Philosophy (CSP): **Prince. Prof Mesembe Ita Edet (1965-2023)**

Contextualizing Language as a Tool of Value Degeneration: A Sociolinguistic Study of Language of Corruption in Nigeria

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Abstract

Corruption has traversed all lengths and breadth of the Nigerian nation. The corrupt practice is mostly ornamented with language. The present study aims to ascertain the linguistic codings used to mask corruption in educational, civil service, political and social settings. Data for the study were collected from notable online newspaper and media sources, which include: *The Vanguard*, *The Guardian*, *The Punch*, *This Day*, *The Nation*, *The Premium*, *Sahara Reporters*, *Naira land* and others published between 2015 and 2021. The data from online sources were complemented by focused group discussions, unstructured interviews and participant's observation method. The study adopted a qualitative research design and a random sampling method in selecting a total of hundred respondents from the five states that make up the southeast zone in Nigeria. The paper anchored its analyses on the conceptual model of Sapir-Whorf relativity framework and the analyses were done using interpretative textual analysis model. Findings from the study reveal that using words, phrases and expressions which are reflected in coinages, code-mixing, reduplication, metonymy, metaphor, slang, borrowing, pidginization, lexical reversals and creative usages to mask corruption have far-reaching effects on national development. The paper recommends that in considering the fight against corruption, the government should pay attention to the linguistic embellishments that act as the lifeline of the negative practice.

Keywords: language, corruption, national development, Nigeria, value system and relativism

Introduction

The issue of corruption has generated a lot of scholarly interest given its rising cases which are expressed mainly through language. Language remains the principal means through which a group of people expresses the totality of their being, beliefs, and historical experiences. Their specificity, thoughts, and understanding of their world is largely reflected in their language use and specific semantic changes. Language therefore becomes a vehicle through which thoughts are constructed and expressed simultaneously to achieve the intended purpose of communication. Hence, an individual's experience, behaviour and culture are expressed in the language he or she speaks. The point is made clearer by Jacob Mey citing Treicher (1989) who expresses that language is an instrument that we use in 'organizing the world and constructing our culture' and in that case, language no longer serves as the 'transparent vehicle of content or as the simple

reflection of reality, but itself participates in how that content and reality are formed, apprehended, expressed, and transformed' (2001, 307). Corroborating the position, Jerome Bruner posits that the symbolic systems individuals use in constructing meanings are already deeply entrenched in their culture and language (1990,111). The system helps the user recognize his linguistic world and record his mental activity (cognition) and use them in social and communicative activities.

Apparently, the language system endorsed by members of a linguistic community influences their cognition, behaviour, psychology and the generality of their being either positively or negatively. According to Curtis Hardin and Mahzarin Banaji, (1993, pps 277-308), results of findings of linguistic relativity hypothesis have shown evidence of effects of language on the speakers' cognition. When linguistic colourations are employed in a manner that bespeaks of a deliberate attempt to manipulate language for corrupt and fraudulent purposes, the concomitant result is tacit endorsement and unchallenging acceptance of corrupt practices. Expression of corrupt practices in the language of 'moral obligation' affects the perception and cognition of the language users about the anomalous act. In Nigeria, most corrupt behaviour and practices have been coloured with language. Such colourations present the depraved act in a glorious outlook.

The present paper seeks to find out the linguistic codings that have been tactically employed to reconstruct corrupt behaviour in Nigeria and the implications of such linguistic colourations of corruption in the overall national development of Nigeria.

Previous Studies on Language and Corruption and Problem Identification

Some scholarly works on language and corruption in different settings within and outside the clime are relevant to the present study. These works include Bassey Ekpenyong and Victor Bassey (2014), who studied the language of corruption and anti-corruption in Nigeria. The researchers drawing their data from popular written and creative literature applied lexico-semantic descriptive model to examine how Nigerians refer to corruption and anti-corruption. Findings from their study reveal that Nigerians employ many lexical features, including gradable synonyms, collocations, metaphors, idioms, clichés and coinages, to portray corrupt practices. In like manner, (ADEGOJU 2007) investigates the corruption of language and Nigeria's debased value system. The study draws inference from the coinage 'Naija' and acknowledges that the depravity of Nigeria's social order is alarming and unhealthy for national development. Also, in their contribution, Cecilia Timayi and Aishatu Yero (2015) view the English language as a point of convergence and a tool for building a corrupt-free Nigeria. The work holds that the English language is a major unification tool which has the potential of amalgamating Nigeria's varied positive norms and value systems to achieve a corrupt-free Nigeria. Similarly, (AGBEDO 2012) examines 'verbal carpentry' as language of political corruption in Nigeria. The paper concludes that to give the English language its rightful place in Nigeria, political leaders should strive to use the language with integrity and not as a weapon of mass deception that violates and insults the sensibilities of the people.

Beyond the shores of Nigeria, several studies have also been carried out on language and corruption. In looking at the discursive construction of corruption

in Ghanaian Parliamentary discourse, Kwabena Sarfo-Kantankah (2018) discovers that corruption among the parliamentarians in Ghana is a huge systematic social canker that hinders socio-political and economic development of the country. The paper suggests that stronger measures and more formidable parliamentary commitments are needed to fight corruption. More so, Gudeta Kebede (2013) reviews political corruption from the political and economic perspectives in Ethiopia. The work holds that perpetuation of political corruption is the major reason for the truncation of the country's democratization process and monopolization of the country's economy among other reasons. In looking at Police Officers' perception of corruption in Zimbabwe, Tapfuiwa Katsinde (2020), employs Bourdieu's theory of habitus (1977) to analyse the responses of sixty-four police officers. The study reveals that corrupt people are usually the rich, the middle class, top politicians or top management.

Evidently, the studies mentioned above provide insights to the present study. However, the present study tries to fill the gap observed in the previous studies. Other works studied corruption in a single setting but the present study attempts to investigate how language has been contextualized and manipulated to promote corruption in the educational, civil service, political and social sectors in Nigeria.

Corruption: A Conceptual Construct

Corruption occurs in different shades, making it difficult to find a definition that will encompass the different forms. However, scholars have attempted to define corruption from varied viewpoints. Robert Klitgaard (1998, 3) sees corruption as the misuse of office for unofficial ends and includes bribery, embezzlement, extortion, nepotism, fraud, influence peddling and the use of speed money which is money paid to government officials to speed up their consideration of a business matter falling within their jurisdiction. Toeing the same line of argument, Lipset, S. and Lenz, G. (2000, 112) view corruption as efforts made to gain wealth or power through illegal means. For A. Ndaliman and M. Auwalu (2011,108), corruption is any act that runs contrary to ethical, legal, legitimate, right, positive and moral standard expected of members of a particular society. From the positions of these scholars, corruption constitutes acts that are in contradiction to the expectation of established moral standard in any community for personal gains. In looking at the term wholistically, Nasir El-Rufai (2003, 2) holds that corruption covers a range of social misdemeanors. According to him, it includes but not limited to fraud, extortion, embezzlement, bribery, nepotism, influence peddling, bestowing of favour to friends, rigging of elections, abuse of public property, the leaking of government secret, sale of expired goods to the public and the use of public resources for personal gains among others. For the purpose of this paper, corruption is seen as all behaviours that run contrary to the moral expectations of members of a society and the abuse of entrusted powers by individuals in positions of trust to achieve personal objectives.

Corruption in Nigeria: An Overview

Corruption in Nigeria is an all-pervading phenomenon that has been deeply entrenched in the Nigerian system. It has enthroned unvarnished dishonesty, moral recklessness, unguided roguery, social retrogression and prevalent disorder

in the nation. Corruption has not only destroyed the social structure but has discouraged hard work and eroded the nation's value system. Decrying the effect of corruption on the value system, Arthur Mbanefo (1999, 11) has this to say:

How was it possible for our value system to become almost completely destroyed within a space of less than twenty years? Our social fabric has been worn terribly thin, our morality has fallen into disrepute, and our respected institutions have lost their authority, while our educational system has lost its quality. The sad corollary to all these is that, internationally, we have lost respect as a serious people who can be trusted in business.

His position aptly captures the extent to which corruption has affected our value system. Arguably, these corrupt practices are initiated, institutionalized and maintained through language. According to O. Oliyide and K. Odeku (2002, 5), corruption is reflected in the practices, conducts, beliefs, ethics, sayings, idiosyncrasies and heritage of Nigeria. In other words, how most Nigerians talk, behave and act reflects their tacit approval or implicit support for corrupt behaviour.

For the purpose of this paper, an attempt will be made to shed light on some sectors that have become a beehive of corrupt practices. The educational sector has suffered its onslaught of corruption. Different tactics have been deployed to perpetuate examination malpractice, ranging from copying in all its shades, examination paper leakages, bribery and drugging of examination officers, and colluding with other agents to perpetuate cheating. In the tertiary institutions, all manners of corruption are witnessed, ranging from sale of marks, gratifications, victimization, extortion and even the use of sex to gain unmerited grades. Bemoaning the situation, Adeyemi Adegoju (2007, 343), citing Bugaje (1995), comments as follows: 'You no longer need to be qualified to gain admission nor do you need to pass exams to get the degrees, for so many ways of going around all these have been perfected and are gaining ascendancy in the amoral atmosphere of the campuses.'

In the same vein, the Nigeria civil service has become an epicentre of corruption (OLIYIDE and ODEKU, 2002). According to them, these corrupt practices in civil service date back to the pre-independence era. Chinua Achebe (1993, 42) presents the point succinctly when he argues that Nigeria is without any shadow of a doubt, one of the most corrupt nations in the world. And so, from fairly timid manifestations in the 1960s, corruption has grown bold and ravenous as with each succeeding regime, our public servants have become more reckless and blatant. Bemoaning the spate of corruption in the civil service, M. Chigbo (2010) remarks that when you come to an office, a messenger will ask you what you have for him or her and at a checkpoint, the police will ask you what you have for him or her (cited in Linus ODO 2015, 181). Re-emphasizing the point, Adibe (2012) adds that law enforcement officers see or hear no evil at the slight inducement; government workers drag their feet and refuse to give their best if there is no enticement, and the journalists would turn the truth on its head once he/she has accepted brown envelopes (quoted in ODO 2015, 179). By implication,

the civil service operates on the notion that anything is possible so long as one is ready to offer a bribe.

Corruption has also been witnessed in the political sector. Corruption in the sector takes place in different shades, which range from bribing of the electorate and officials of the electoral body to snatching of ballot boxes, fraud during result collations, under-aged voting, buying of votes and other forms of political corruption. In fact, corruption in the political sector and in most sectors in Nigeria has remained unabated.

Another corrupt practice that has continued to flourish with innovative sophistication is the advance fee fraud popularly known as 419. Smith (2006) cited in Chris Agbedo (2012, 29) posits that the linguistic coding 419 is named after the number in the Nigeria Criminal Code Act that deals with a specific form of fraud.¹ The linguistic colouration has been extended to become an encompassing term for all forms of dubious behaviour beyond the normal trick of 'obtaining' from people. Such manipulation of truth and ripping others off, in any form, is also referred to as '419'. The situation makes the position of Bugaje (1995) a truism that 'the country is daily receding but the only thing that moves forward in the country is corruption,' which is not only growing and thriving, but has become the biggest industry (quoted in ADEGOJU 2007, 345).

Sadly, the points raised above account for why Nigeria over the last few years has been rated the most corrupt nation on earth, second to Bangladesh, the second most corrupt in 2001, 2002 and 2003, the third most corrupt in 2004; the sixth most corrupt in 2005, and the eighteenth most corrupt in 2006 (The 2007 Transparency International Corruption Index). In 2019, the country is also rated the 146th out of 180 most corrupt countries of the world (The Transparency International Report of 2019). The figures above suggest that corruption has been entrenched and institutionalized in Nigeria.

The realization of the soaring wave of corruption in Nigeria and the need for transparency and accountability has brought about agencies like the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) to wage war against the hydra-headed social canker. Although these agencies have recorded some successes, corruption is still endemic in Nigeria. Hence, the present paper seeks to unveil the linguistic choices often used to coat corrupt behaviour in Nigeria. It is believed that exposure of such linguistic expressions will help to unearth and create an awareness of the dynamics of corruption-related language use.

Theoretical Framework

The study is underpinned by Sapir-Whorf hypothesis of linguistic relativity (1929)

¹ Section 419 of The Criminal Code Act of Nigeria states that 'any person who by any false pretence, and with intent to defraud, obtains from any other person anything capable of being stolen, or induces any other person to deliver to any person anything capable of being stolen, is guilty of a felony and is liable to imprisonment for three years.' The information is a summary of the legal provision under the Criminal Code Act of Nigeria.

as cited in David Mandelbaum (1949). The conceptual framework upholds that there is a relationship between the language one uses, how one talks and how one perceives the world and reality. By implication, our language shapes our reality and restricts the way we think. Insights from the hypothesis reveal the interrelatedness between language and culture, which influences language users' thought processes. Hence, the language habits of the different linguistic communities predispose them to choices of interpretation. Although Scholars like Stephen Pinker (2007,57) have faulted the model arguing about the 'certainty of language' affecting thoughts and how thoughts can be affected by language. However, current studies have shown that language has magnitude impact on cognition. According to D. Casasanto (2016, 159), these studies have suggested that words found in some languages, but not in others can radically transform people's minds and reshape their world. Furthermore, Danslobin (1996) believes that language affects cognition during the process of encoding our thoughts into words, or 'thinking for speaking' which involves picking those features of objects or events that are readily encodable in the speaker's language (cited in CASASANTO 2016, 159).

The model is viewed from two dimensions: linguistic relativity and linguistic determinism. Linguistic relativity is anchored on the principle that the structure of a language affects the speaker's cognition, mental representations or perception of the world, which are context dependent. In other words, the kind of language we use has pervasive influences on how and what we think and predisposes us to view the world in a certain way. On the one hand, linguistic determinism holds that language is a function of thought as language users can only organize their thoughts in line with their language. By implication, linguistic determinism posits that language determines the thoughts of the users and linguistic categories limit and determine cognitive categories. We dissect nature along the lines laid down by our native language.

In line with the tenets of the framework, the model is considered apt for the study given the way language is contextualized and manipulated to reflect the thoughts of the users about corruption in Nigeria. The contextualized language use and linguistic choices affect the cognition and world views of Nigerians as it masks the obnoxious act in an acceptable form. Such ingenious and innovative employment of linguistic coding has helped to enthrone corruption in Nigeria.

Methodology

Data for the study were collected from notable online newspaper and media sources which include: *The Vanguard*, *The Guardian*, *The Punch*, *This Day*, *The Nation*, *The Premium*, *Sahara Reporters*, *Naira land* and others published between 2015 and 2021. The justification for the period is that it provides adequate data considered to have features relevant to the study. The data from online sources were complemented by focused group discussions, unstructured interviews and participant's observation method. The researcher adopted the type of observation, which Werner and Schoepfle (1987) cited in Micheal Angrosino & Kimberly Mays Deperez (2000, 677) described as a method of observation that is supported by interviews in which the participants' insights open more room for further observations.

The thrust of the investigation is on the corrupt linguistic codings used in the educational, civil service, political and social settings. The study adopted a qualitative research design and a random sampling method to select a hundred respondents from the five states comprising the southeast zone in Nigeria (ten women and ten men from each state). The respondents were chosen from the State Secretariats, State Universities in different states (Chukwuemeka Odimegwu Ojukwu University (COOU, Anambra State), Ebonyi State University (EBSU), Enugu State University of Technology (ESUT) Imo State University (IMSU) and Abia State University (ABSU) as well as political gatherings in the states under study. The collection of data lasted for a period of six months from March 2021 to September 2021. Few of the expressions from the state secretariats were said in the local languages but translated into English by the researcher. The paper anchored its analyses on the conceptual model of Sapir-Whorf relativity framework and the analyses were done using interpretative textual analysis model. The respondents provided the lexico-semantic descriptions and analyses of words, expressions, phrases collected from the online newspapers, media platforms and interview during the focused group discussion. A total of 75 words, phrases and expressions were analysed. The analyses were presented in a tabular form.

Presentation of Data

Table 1: Corruption Related Linguistic Coding in the Educational Sector

S/no	Linguistic Coding	Context of Use	Lexical Category	Lexico-semantic Description as Given by the Respondents
1	Blocking a lecturer's course (<i>Nairaland</i> : top 5 universities in terms of blocking lecturers)	"What does blocking mean? Bribing a lecturer."	Coinage	Bribing a lecturer with money to pass his/her course
2	Sorting (<i>Sun online</i> 13th Oct., 2019)	"sorting started as an aberration... so they offer themselves and/or money to willing lecturers, get awarded good grades in return."	Slang	Inducing a lecturer so as to award a good grade to a student
3	Sex-for-grade (<i>Guardian Online</i> 18th	"sex for grade is the practice	Neologism	Linguistic expression to

	Nov., 2019)	of male lecturers blackmailing, forcing, intimidating & demanding sex from female students as a condition for awarding them pass marks in their courses.”		mean the use of sex to obtain a higher grade
4	Double decker (<i>Sun online</i> 13th, Oct., 2019)	“some notorious randy male lecturers have been branded ‘double decker’ which means that they would sleep with a female student and also collect money from her to award her good marks.”	Slangy Expression	Sleeping with a female student and also collecting money to award good grades
5	Let my people go (<i>Online Nigeria Tribune</i> Mar 14th, 2021)	“Lose your grip and let my people go.”	Biblical extension	Biblical expression which has been extended to mean awarding at least ‘E’ grade just to allow a student to pass
6	Purchased certificate	“In Nigeria,	Derived	Linguistic

	(<i>Geeky online media</i> Dec. 30th, 2019)	fake degree certificate black market has become sophisticated, making it easy to buy a certificate now more than ever before.”	neologism	coating for parading certificates bought and not studied for, by an individual
7	Certificate peddling (<i>The Nation online</i> June 30, 2021)	“Prof Is-haq Oloyede has said that many tertiary institutions still mobilize or award certificates to people who never attended the institution.”	Derived neologism	Linguistic colouration for issuance of certificates to individuals who never attended the institutions
8	Assisting/ helping students (<i>Guardian Online</i> 25th June, 2019)	“I told them I did not understand what they meant, and they said you will allow us to help our students.”	Coinage	Linguistic coding for colluding and aiding/ abetting examination practice
9	Mercenaries (<i>Guardian Online</i> 25th Jan., 2019)	“They get ‘mercenaries’ to help their students solve the questions which are now distributed among the students.”	Coinage	Linguistic coding for hired individuals who sit for examinations for other people

10	<i>omokirikiri</i> (Imo State University)	"If you are caught with omokirikiri, you will have yourself to be blamed."	Blend of Yoruba and Igbo	Already prepared tiny material used for cheating during examinations
11	<i>Mgbo</i> (Ebonyi State University)	"Mgbo is not allowed in this examination."	Borrowed Igbo word for bullet	An expression used among students to describe copied materials used for examination malpractice
12	<i>Ogoro</i> must jump (ChukwuemekaOdimegwu OjukwuUniversity)	"Ogoro must jump."	Loan word from Urhobo	<i>Ogoro</i> means frog in Urhobo. It is an expression used among students to express the inevitability of cheating in examinations
13	Microchips (Enugu State University of Tech.)	"If you have fortified yourself with microchips, I will advise you to remove it."	Loanword from English	Computer jargon and linguistic colouration for tiny written material used for cheating during exams
14	Paying in kind (<i>Nairaland</i> : Inside 3Nigerian universities where students pay...)	"Students who can't pay in cash are expected to pay in kind."	Extended neologism	the use of sex or other inducement to obtain good grades
15	Formation (Abia State University)	"Guys we need to plan the formation now."	Slang	Linking and selecting who to sit with in the

				examination hall for purpose of cheating
16	Runs (Imo State University)	“It is after the examination that these lazy students do the runs.”	Slang	Linguistic colouration used to describe cheating, malpractice and nefarious acts perpetrated by staff and students

Table 2: Corruption Related Linguistic Coding in the Political Sector

S/no	Linguistic Coding	Context of Use	Lexical Category	Lexico-semantic Description as Given by the Respondents
17	Lobbying (<i>This Day</i> 1st Nov, 2020)	“Lobbying which is equated to bribery and corruption seek to ‘buy’ power...”	Extended coinage	Nigerian expression for ‘buying’ of power and influence through bribery
18	Ballot box snatching (<i>The Guardian</i> 17th Nov., 2019)	“Ballot boxes were also snatched away by political thugs at polling units at Crowther College, Lokoja and Muslim Community College, Lokoja.”	Coinage	Linguistic coding for taking of ballot boxes forcefully for electoral malpractice

19	Vote buying (<i>The Guardian</i> 17th Nov., 2019)	“Prof Adele Jinadu while addressing a world conference said reports from CDD observers indicate widespread violence, intimidation of voters, vote buying...”	Coinage	Linguistic coating for influencing voters’ choices through bribery or other inducement
20	Budget padding (<i>The Punch</i> 30th Dec., 2016)	“Budget padding is not only fraudulent, it is also a destructive crime against the future of the people.”	Derived Neologism	Linguistic colouration for inflating of the national budget for personal gains
21	<i>Wuru-wuru</i> (from a political gathering in Awka)	“The man is a wuru-wuru person.”	Borrowed Yoruba word	Nigerian expression for a deceitful person or group of persons or unclear process
22	<i>Mago-mago</i> (from a political gathering in Awka)	“There is mago-mago in the sharing of the money.”	Borrowed Hausa word	Linguistic coding for crooked and tricky process
23	Politics is a dirty game (<i>The Vanguard</i> 11th Feb., 2015)	“It is indeed true that politics is a dirty game, said a commentator by name Ade, in the Apapa-	Cliché	Linguistic Colouration to express that politics in Nigeria is characterized by lies, deceits, character assassination, fetish practices, mudsling and others

		bound bus as a radio commentator said something about General Muhammad u Buhari's health."		
24	Second term/third term bid (<i>The Vanguard</i> 2nd Oct., 2019)	"Recall that Presidency had vowed that noting(sic) would make Buhari seek for a third term after his second term."	Cliché	Linguistic coding for tenure elongation by politicians
25	Continuity in government (<i>The Guardian online</i> 19th Jan., 2015)	"The concept of continuity of people-friendly public policies in governance is well known to us."	Slogan	Linguistic colouration and justification for extension of tenure in office by politicians
26	Dividends of democracy (<i>The Sun news online</i> 30th Aug, 2018)	"The dividends of democracy are simply the benefits enjoyed by the masses who voted for the government in power"	Extended coinage	Linguistic coating for enjoyment of benefits accruing from politics by politicians and their associates/false promises

27	Looting (<i>The Punch online</i> 30th Aug., 2020)	“The public has a right to know how recovered N800bn loot has been spent, and the details and purpose of the alleged payments of N51bn into individual private accounts.”	Cliché	Linguistic coding for unabated stealing of public funds
28	Manipulation of figures (<i>The Punch online</i> 17th April., 2017)	“The speaker of the House of Representatives, Mr Yakubu Dogara, warned on Monday that figures could be manipulated if a population census was conducted by Nigeria in 2018.”	Cliché	Nigerian expression used for falsification or alteration of data for cheating purposes
29	Ghana must go bags (<i>Urhobo Today</i> 27th April., 2017)	“A combined team of Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the	Coinage	Nigerian expression of describing the idea of massive plundering of public funds

		Army raided three vehicles with several “Ghana must go” bags containing huge sums of money.”		
30	Share the money (www. <i>Tori news</i> 26th Nov., 2015)	“The real reason why PDP is called ‘share the money’ party has been revealed by a card-carrying member of the party.”	Slogan	Linguistic coding with which a particular political party in Nigeria is known for. The ideology of using bribery to gain undue advantage
31	Chop and clean mouth (Political gathering in Imo State)	“Every one of them has learnt how to chop and clean mouth.”	Pidginized expression	Nigerian expression for covering track of corruption
32	Cut corner (Political gathering in Abia)	“People try to cut corners for selfish reasons.”	Derived idiom	An expression in Nigeria used to describe dubious and treacherous acts and not following due process
33	Fast lane (Political gathering in Anambra State)	“Our young people seem to be on a fast lane and cannot wait like we elders did in the past.”	Derived idiom	Linguistic coding for ‘get rich quick syndrome’ which is prevalent in the Nigerian system as against the English meaning of a life filled with excitement

34	Sharing the national cake (<i>The Daily Trust online</i> 7th May, 2019)	“He (Governor Okowa) complained that South-South States aren’t getting their fair share of the national cake”	Derived idiom	An idiom which has been used differently in Nigeria to mean that the country belongs to everybody thereby justifying the reason for massive looting
35	Brown/yellow envelope (<i>BBC News</i> 5th March, 2015)	“It is common for ‘brown envelopes’ containing cash to be handed out during press briefings- a practice that has been going on for so long that many young journalists with whom I have spoken have no idea that it is unethical”	Derived neologism	Linguistic colouration for indirect monetary inducement especially to journalists
36	Pen robbery (<i>Nairaland-pen robbery</i> societal evil)	“There is no doubt that pen robbery is one of the greatest societal evils which has not only eaten deep into every sector in Nigeria but has also become	Figurative expression	Nigerian expression to describe situations where those in the position of authority use their pens (position) to plunder public funds

		official and legal”		
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Table 3: Corruption Related Linguistic Coding in the Civil Service

S/n	Linguistic Coding	Context of Use	Lexical Category	Lexico-semantic Description as Given by the Respondents
37	Ghost workers (<i>The Vanguard news online</i> 2nd Jan., 2021)	“Of the 22, 556 ghost workers, 14, 762 were discovered at the local government level while 7, 794 were found to be collecting salaries from public primary schools without being teachers.”	Cliché	Linguistic colouration for civil servants whose names are on the payroll of different state governments but are not real workers
38	Falsification of age (<i>The Sun news online</i> 9th Feb., 2020)	“Again, harsh economic condition, poor government regulations without palliatives in place is some of the reasons people go into age falsification.”	Coinage	Nigerian expression for changing of one’s date of birth to remain younger and employable
39	Federal character (<i>The Guardian online</i> 2nd Nov., 2020)	“Vice President Yemi Osibanjo was quite right that “Federal Character is essentially affirmative to create a balance...If we are to reserve an office for a particular zone,	Lexical extension	Linguistic coding for favouring of particular ethnic group and justification for the appointment of less qualified candidates over more qualified candidates

		that zone should be able to produce the best candidate.”		
40	Quota system (State Secretariat, Awka)	“Quota system is used in federal employment and not in state employment.”	Lexical extension	Nigerian expression for deep seated divide among the ethnic groups and justification for the sacrifice of merit at the altar of mediocrity
41	Settlement (State Secretariat, Owerri)	“What is in vogue now is government of settlement.”	Slogan	Linguistic colouration for implicit request for bribes
42	Nepotism (State Secretariat, Awka)	“They are condemning it but they are the ones encouraging nepotism.”	Lexical extension	Nigerian expression to coat the favouring of relatives and friends of the powerful especially by giving them jobs
43	Tribalism (<i>The Punch online</i> 17th Nov., 2020)	“Tribalism is a parochial attitude found in every culture, in every nation, and in modern societies across racial lines.”	Lexical extension	Linguistic coating for favouring of a particular tribe as against the original meaning of being loyal to one’s tribe/group or party
44	Bigotry (<i>The Vanguard news online</i> 22nd Nov., 2018)	“In the piece, Lee described bigotry as one of the deadliest social evils plaguing our world today.”	Lexical extension	Linguistic colouration for favouritism and support of a course at the detriment of other groups/ interests
45	Sacred cows	“The Federal	Cliché	Nigerian expression for

	<i>(The Vanguard news online 13th Aug., 2020)</i>	Government says there is no sacred cow in the fight against corruption...”		individuals who cannot be prosecuted no matter their offence
46	Anointed ones <i>(The News Nigeria online 22nd March, 2021)</i>	“In Nigeria politics, (anointed one) refers to the person whom the powers-that-be have declared should occupy a position, merit or no merit, election or no election.”	Biblical Borrowing	Linguistic coating for persons who occupy political positions with or without merit or without being elected
47	Missing files <i>(The Punch online 23rd Aug., 2020)</i>	“The missing files also included the non- declaration of assets and possession of foreign account cases against Anambra North Senator, Stella Oduah, the President of the Nigerian football Federation, Amaju...”	Slogan	Linguistic colouration for deliberate disappearance of case files against corrupt individuals as a way of covering traces
48	Jump the line (State Secretariat, Abakiliki)	“Every body is trying to jump the line.”	Derived idiom	An idiom which is used differently in Nigeria to colour the act of impatience and not waiting for turns
49	Non-declaration/f also declaration of assets <i>(The</i>	“The Code of Conduct Bureau (CCB) has invited a Chief Accountant in the office of the	Derived neologism	Linguistic colouration for deliberate refusal by individuals to declare their properties or declaring less of their assets

	<i>Premium times</i> July 16th, 2021)	Kano State Accountant-General Shehu Ibrahim over alleged false declaration of asset.”		
50	Appreciation (State Secretariat, Abakiliki)	“The ‘Oga’ will expect us to appreciate him for helping us to find the file.”	Coinage	Nigerian expression for implicit bribery and inducement
51	Contract inflation (Enugu State Secretariat)	It is surprising that costs of contracts are always inflated by contracors.”	Coinage	Linguistic coating for overrating the cost of contracts for personal gains
52	Who dey chop, no dey talk (State Secretariat, Awka)	“They will not speak against what he is doing. Afterall, who dey chop, no dey talk.”	Pidginized expression	Linguistic colouration for individual who are benefiting from corruption not to raise an alarm
53	You don’t talk while you are eating. (said in Igbo language at State Secretariat, Aba)	“They have learnt not to talk while they are eating.”	Figurative expression	Nigerian expression for covering traces of corruption by the beneficiaries.
54	The 11 th commandment (Thou shall not be caught) (State Secretariat Owerri)	“Remember the 11 th commandment.” (Thou shall not be caught)	Biblical borrowing	Linguistic colouration to express caution while cheating.
55	Money laundering (State Secretariat Owerri)	“They use various fictious names for the business of money laundering.”	Cliché	Nigerian expression for illegal appropriation of public resources for private uses especially when the monies are lodged in foreign bank accounts

56	Soft landing (<i>The Punch online</i> Nov., 14th 2021)	“though it was gathered that some of the politicians and contractors who had abandoned projects in the Niger Delta had returned to the sites, a few others were said to have been making frantic efforts to persuade the Ministry of Justice to hold on to the documents and give them a soft landing.”	Slogan	A subtle way of dismissing corruption charges against indicted individuals
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Table 4: Corruption Related Linguistic Coding in the Social Setting

S/no	Linguistic Coding	Context of Use	Lexical Category	Lexico-semantic Description as Given by the Respondents
57	African time (<i>The Guardian online</i> 14th April., 2018)	“There is a culture of impunity that is ravaging the African nations called African time.”	Slang	Nigerian expression for perceived social tendency to describe relaxed attitude towards time, appointments or events
58	Nigerian factor (<i>The Punch online</i> 12th Nov., 2017)	“I’m sure we have all heard this expression (Nigerian factor) and we laugh about it.”	Cliché	Linguistic colouration to describe the unworkability of the social system due to perceived unethical behaviour and complacency
59	God-fatherism (<i>BBC News</i> 4th Feb., 2019)	“God fathers in Nigerian politics don’t usually run	Biblical borrowing	Derived from the concept of baptism which is a Nigerian

		for the office themselves, but many believe they are the ones who decide the election winners and losers.”		expression for a superior personality who sponsors or provides support for another to gain advantage in politics, social, cultural and other aspects
60	Favouritism (<i>Independent Newspaper</i> 5th July, 2018)	“Alli, in an interview with news men in Ilorin, said hope of good governance may many people had, had been dashed by the government through nepotism and favouritism.”	Slogan	Linguistic coding for appointment of preferred candidates who are not worthy of the position they occupy
61	Yahoo-yahoo (<i>The Premium times</i> May 3rd, 2021)	“The ‘yahoo-yahoo’ business formally known as cyber fraud in Nigeria’s cybercrime law is not a new phenomenon in the country.”	Slang	Linguistic coatings in Nigeria for cyber fraud where people through counterfeit pretence, impersonation, cheating or through other fraudulent representation of facts
62	Yahoo plus (<i>The Guardian online</i> 7th Nov., 2019)	“...the use of voodoo and charms for spiritual protection and to charm potential victims is very common among yahoo boys in Nigeria. The practice is referred to as yahoo plus.”	Derived neologism	Linguistic coating for the use of traditional charms and mystical powers to charm potential victims
63	Scamming	“Now Mr Okeke	Extended	Nigerian

	(BBC.Com 23rd September, 2019)	or Invictus Obi as he is popularly known is accused by US Authorities of stealing \$11m in one online scam alone.”	coinage	construction for online crime which has been extended to cover other forms of deceit/lies and fraudulent practices
64	Man-know-man (said in Igbo language at State Secretariat, Aba)	“Nigeria is a country of man know-man, unless you know somebody, you will never get anything.”	Pidginized expression	Nigerian appellation used to describe the practice of favouritism
65	Connection (Naira land: can one get a government job without connection?)	“You won’t even get any job without connections or money.”	Slogan	Linguistic colouration for preference of individuals due to whom they know and not usually on the basis of merit
66	Ima mmadu (IM) (said in Igbo language at Enugu State Secretariat)	“IM is the order of the day in Nigeria.”	Borrowed Igbo expression	Nigeria construction for favouring of one’s relations and friends
67	Long leg (State Secretariat, Abakiliki)	“Somebody with a long leg can get anything in Nigeria.”	Adapted Nigerian idiom	An idiom which was adapted from British idiom, long arm (which means far reaching power) but is used in Nigeria to mean an undue influence used to gain advantage or favour
68	Money exchanging hands (State Secretariat, Awka)	“Money must exchange hands for you to get such high-profile jobs.”	Slogan	Linguistic coding for giving bribes in order to get essential services
69	If you can’t	“Nigeria is now a	Derived	Nigeran expression

	beat them, join them. (State Secretariat Owerri)	country of if you cannot beat them you join them.”	idiom	to discourage integrity and honesty and encourage collusion in corrupt act
70	Anything goes (<i>Sahara Reporters</i> 29 March, 2016)	“But this is Nigeria, a country of anything goes, where perverse actions perpetually multiply and endure as instruments of governance.”	Coinage	Nigerian colouration for a system that lacks order and accepts all manner of behaviours
71	Sit don look (State Secretariat, Awka)	“Dog name na sit don look, we go dey look dem.”	Pidginized expression	Linguistic coding for <i>laissez faire</i> attitude and subtle support for fraudulent practices
72	Sleeping on duty (said in Igbo language at Enugu State Secretariat)	“This man, you need to wake up. Stop sleeping on duty!”	Extended coinage	Linguistic construction to describe a person who is adjudged as not clever enough to participate in dishonest practices
73	Maga (State Secretariat Owerri)	“The man na their maga.”	Borrowed word/slang	Nigerian expression derived from West India (maga) which is used to describe a person with a very thin body but is used in Nigeria to describe a fraud victim
74	Clean the money (said in Igbo language at State Secretariat, Aba)	“After everything, they will clean the money.”	Coinage	Linguistic colouration which means to divert money gotten through fraudulent means to a more legitimate business

75	Give <i>Egunje</i> (State Secretariat, Awka)	“They will always ask for Egunje now.”	Borrowed Yoruba word	Linguistic coatings for bribery and other inducements
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The Implications of Linguistic Colourations of Corruption in the Overall National Development of Nigeria

The responses from the respondents show that presenting corruption in linguistic colourations has helped to enthrone the unethical act. According to them, such embellishments give corruption attractive looks and downplay the gravity of the act. They further present that shrouding corruption in linguistic coding makes unwary individuals victims as the masking is innovatively and craftily done for dubious purposes. While some respondents argue that corruption has become a tradition in Nigeria and may be difficult to curb, others opine that the linguistic colourations help in the promotion of corruption. Such linguistic ornamentation accounts for increasing rate of corrupt behaviour in Nigeria, and have far-reaching effect in the nation's overall development.

The expressed views of the respondents show that corruption accounts for underdevelopment and poor infrastructural development in Nigeria. As a result of corruption, funds meant for development are converted for personal gains and the acts are covered with language. Deploying linguistic colourations encourages corruption tacitly and most foreign investors may not be able to cope with the consequences of corruption. This also contributes to poor economic growth in the country (ANDREW 2016, n.p.) and (USIFO 2017, n.p.) Another implication of embellishing corruption with language is unemployment and increased poverty level among the citizens. Obviously, any nation that thrives in corruption enriches few citizens while the majority wallows in abject poverty. Finally, in Nigeria, corruption accounts for high rate of insecurity as budgeted funds are lost through corruption and are ultimately covered with linguistic coatings.

Discussion of Findings

The paper investigates the linguistic colourations which are indicative of corruption in Nigeria. The linguistic coatings identified are usages found in the educational, civil service, political and social settings. Using linguistic masking and appropriate moral language to ‘conventionalize’ corruption does not only give it a fashionable outlook but also presents the perverse behaviour as a social norm in the minds of some Nigerians. In line with the model used for the study, coding corruption helps the language users perceive the act in a certain way. This is evident in the words of B. Hussein (2012, 644) who avers:

In this view, then, language provides a screen or filter to reality; it determines how speakers perceive and organize the world around them, both the natural world and the social world. Consequently, the language you speak helps to form your world-view. It defines your experience for you; you do not use it simply to report that experience. It is neutral but gets in the way, imposing habits of both looking and thinking.

The same idea is expressed by J. Carrol (1956, 137) who posits that ‘the cue to a certain line of behaviour is often given by the analogies of the linguistic formula in which the situation is spoken of, and by which to some degree it is analysed, classified, and allotted its place in that world which is to a large extent unconsciously built up on the language habits of the group.’ These scholars’ position clearly shows that members of a linguistic community only perceive issues as their language allows or predisposes them to. Therefore, masking corruption in a fashionable manner defines Nigerians’ experience and perception of corruption.

It is arguable that coding corruption using linguistic forms may not necessarily depict support for corruption. It is also debatable that many language users who mask corruption in linguistic euphemism do not have the intention of coating corruption but view the language of corruption as a language norm among members of the linguistic community. Although this may sound considerable, it has been established by scholars that words found in a language have a way of influencing the people’s minds and reshaping their worldview in a radical manner as explained by D. Casasanto (2016, 159). Albeit, such a transformation may be negative or positive. The embellishment or adornment of the negative act provides the users of such language with the impertinence to continue in the negative act. Both the previous and current studies have shown that using linguistic colourations to beautify corruption acts as the lifeline of the act and will make it difficult to curb corruption, especially in Nigeria.

Conclusion

Findings from the study reveal that Nigerians deploy different linguistic categories such as cliché, slang, Biblical borrowings, slogan, derived neologism, extended coinages, Pidginized expressions, borrowed words, creative usages, derived idioms, lexical extensions, figurative expressions, loanwords and blends to mask corrupt behaviour. The present study holds that such linguistic colourations have far-reaching effects on the image and the development of the nation. Hence, the paper has tried to create an awareness of the linguistic embellishments used in reconstructing corruption in Nigeria. The essence of the paper is not to point accusing fingers at any party, but to unmask the linguistic coatings in which corrupt practices are crafted. Therefore, any reasonable fight against corruption by the government should consider the language used in concealing the act as it will help in bringing to the limelight the bare-faced deception achieved through the deployment of linguistic colourations.

Declarations

The author declares no conflict of interest and no ethical issues for this research.

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**When Vulgarism Comes through Popular music: An Investigation of
Slackness in Zimdancehall Music**

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Abstract

In Zimbabwe, popular music, particularly the *Zimdancehall* music genre, has become a cultural site where Shona moral values clash with explicit sexual lyrical content despite a censorship regime in the country. This article examines the nature and cultural consequences of the moral decadence that emerges in popular *Zimdancehall* song lyrics by several musicians. The article illustrates how vulgar language popularises *Zimdancehall* songs in unheralded ways that foster identities laced with cultural ambivalences that may portray the artists as both famous and depraved. This qualitative study does textual and content analysis of 11 purposively sampled songs with sex terms to elucidate the cultural inconsistencies in *Zimdancehall* song narratives. Analysis is informed by the Neuro-Psycho-Social theory, which recognises how socio-cultural restrictions are challenged by an emerging ghetto culture like new wine in old bottles. Alternative unsanctioned new popular music genres can be used to permeate the sociocultural system.

Keywords: immoral behaviour, popular music, slackness, *Zimdancehall*, vulgarism.

Introduction

Zimdancehall music¹ started in the 1990s and became popular among Zimbabwean urban youths after 2005 (UREKE & WASHAYA 2016). Since the emergence of the music genre *Zimdancehall* artists have laced their songs with sexual lyrics that shame people, the elderly in particular, in the public domain while at the same time attracting the interest and imagination of the urban youths. Hakim (2010, 503) says erotic capital has enhanced value in situations where public and private life can become closely intertwined, such as jobs in the media and entertainment industries. *Zimdancehall* owes its popularity largely to the advent of home studios in Zimbabwe, which ensured that music that used to be prohibited by professional studios is now recorded in these home studios. This is because, unlike the traditional professional studios, the home studios concentrate more on making money and care less about the moral fabric of the songs. Thus, though exploitation

¹ ZIMDANCEHALL music is a Zimbabwean genre that originated the early 2000s which fuses reggae, dancehall and traditional music.

of the erotic capital *Zimdancehall* music has tended to surpass the *sungura* music genre in terms of popularity despite the prevalence of markers of immoral behaviour. In the Zimbabwean context, specifically in Shona society, performance of *Zimdancehall* by youths employing implicit and explicit sex words has led to disapproval by adults. Mangeya (2022, 361) critically engages a discourse of macho masculinity that is discursively constructed in *Zimdancehall* music as laying down the rules of engagement for heterosexual encounters. Chitando and Chirongoma (2012) characterise these as 'dangerous masculinities' in so far as their naturalisation of pain and violence is considered as a yardstick of sexual gratification for women.

Zimdancehall is infamous in Shona society for the prevalence of vulgar language² and loose morals in the public domain. Music reflects society's hopes and aspirations, articulates issues characterising the populace, and is a mirror of the moral landscape. Zimbabweans relate to vulgar 'texts' differently depending on their ethical disposition. Meanings of texts are contestable and music lyrics are not produced and consumed in a social vacuum. By analysing songs that ran afoul with moralists in Zimbabwe, it is possible to see interrelationships and tensions between youth concerns and the values that Shona adults want to inculcate in youths. This essay argues that sex terms have popularised *Zimdancehall* songs in unpredicted ways that have fostered identities laced with cultural incongruities, depicting the artists as both well-known and immoral. The question for this study is: What are the factors that have contributed to the growth of *Zimdancehall* music, despite it being characterised by suggestive sexual lyrics?

This article textually analyses 11 purposively selected *Zimdancehall* controversial songs: *Zunza mazakwatira*, *Munodonhedza musika*, *Magate*, *Ita seunononga*, *Sweetie*, *kaNjiva*, *Chiita kwacho*, *Ndongosimudza musoro*, *Ane zihombe* and *Huya umbondi rider*) to show how they portray sex lingo, a taboo in Shona culture. Most of the lyrics are sung in Shona and some phrases incorporate English and slang. Translations were made since the researcher is proficient in Shona and English and understands the local street lingo. The thematic approach (IYENGAR & SIMON 1993) in examining the songs categorised them as sex songs. The songs were accessed from YouTube, transcribed and the quote parts of the songs were explained. Textual scrutiny (FIIRSICH 2009; MCKEE 2003) is steered by the fact that songs are cultural products which reflect norms and moral values in different ways.

Sex is one of the most tabooed aspects of human existence and sexual identity affects how and where a person uses sex words. The use of obscenities has liberalised in the past few decades, and the normally tabooed "four-letter" words relating to sexual activity are now accepted in the current scene (GORDON 1994). This study uses the Neuro-Psycho-Social (NPS) theory of cursing to analyse *Zimdancehall* lyrics (TIMOTHY 2000). NPS theory integrates three broad aspects

² Making explicit and offensive reference to sex or bodily functions. Used here interchangeably with 'sex words'.

of human behavior: neurological control, psychological restraints, and socio-cultural restrictions. All these three dimensions underlie human behavior and are interdependent systems. The sociocultural system subsumes the historical-social information about word use. The sociocultural system describes variables that people in a culture use to determine the appropriateness of words in a given context. Each culture has developed its own criteria for what constitutes words that are acceptable in public. What makes a sex word appropriate or inappropriate depends on a given linguistic context, family and cultural environment (TIMOTHY 2000, 19).

The first section of the paper traces the Jamaican roots of *dancehall* music before exploring how *Zimdancehall* has evolved to popularity in Zimbabwe. The main section analyses 11 *Zimdancehall* songs with sex lingo and how they receive mixed reactions from the youth and elderly. The third section discusses the factors affecting the implementation of the Censorship and Entertainment Control Act by the Censorship Board. It demonstrates how policies set by the government of Zimbabwe have impacted positively on the growth of the Zimbabwean music industry. The paper finally examines the growth of the *Zimdancehall* genre spurred by technology and government's 100 percent local content policy.

The Jamaican influence on *Zimdancehall* music

According to Pen (1992,124), Jamaican dancehall music rose to prominence when the Jamaicans rejected the People's National Party revolutionary democratic socialist regime of Michael Manley and placed their hopes instead on the Jamaican Labour Party's Edward Seaga. Since the death of Bob Marley, representation of underprivileged Jamaicans and Rastafari in popular culture has been little on conventional media. Cultural and political changes coupled with changing public tastes ushered in a new Jamaican dancehall culture, becoming an increasingly significant institution for Jamaicans. The same has happened for unemployed ghetto youths³ in Zimbabwe who perform and identify with *Zimdancehall* music. Jamaican dance-hall music can be viewed as a portrayal of cultural decay amongst youths in the way it glorifies violence, promiscuity and drug abuse in poor societies. Crawford (2010) concluded that there is a correlation between hard-core dancehall genre and the sexual and violent behaviour of adolescents. Of the 100 adolescent cases (50 males, 50 female), females (40%) were more likely to gravitate to sexually explicit lyrical content than their male counterparts (26%). Females (74%) were more likely to act upon lyrical content than males (46%).

The frequency of vulgar terms in *Zimdancehall* is viewed as a type of noise pollution and the spread of sexual and physical abuse in the ghettos can be directly linked to the rise of Jamaican dancehall over original roots reggae music (CRAWFORD 2010). However, after the death of Bob Marley, reggae melo tunes were gradually replaced by Jamaican dancehall music with faster beats and more

³ Young people from poor densely populated townships with a rich cultural heritage and a sense of shame as well as a desire to escape from economic hardships, inferior status and social restrictions associated with their environment. _

materialistic themes. Pen (1992) believes it was a daily bread attempt to reduce the potency of Rastafarianism. In Jamaica dancehall became very profitable as promoters and record producers gave preference to the genre over reggae music, leading to polarization of societies. There were now three music cultures which one would follow; members of the Bob Marley chanty, members of the Nyabingi and The Twelve.

Slack lyrics which leave nothing to the imagination can be traced back to the rebellion against fading Rastafari movement ideals. Ironically the term reflects the derisive attitude towards the fight by Rastafarians, which lacks a deeper message. There is still very good conscious music with decent lyrics coming from Jamaica which make us stronger as a people but youngsters ignore this type of music and choose to associate with the Jamaican rude boys of dancehall whose lyrics only talk about ganja and sex. They opt to listen to wrong music from Jamaica and adapt it to suit their ghetto experiences in Zimbabwe. This associates *Zimdancehall* music with sex and drugs and many artists' careers are at risk of ending early because of indulging in risky behaviour.

Some Jamaican artists such as Yellowman introduced slackness⁴ and that culture has affected young Zimbabweans who perform *Zimdancehall*. At first the genre was seen as a copycat of Jamaican culture so it was never taken seriously and recording studios shunned it saying it did not appeal or sell. The arrival of independent home studios and the advent of urban grooves in 2001 opened up the doors for various artists who released several albums. Some hard-core artists released Shona lyrics, a departure from English/Patios which proved very popular with the people and shaped a new direction for the genre. The Shona vernacular songs appeal more to the ghetto youths and have made *Zimdancehall* very popular as it has gained mass appeal. DJs have played a key role in commercializing *Zimdancehall* music. In the past *Zimdancehall* artists were isolated but they have since teamed up in shows and collaborations, churning out very popular productions.

However, Zimbabwe's newest addition to the family of popular genres, *Zimdancehall* music which started in the late eighties, has become synonymous with explicit sexual lyrical content. The songs have become loaded with vivid pornographic phrases. The genre's proponents come from ghettos such as Mbare. This is the factory where the country's reigning dancehall kings have been refined at Chill Spot Records and delivered to the country's stages to entertain hordes of ghetto youths who are eager to hear their raw and aggressive take on life. Music lyrics have a direct influence on youths. The explicit content has the potential to change the behaviour of young people because they try to live the lyrics that they hear in the songs of their favourite artists. Most, if not all of today's most admired youth artists, locally and internationally dish out music with sprinklings of obscenity or spiced up with narrations of sexual encounters.

The Jamaican influence has caused *Zimdancehall* music artists to also sing vulgar words. Cultural purists like Chihora (2016) argue that dirty lyrics sung by some of the musicians risk killing *Zimdancehall*, as they may cause the entire

⁴ Straight forward vulgar lyrics and sexual behaviour performed live or recorded.

genre not to reach where it is supposed to. However, one can argue that instead of the music being banned as suggested by others, it should be censored and promoted. Notably, the energy in *Zimdancehall* becomes very sexual, with artists and fans donning more and more revealing clothes, scandalous dance styles, and dirty lyrics from the DJs.

***Zimdancehall* songs with vulgar language**

Regionally and internationally, it is trendy right now that musicians use sex lingo, imagery and dressing in different ways to sell records. This has become fashionable. Some of these artists sexualize their lyrics to sell their music and be popular but there are exceptions to the rule. Hakim (2010, 501) says the social and economic value of erotic capital is highlighted in the entertainment occupations. In Japan, the 'entertainer' visa is granted to immigrants to musicians, artists, hostesses, and commercial sex workers in the leisure industry. In the Western world, the sex industry in its diverse manifestations is also part of the wider entertainment industry. The *Zimdancehall* songs in the sample dwell on 3 sexual issues: female body size, private body parts and erotic encounters.

Voluptuous waists

Women's waists have been objectified by *Zimdancehall* musicians. Hakim (2010, 500) says, "There are cultural and temporal variations in ideas about what constitutes beauty. Some African societies admire women with large voluptuous bodies." The songs indicate how in the Shona culture, the concept of beauty appreciates huge body frames. *Zimdancehall* artists have ridden on that value to capitalize and rise to popularity with the song lyrics shown in 1-4 below:

1. *Munodonhedza musika* (You drop the market) by Boom Betto
2. *Zunza mazakwatira* (shake your booty) by Seh Calaz
3. *Magate* (Big clay pots) by Enzo Ishall
4. *Ita seunononga* (Act as if you are picking something) by Guspy Warriar

The lyrics of (1) say *Amai munodonhedza Musika, muchizunza mutaka. Vanhu vanomira hoo pamunosvika* (Mother you drop the market, when you shake your buttocks. People stand awe-struck when you arrive). He adds that when she passes by guys freeze like there is an earthquake (*Pamunodarika maface anosticker. Kuita kunge nyika irikundengendeka*). This hit song was recorded in 2016 at Off the Stage Riddim and it was produced by DJ Levels. Its lyrics describe the beauty of a woman. The lyrics *Amai munodonhedza musika* (mother you destroy markets) describe the body of the woman's beauty as exceptional and outstanding. The controversial lyrics have been slammed for objectifying women though the song topped the *Zimdancehall* charts on radio. *Zimdancehall* artistes have become one-hit wonders because of these controversial songs and fans love them. The song implicitly talks about hip gyration in the public domain. In Shona tradition this was confined to all-night moonlit ordeals and was never publicised in broad daylight as *Zimdancehall* artists are now doing.

Also, song (2) is another case in which women are asked to shake their buttocks in provocative ways. The song received a lot of support from young people. However, after recording this not-so-explicit song, Seh Calaz was fined for contravening the Censorship and Entertainment Control Act. In the song, Seh Calaz is clearly talking about sexual conduct, but uses otherwise clean language and innuendos that can be deciphered anyhow. While he was convicted and fined \$100, Seh Calaz argued that the song was a leaked club version and he had no control over such actions. Certain songs that are uploaded on YouTube have different versions and are classified accordingly to allow users to select their favourite picks.

Another song, which even goes deeper into women's buttocks is the popular track (3) whose lyrics say *Uriwetambo pakati sekenduru, mhandu yechinomwe, une chuma muchiuo...* (You have a G-string in between (your buttocks), enemy number eight, you wear beads on your waist). Enzo Ishall gained popularity riding on the back of slack lyrics. It has become fashionable for artists to compose songs laden with sexual innuendo. Enzo Ishall argues that his songs are 'innocent' but fans interpret them to mean whatever they like. He crafts lyrics that attract sexual interpretations by followers. *Magate* created a frenzy with a social media challenge which had women seeking to out-twerk each other. That does not promote *Hunhu/Ubuntu*, and in Shona culture must not be brought into the public domain. Children have even taken part in the *Magate* challenge, which shows how pervasive music is. The lyrics are so dirty that one cannot listen to them in the presence of the elderly or *vanyarikani* (respectable people). Ishall has been put into the limelight by his witty word play. He has an implicit way of alluding to sex without mentioning the vulgar words in his songs. He has been propelled to popularity by songs that have sexual innuendo. The artiste has attained a greater height irrespective of the sexual innuendo in his music.

Yet another song which dwells at length on women's waists as objects of sexual pleasure is (4) above. He says I marvel at our pink lips, and curvy hips (*Ndospakwa nema lips ako ari pink, baby girl nema curvey hips*). He explicitly says the girl is sexy and beautiful, so she must twerk in front of him (*Une ka sexiness beauty. Ndiwainire*). The girl must come close to him and not fear but twerk and give him everything (*Uya padhuze neni bhebhi usavhunduke. Waina ndipe zvese usasirire*). He says he wants his ex-lover to envy them (*Ndoda ex-girlfriend yangu igumbuke*) and this has potential to spark a battle. The artist delves further into pornographic imagery when he sings *Inonzi seunononga kana kuti fongo* (It is called 'Like you are picking something' or doggy style). The Shona term *fongo* refers to doggy style position during sexual intercourse, and Guspy urges the girl to keep twerking repeatedly (*Ramba uchidaro!*). Primack et al (2008) say sexual content is frequent in popular music and conclude that degrading references to sexual activity are more common in popular music than non-degrading references.

The private parts

There are also *Zimdancehall* songs that objectify private parts. The music cannot be listened to by elderly people as it is uncharacteristic of Shona cultural norms and values. It is about sexual immoralities which are taboo in the public domain. The *Zimdancehall* songs allude to private parts, as shown in (5) - (7) below:

5. *Ndipowo Stonyeni* (May you please give me *stonyeni*) by Jah Signal
6. *Yekedero* (As it is/raw) by Jah Signal
7. *Ane Zihombe* (He has a big one) by Lady Bee

In song (6) above Jah Signal claims the word *stonyeni* means love, when Zimbabweans actually use it to refer to the vagina. So, his chorus *Ndipowo stonyeni* (May you please give me *stonyeni*) actually explicitly means asking for sexual intercourse. The artist has achieved his mission of dominating the annual music chart lists on TV and radio, receiving an award for his work. Jah Signal also sang '*Yekedero*' (as it is) which topped the charts but is a lurid story. His song *Kupinda mubako* is also another song which uses sexual innuendo. He sings *Ndirikuda kupinda mubako.....pinda* (I want to enter in the cave.... enter) *Asi ndichapinda yekedero.... pinda* (but I will enter raw.... Enter). *Kupinda* refers to penetration here. Youths use the expression '*Yekedero*' to refer to unprotected sex and judging by the song's popularity amongst the youths, one shudders to imagine whether or not it drives them into having protected sex. Soul Jah Love's song *Ndongo simudza musoro* (I will lift the head), implies manhood getting erect.

Zimdancehall female artist Lady Bee has managed to make a breakthrough in the male-dominated genre and challenged patriarchal supremacy. She is well known for her explicit lyrics and skimpy costumes on stage. Her 2012 song 6 above has sexual innuendo. '*Ane zihombe*' addresses the question of penis size, demonstrating the assertive participation of female artists in popular music. This has challenged women's subservient, quiet, homemaker role (MAKORE 2004, 50). Her song has sexually explicit lyrics where she makes a sensual description of the male body. In the song she describes how she wants to have intercourse, which is against Shona societal norms where women are expected to be submissive to husbands. Mangeya (2022) sees Lady Bee as perpetuating the dominant phallogocentric discourses constructing women as sexual objects who do not really need to be cared for and valued.

Sexual encounters

Songs have been penned which refer to sexual intercourse and these have made household names. *Zimdancehall* songs which contain sexual innuendo attract attention and become hits. *Zimdancehall* artistes always find a way of 'saying things without saying them', and that is one of the main reasons why their songs have resonated with many youths in Zimbabwe. Examples of songs that have implicit and explicit sex terms are numerous and they include (8)-(11) below:

8. *Ndongosimudza musoro* (I will lift its head) by Shinsoman
9. *Kanjiva* (The little dove) by Enzo Ishall

10. *Chiita kwacho* (Just do it) by Enzo Ishall
11. *Huya umbondi rider* (Come and ride me) by Lady Squanda

Shinsoman penned the song 7 above to portray imagery of the erect penis which lifts it head in readiness for the sexual encounter with a woman. The explicit lyrics say *Ndoti babe tanga nekubathroom tozopedzerana kana tapinda mubedroom* (I say babe bath first, then we can square off in the bedroom). This is also expressed in (9) above as Enzo Ishall talks about sex but never mentions the word throughout the song. The lyrics *Katanu kusara kari nude, ndikati very sorry handisiri mumood, kaswederera mudhuze zvikanzi chiita kani...*, (Undressed to nudity, and I said sorry I am not in the mood, she moved closer and said please do it) portray a woman who is high and in the mood for sex but unfortunately the man is unwilling.

Enzo Ishall was among artists who walked away with awards for music that rose high on the airwaves in 2018. His songs were some of the most played on local chats and in households. Song 8 was voted first in the *Coca-Cola Top 50 Videos*. The video created waves. The lyrics of the song *Aka, ikaka, Kanjiva, kakaiswa apa, kogoiswa apa...Kanjiva...* (This one, this very one, the little dove, it's put here, and put here, the little dove) contributed to it being voted the best. *Kuisa* is a Shona word which can be interpreted to mean inserting the penis! *Kanjiva* became a favourite of both the young and the old, catapulting Enzo Ishall in the music industry. The sex words that characterise his compositions have made him popular. On official platforms the musician said his song is merely about a dance.

Lady Squanda is another *Zimdancehall* female artist who sang the controversial song 10 above in 2016. In Shona language, the term '*kukwira*' (to ride) refers to their encounters with partners who men do not care about. The song expresses the nymphomaniac woman's desire for sex which is also against the norms and values of the Shona society. "Riding, from which the 'rider' is adopted, is not a respectful way of characterising sexual encounters" (MANGEYA 2022: 371). Erotic capital is a major asset in mating and marriage markets, but can also be important in the media, advertising, the musical arts, and in everyday social interaction (HAKIM 2010). By expressing her desire thus, Lady Squanda perpetuates sexual violence against her own gender although male artists are usually the major culprits in the negative representations of women through popular music (CHARI 2008; CRAWFORD 2010). Many conservative Zimbabwean adults have slammed these songs as vulgar and believe they affect children and young adults negatively due to their suggestive sexual lyrics.

The Censorship and Entertainment Control Act

People are being inundated with all these dirty lyrics in a country that has legislation to control what comes to the public domain. The Censorship Board's duty is to regulate and control the importation, production, dissemination, possession and public exhibition of prohibited music records, films, publications, pictures, statues of undesirable film material, and records. It governs the nature of acceptable public entertainment (Censorship and Entertainment Control Act Chapter 10:04). Zimbabwe appoints a board of censors in terms of the Censorship

and Entertainment Control Act Chapter 10: 4. The Act states that the Censorship Board's duties include regulating public entertainment in the digital age with the mandate to censor:

Any matter which is indecent or obscene or is offensive or harmful to public morals or any indecent or obscene medical, surgical or physiological details the disclosure of which is likely to be offensive or harmful to public morals; or for the dissolution or a declaration of nullity of a marriage or for judicial separation or for restitution of conjugal rights.

The outdated censorship process encounters the problem of interpreting works of art using factual evidence like the existence of clearly vulgar language. Stakeholders' must push for the modernisation of the laws governing content distribution. There is need for the Censorship Board to be reformed, and its modus operandi revised in light of new technological developments and international trends. Authorities should move towards establishing a process that allows the categorisation of content based on its rating. In Zimbabwe, so far, there is no attempt to categorise content on national television and radio compared to what other countries are doing. Categorisation of content allows users to choose what is best for them and their children in accordance with their values, traditions, customs and other factors that determine choice of content. Before the turn of the millennium and the advent of new technological advancements in the record industry there was a strict censorship authority, an equally stern process to make it to the airwaves, and creative control at recording labels. It was virtually impossible for musicians to release explicitly uncouth material. At an Arts and Culture workshop, theatre guru Daves Guzha (Personal communication, 15 August 2021) argued that the very existence of the Censorship Board and the archaic censorship laws in this country is not necessary. His argument was that art is about writing lyrics in a way that allows us listeners to interpret in our own way, and unless there are clearly vulgar words, censoring such work of art would be tantamount to stifling artistic creativity. Guzha's comments may be more applicable to politically sensitive words than slackness.

Releasing two versions of the same song has been done to escape censorship. *Zimdancehall* artistes tend to release an explicit version for the streets and nightclubs and a cleaner version for radio when they know their song is dirty. This is also done on the international music scene in Jamaica where most dancehall artistes release cleaner and raw versions of the same song. The same is done with music videos by international artistes who release explicit as well as censored videos of their songs. Views on YouTube and suggestions on Google show that some people love the explicit and raw versions of such songs. Music videos labelled 'explicit' on YouTube tend to have more views than the censored ones. In Zimbabwe there are a few *Zimdancehall* videos which show explicit content. In the past even lyrically liberal *Zimdancehall* chanters used to release a cleaner version for every dirty song just to get airplay but nowadays there might be no need to do so as mainstream platforms like radio stations are also playing this music. However, their effort to present parallel meanings of the songs is a far

cry from how the message has been decrypted in the streets, where it matters the most.

Sexually explicit content has been condemned by critics and academics. Before the advent of digital technology there was no sexually explicit content that was ever broadcast on radio or television as it was censored before it got to any mainstream platform. When one is with children or other respectable people, they have to avoid switching on the radio because of the morally unacceptable content that is sometimes broadcast. People need to rethink our moral values and allow only songs with educative lyrics for our children rather than playing morally bankrupt songs for the simple reason that they sell. Our society now has dirty minds because sometimes *Zimdancehall* musicians sing dirty lyrics with vulgar meanings, and children end up adopting these negative things.

Zimbabweans ought to advocate for the enactment of legislation that ensures the society's moral fabric is safeguarded and those who step over the prescribed moral values are brought to book. All music should go through the Censorship Board to ascertain its suitability for public consumption. The law should cover the new phenomenon of home studios which have rendered existing legislation obsolete, especially in the face of social media. Culturally, *Zimdancehall* is influencing young Zimbabweans in a bad way. There is a need for punitive action from the authorities when musical overtakes constructive lyricism as is the case with *Zimdancehall*.

Most trending *Zimdancehall* artistes have been propelled to stardom by songs which contain sexual innuendo or have negative moral substance when judged by Shona social expectations. It appears local artistes have latched onto the Western concept that sex sells in any art genre. It is uncertain whether musicians structure their lyrics to appease a perceived appetite for sexual content locally or they are setting the pace for what they want society to follow. People need to denounce music which explores a subtle agenda of sexually objectifying women. Music has a powerful influence hence any society that functions well should stand up against lyrics that pull women down. Post modernists might argue that there is nothing wrong with the productions, but young children consume these sex-laden productions and parents constantly find themselves challenged when asked to interpret these lyrics by their innocent children eager to understand and learn their language.

Policies

Policies set by the government of Zimbabwe have impacted positively on the growth of the Zimbabwean music industry as Jonathan Moyo, the then Minister of Information and Publicity, brought the 75 percent local content requirement for broadcast content. This helped the local artists be heard and recognized by the audience. Some previously unheard singers and producers immediately became household names as their music was played on the state media. Most *Zimdancehall* artists emerged and gained ascendancy since *Zimdancehall* was a genre dominated by youth who are mostly involved in crime and pervasive sexuality.

The 50/50 gender representation introduced by the government in all occupational spheres also helped women participate in the music industry. Kufakurinani and Mwatwara (2017) assert that female artists like Lady Squanda,

Xpriot, Bounty Lisa, Lipsy, Lady Banks among others have emerged in the Zimbabwean artistic youth culture most notably through *Zimdancehall*. *Zimdancehall* music is enjoying a lot of airplays on radio and television despite some artists using obscene words in their songs. The Broadcasting Services Act Chapter 12:6 and other relevant legislation need to be reviewed to ensure programming reflects Zimbabwe's national identity and respects community standards and values (CHIHORA 2016). *Zimdancehall* as part of the music genres in Zimbabwe should aim at achieving such objectives and portraying the Zimbabwean identity.

Zimdancehall artists have brought about slackness, vulgarity and obscene behaviour among Zimbabwean youth because of the dirty lyrics in most of their songs. Some of the artists have had some of their songs banned on radio and television because of their explicit content.

Zimbabwean music is perceived as a way of expressing opinion and it is a powerful force that can impact a society. Lyrical analysis of *Zimdancehall* songs reveals the artists use controversial lyrics and sex lingo in their songs. Mbembe (2001) says that using vulgar lyrics in a song can become fashionable in a post-colonial state, which can be attributed to lack of seriousness by some *Zimdancehall* artists. He identifies these artists, who utter anything, including vulgar lyrics as long as the words uttered do rhyme, as reckless.

Tivenga (2018) posits that most urban grooves artists have first-hand experiences of the ghetto life that they sing about as they have their roots in these ghettos commonly known as high-density residential townships in Zimbabwe. The songs are composed, produced and consumed in the backyard studios from the townships and they are an expression of what the youth see and experience due to unemployment and consumption of alcohol. The quality of work from *Zimdancehall* artists is compromised because of mushrooming backyard producers who produce substandard music. However, the music genre offers a chance for the urban youth as well as backyard studios around the ghetto to generate income.

Technology

Before 2000, music was not easy to get because few families in Zimbabwe had a radio or television set. Those people who had a radio or television bought records and cassettes. That time explicit music could not be bought anywhere because people wanted value for their money and they respected the people in whose presence they would play the music. Nowadays one feels some kind of liberation because they can listen to music privately through their headphones. Explicit content was easy to store away from children in the early 2000s but two decades later, the old ways of censorship are no longer effective. In this age of smartphones (that can carry hundreds of videos), internet connectivity and limitless access to any content is difficult. With the advent of technology or the internet, music is now a click away from being purchased and downloaded, and since one can play music from their phones, no one may bar them from listening to sexually explicit content. A controversial song can go viral and be a hit within two days of being released. The presence of social media and various technological gadgets have made traditional censorship regimes ineffective.

Copies of recordings have transitioned from hard to soft in the digital age. Censorship will not work using archaic methods because music is circulating

freely on social media platforms. Music recording has evolved from the days of analogue recording with live musical instrument bands because now one person can mix everything digitally in the home studio. In *Zimdancehall* music, different artists chant on a similar beat because the lyrical content keeps many ears listening to a song. During the analogue era, musicians had no creative freedom as the record labels then had power to control the content before it was released. Now that process is gone and musical artists are churning out raw lyrics and availing such products to the listeners. In Zimbabwe, singing vulgar lyrics used to happen at live shows in night clubs but was not allowed on mainstream media. Recent trends owe more to technology than the fact that Zimbabweans' values and norms are fading. Westernisation has meant that artists' creative control is now unrestrained in many sectors. In the past, they had to play around with words to relay sexually connotative lyrics in a witty manner to avoid popularising vulgarity because that would never get to the audience.

Conclusion

The main argument in this paper is that sex terms objectify women, and popularise *Zimdancehall* songs in unpredictable ways that foster identities laced with cultural ambivalences that may portray the artists as both celebrated and immoral. The article began by tracing the Jamaican roots of the genre and how it was adapted locally and then chronicled the factors that have contributed to the growth of *Zimdancehall* music. The paper's argument is that these ghetto youths who spend their day at the street corners and bridges smoking marijuana are populous in urban centres and identify with this genre and popularise it. The paper also argues that their frustrations, spurned by the country's dire economic situation in which they find themselves jobless and cashless, ventilate their indulgence, rebelliousness and lack of respect for acceptable moral values. The young generation is playing a dominant role in popularizing *Zimdancehall* music. Most *Zimdancehall* artists are still in their 20s and 30s and their hit songs containing immoral sex terms are influencing youths in a negative way. The music is often listened to by ghetto youths who dominate the genre in terms of singing and appreciation.

Technological advancements in the music industry have contributed to the growth of *Zimdancehall* music through the emergence of Home Studios. The internet and digital technology have made transferring music from one device to another easy. This helps one's music to reach audiences by circumventing the Censorship Board. The music can be accessed through the internet. Also, radio stations like Power FM and Star FM have promoted *Zimdancehall* music in the sense that these stations have made slots where this genre has been given airplay. Live streaming used by radio and television stations has helped local artists for their music to be disseminated. This has helped artists to be recognised internationally and land collaborative shows with international dancehall giants like Turbulence, Capleton and Sizzla Kalonji.

Declarations

The author declares no conflict of interest and no ethical issues for this research.

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Conquest and Law as a Eurocentric enterprise: An Azanian philosophical critique of legal epistemic violence in “South Africa”

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Abstract

This essay will critically analyse how conquest that resulted in white settler colonialism laid the foundation for epistemic violence. Epistemic violence, which took the form of the imposition of the law of the European conqueror in the wake of land dispossession in 1652 in South Africa is the fundamental problem this essay will critically engage with. We will rely on the Azanian philosophical tradition as a theoretical framework to critique this legal epistemic violence. Our theoretical framework is in line with Afrikan jurisprudence, which is grounded in the culture and worldview of the Indigenous people conquered in wars of conquest. Fundamental to our argument is that the law of the European conqueror, which was imposed through conquest is a Eurocentric enterprise, which seeks to negate the Afrikan worldview and culture and reinforce historic injustice. It is important to note that epistemic violence commenced with the issuing of papal bulls, which undergirded conquest and white settler colonialism in South Africa. The thesis of the essay is that in the wake of conquest and the attendant imposition of the law of the European conqueror, white settlers used their law to technicalise issues of historic injustice such as land dispossession. It is in this sense that this essay seeks to contribute to the decolonisation of law by foregrounding the worldview and culture of the Indigenous conquered people.

Keywords: Conquest, epistemic violence, law, white settler colonialism, South Africa, Azania, Afrikan jurisprudence, Chimurenga

Introduction

This essay will critically analyse, in the context of conqueror South Africa (RAMOSE 2018), the relation between conquest in unjust wars of Western colonisation and legal epistemic violence. This legal epistemic violence took the form of the imposition of the Eurocentric law of the European conqueror on the Indigenous people. The European conqueror imposed the Eurocentric law to justify the violent acquisition of the land of the Indigenous people in 1652. By relying on the Azanian philosophical tradition/Azanian jurisprudence, this essay will contribute towards a decolonisation of law in conquered Azania which is dominated by white settlers who used their law to rationalize conquest since 1652. It is in this sense that it is a defence of the Afrikan world view, culture and law. And a contribution to the negation of European legal epistemic violence, which sustains the historic injustice of land dispossession since 1652.

The underlying argument is that the “scientization” of the law in the form of legal positivism led to the dismissal of the idea of knowledge as symbolic in

nature through the argument that there are “objective legal facts” and thus “objective legal problems” which need “objective or neutral adjudication and resolution” without a committed consideration of their cultural and historical context. This is an imposition of legal colonial epistemology on the Indigenous conquered people. And this imposition made it possible for the Europeans to entrench their colonisation legally through the distortion and subjugation of Afrikan law and jurisprudence specifically the underlying ethical dimension thereof, which is *Ubu-ntu*.

This distortion is apparent through the “deliberate absence” of *Abantu/Batho* and *Ubuntu/Botho* in the current “South African” constitution. This distortion of Afrikan jurisprudence is conspicuous in the 1996 constitution, and this very distortion led to the legal colonisation of Afrikan jurisprudence through the shift from parliamentary supremacy to constitutional supremacy in 1994. This legal colonisation of Afrikan law and jurisprudence as a manifestation at the level of law of the epistemological legitimization of conquest took the form of the colonial invention of “customary law” *ala* the *African Survey*. Distorted Afrikan jurisprudence and law are now “subject” to the constitution, and one cannot fail to notice the connotations of colonial power-relation accompanying the operative word “subject”. The Indigenous conquered people are a “subject race” with a “subject law”. Thus, the liberation of the Indigenous conquered people implies the liberation of their law. This liberation entails first and foremost the restoration of sovereign title to territory as the fundament of Afrikan law and jurisprudence prior to conquest in the unjust wars of colonisation since 1652. The restoration of sovereign title to territory to its rightful owners since time immemorial, namely, the Indigenous conquered people should be through a *chimurenga* which will precede the abolition of the current constitution. This is because a revolution must negate the current constitutional framework in order to establish a new one premised on the law and culture of the Indigenous people. It is in this sense that the mere call for the abolition of the constitution of 1996 is not revolutionary in itself but must be preceded by a *chimurenga*. This war of liberation will first restore the land and then lay the foundation for a post-conquest Azanian constitution for an independent Azania premised on Anton Lembede’s Africa for the Africans, Europe for the Europeans, and Asia/India for the Asians/Indians. This essay is divided into three sections, which discuss the above in detail, we now turn to the first section.

The catastrophic coming of the Europeans and conquest

Fundamental to European Modernity in “South Africa”¹ is conquest² in the unjust wars of colonisation since 1652 (RAMOSE 2007). White settler colonialism

¹ For the purposes of this study the name South Africa is placed in inverted commas to reflect that it is an ethically and politically contested name. The Pan Africanist Congress and the Black Consciousness movement regard the geographical area called South Africa by the European conqueror to be Azania.

founded on land dispossession, following military defeat in “South Africa” and its consequent imposition of the law of the European conqueror at the expense of African law and jurisprudence, is founded on conquest in these unjust wars of colonisation since 1652 (RAMOSE 2007). Thus, conquest is not just a military encounter, but it is also an epistemological event. Conquest in the form military defeat, is premised on the epistemological paradigm of the European conqueror in the form of the international law of colonialism (MILLER 2011) and *Romanus Pontifex* issued in 1455 (RAMOSE 2018). In other words, there is an epistemology that founds conquest in the form of military defeat and another epistemology which legitimates the former, so as to naturalise it in the eyes of the Indigenous conquered people.

The distinction between these two epistemologies is merely analytical but not historical. This is because the racist idea that Azania was a *terra nullius* precedes military defeat, as part and parcel of the doctrine of Discovery (MILLER 2011), but also attains an afterlife through white settler historiography (DLADLA 2018) “in the wake” (SHARPE 2006) of military defeat and the colonial invention of “South Africa”. Thus, the historiography of Afri-forum as a manifestation of white settler historiography, which propagates the absurd myth of “the Bantu migration” complements the principle of *terra nullius*, as part and parcel of the doctrine of Discovery as international law of colonialism (MILLER 2011). In other words, while the principle of *terra nullius* founds conquest, “the Bantu migration” legitimates conquest, following military defeat. While the former is jurisprudential, the latter is historiographical.

But both are part and parcel of the entire epistemological paradigm of the European conqueror and the successors in title to conquest in the unjust wars of colonisation (RAMOSE 2007). For instance, with regard to the jurisprudential

² For the purposes of this thesis conquest by itself as a result of war is neither just nor unjust in the sense that it is part and parcel of the logic of war. But that it is war which can be either just or unjust as per the doctrine of the Just war as formulated by St Augustine and Thomas Aquinas. We are aware that Thomas Hobbes employs the locution “unjust war” in the technical sense. However, for the purposes of this thesis we will eschew this phraseology. In this thesis we will consistently employ the concept “*indigenous peoples conquered in the unjust wars of colonisation*” to posit that the conquest of 1652 was ethically untenable as it stemmed from the wars of colonisation which were unprovoked thus unjust. This concept will also be employed to contest the ethically untenable claim by the successors in title to conquest such as the so-called Afrikaners that they are a conquered people and that they are indigenous to Azania just like the Indigenous people they conquered in the unjust wars of colonisation since 1652. This historically obfuscating equation in effect obliterates, for the ethically and historically less sensitive, the inherent original injustice of the unjust wars of colonisation. It is the case that this obliteration is the reaffirmation of the famous “South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white” *ala* the Freedom Charter and as reinforced by the Preamble to the final constitution with “we the people of South Africa”. This thesis will not delve into an extensive analysis of the doctrine of Just war as developed by the abovementioned philosophers.

aspect of the epistemology of conquest, the first discovery claim entailed the assertion of an “unoccupied land” (meaning not occupied by Europeans as civilized beings), while the historiographical eventuates in the arrogant “self-indigenisation” by white settlers, through “fantasies of colonialism” such as “our fatherland” by for instance the so-called Afrikaners. In addition to regarding themselves as indigenous, they deem themselves to be a conquered people.

This is how Willie Esterhuyse (2012,277) states it “At one stage I wondered whether we would succeed in seeing the peace process through. South Africa, I told Pahad, was different from all the other countries in Africa. It had a large white population, and the Afrikaners had long ceased to be settlers. They were white Africans. Aziz Pahad agreed enthusiastically”. This is how Neil Barnard further states it:

Perhaps my mother’s remark to me in my childhood years that English was the ‘language of the conqueror’ had something to do with my refusal to speak it...What rubbed even more salt into their wounds was a letter from the South African head of state for the attention of the British premier, Margaret Thatcher, in which he objected in the strongest possible way to this undermining by our former conquerors (2015,22)

Contrary to the above-mentioned statements by the successors in title to conquest in the unjust wars of colonisation since 1652, the title to territory is vested in the Indigenous people since time immemorial. The Indigenous people conquered in the unjust wars of colonisation are subjected to epistemicide as inscribed historically in a constitution, that condones epistemic domination by recourse to the ethically contestable “right of conquest” (RAMOSE 2018). It is however important, to note that for the purposes of this essay conquest in “South Africa” does not commence in 1652. We now know that there were several attempts at military conquest by the Portuguese and the Spanish around the late 1400s (PHEKO 1984). The epistemological fundament of conquest was laid in 1455 in Europe prior to the catastrophic coming of the Europeans to Azania.

The doctrine of Discovery, which laid the fundament for the loss of title to territory, traces its origin to 1455, when Pope Nicholas the V issued *Romanus Pontifex*. Thus, *Romanus Pontifex* is foundational to the loss of title to territory by the Indigenous people conquered in the unjust wars of colonisation, since 1652 (RAMOSE 2018). In explicating this connection, this essay follows a wholistic approach which is premised on a philosophical analysis, which situates the conquest of 1652 in the unjust wars of colonisation, within the historical context of *Romanus Pontifex*. In so doing, this essay posits that the loss of title to territory, begins almost two centuries earlier with *Romanus Pontifex* (1455) of Pope Nicholas the V which authorised and anticipated the unjust wars of colonisation of 1652 in conqueror South Africa (RAMOSE 2018). The doctrine of Discovery as an international law of colonialism (MILLER 2011) is the fundament of the conquest since 1652 in the unjust wars of colonisation.

The condition of possibility for the imposition of the law and jurisprudence of the European conqueror, is the 1652 conquest which is normally excluded from the realm of “juristic facts” (RAMOSE 1998). European rationality is fundamental to conquest at the ontological and epistemic levels. The Aristotelian philosophical anthropology typified by the idea that “man is a rational animal” is foundational to the white supremacist political ontology, which reduces

the Indigenous people to the non-human, thus legitimating the 1652 conquest in the unjust wars of colonisation. For the analytical purposes of this essay, this “ontology of racism” is foundational to both the epistemology which founds conquest and the epistemology which legitimates conquest.

This is because the doubting of the humanity of the Indigenous people, which is at the core of the “ontology of racism” is not just an event of military defeat, but it is a structural relation following the former. This ontological aspect of conquest is inextricably linked with the epistemicide, that manifested itself in the imposition of the epistemological paradigm of the European conqueror in law and history. Conquest is foundational to epistemicide, and it is its condition of possibility. This is because conquest is not just a mode of territorial acquisition, through military defeat which eventuates in the deprivation of native title by the European conqueror. According to Winter (2011) conquest in the colonial world is foundational to “a legal claim and title to rule” over the conquered people. Thus, conquest in the form of military defeat founds the “right of conquest” (KORMAN 1996). This is the second aspect of the epistemology of conquest for our analytical purposes in this essay. This implies that the epistemology of conquest comprises of two dimensions, the first one which founds military defeat and the second one, which legitimates military defeat.

This epistemology of conquest which founds and legitimates military defeat, and its aftermath is at the core of “the epistemological paradigm of the European conqueror” (RAMOSE 2018) which was imposed since 1652 to this day in “post-apartheid South Africa,” particularly in the final constitution of 1996. In other words, there seems to be an epistemology of conquest at work in the whole process of the imposition of the law and jurisprudence of the European conqueror, who became a white settler through land dispossession. Land-appropriation (SCHMITT 2006) is foundational and prior to land-division through the law of the coloniser. Land-division (SCHMITT 2006) is premised on the originary violence of land-appropriation in military defeat. Thus, our hypothesis is that the originary violence of conquest precedes and buttresses the epistemic violence which stems from it. Conquest since 1652, which inaugurates white settler colonialism takes the form of violent land dispossession and epistemicide (RAMOSE 2018), which legitimises the loss of territory and sovereignty of the Indigenous conquered people. In other words, epistemic violence which manifests itself in the form of the imposition of the law, jurisprudence and history of the European conqueror is a form of an exercise of “the right of conquest” (KORMAN 1996), a legitimation of conquest and a manifestation of “the law of conquest” in “South Africa”.

It is an established historical and legal fact, that conquest has been foundational to the acquisition of territory and sovereign title to it, both in Europe and outside of Europe (RAMOSE 2002, KORMAN 1996, SCHMITT 2006 and WINTER 2011). Mogobe Ramose in *I conquer, therefore I am sovereign: reflections upon sovereignty, constitutionalism and democracy in Zimbabwe and South Africa (2002)*, critically discusses how the European conqueror both in Zimbabwe and “South Africa,” acquired territory through conquest in the unjust wars of colonization. Foundational to this violent mode of acquisition of title to territory, is a military defeat in unjust wars of colonization both in Zimbabwe and “South Africa”. Conquest as reflected in the title entails the violence of war. This is central to our argument. We argue that this violence of war results at the same

time in land dispossession and the imposition of the law of the European conqueror, who uses the same law to justify the violence of law, in order to evade issues of historic justice.

This historiographical legitimization of conquest through historical knowledge is discussed by Ndumiso Dladla in “The liberation of history and the end of South Africa: some notes towards an Azanian historiography in Africa, South” (2018). As far as conquest as a mode of acquisition of territory is concerned, Robert Miller states that:

Europeans could acquire title to Indigenous lands by military victories. Conquest was also used as a term of art to describe the property and sovereign rights Europeans claimed automatically just by making first discovery (2011,854) In the so-called voyages of discovery Europeans acquired newly discovered lands by conquest. As Yehuda Blum states it:

Notwithstanding this hesitancy of practice to follow the classifications laid down by doctrine, it seems both pertinent and useful to mention the fact that modern international law generally distinguishes five modes of acquiring territory which are classified under the following heads: occupation, accretion, cession, *conquest* and prescription (1965, 3) (our italics).

This is how according to Freda Troup conquest unfolded in South Africa: The Khoikhoi sued for peace, and tried to regain rights to their pastures, “standing upon it that we (the Dutch) had gradually been taking more and more of their land, which had been theirs since the beginning of time... Asking also, whether if they came to Holland, they would be permitted to do the like. The Commander argued that if their land were restored there would not be enough grazing for both nations. The Khoikhoi replied Have we then no cause to prevent you from getting more cattle? The more you have the more lands you will occupy. And to say the land is not big enough for both, who should give way, the rightful owner or the foreign invader? Van Riebeeck made it clear that they had now lost the land in war and therefore could only expect to be henceforth deprived of it... The country had thus fallen to our lot, being justly won in defensive warfare and...it was our intention to retain it (1975,33-53).

It is upon this military defeat that a process of legitimisation, was embarked on to naturalise this conquest in the unjust wars of colonisation. This exercise in legitimisation is intended to result in what is called “colonial unknowing” (VIMALASSERY 2016). Thus, conquest has two elements, namely, the element of military defeat through which title to territory is acquired and the acquisition of a legal and moral claim to rule over those whose title to territory is deprived in the military defeat. As Yves Winter in *Conquest in Political Concepts (2011)* states it “conquest was intimately tied not only to the empirical fact of military defeat and subjection but to a legal and moral claim, to a legal title to rule”. This second element of conquest took the form of the imposition of the law and jurisprudence of the European conqueror, which was accompanied by the distortion of the law of the Indigenous people conquered in the unjust wars of colonisation and the resultant reduction of issues of historic justice to technical legal issues, which is the core of the critique in this essay. This second element of conquest is consummated in the final constitution, which is a culmination of the long process of white settler colonial constitutionalism since the 1853 Cape

constitution. We are aware that the legal legitimisation of conquest is also premised on the historical legitimisation of conquest.

This is because law and history are inextricably intertwined. History is studied in the interest of power and the foundation of European law is also power and violence. It is important to note that the legal history of “South Africa” by white settler scholars, is reflective of this exercise in the legitimisation of conquest. This takes the form of the exclusion of conquest and its concomitant epistemicide, from the realm of “juristic facts” as Mogobe Ramose has established it in relation for instance with H.R Hahlo and Ellison Kahn in the text called *Historic titles in law* (1998). The imposition of the law of the European conqueror is consummated in “South African” constitutionalism, which has reached its apex in the final constitution of 1996. This implies a historical connection between conquest and constitutionalism in “South Africa” as accentuated by Joel Modiri in *Conquest and constitutionalism: first thoughts on an alternative jurisprudence* (2018). As Mogobe Ramose in *Towards a Post-conquest South Africa: beyond the constitution of 1996* states it:

The his-story of constitutionalism in conqueror South Africa reinforces our argument. We are not against constitution making. Rather, we are against the surreptitious imposition of a constitution being the reaffirmation of the elements of the doctrine of Discovery”. The inherent injustice of this doctrine renders the constitution as its outcome ethically unacceptable (2018,14)

The European view that accepted the legitimacy of acquisition by conquest, during the so-called journeys of discovery is no longer formally accepted in terms of contemporary international law (BLUM 1965). The European legal framework which justified the idea of the wrongdoer benefiting from wrongdoing, is countered by another one which rejects the idea of benefiting from crime such as violent acquisition through conquest, namely *jus ex injuria non oritur* [a legal right or entitlement cannot arise from an unlawful act or omission] or, its relative, *commodum injuria sua nemo habere debet* [a wrongdoer should not be enabled by law to take any advantage from his actions] (RAMOSE 2002). Even in terms of the doctrine of Just war, the victim can recover that which was taken through violence if there was no just cause. The principle of recoverability (**ad repetendas res**) (RAMOSE 2018) posits that the victim can recover that which was taken through violent conquest. But the papal bulls like *Romanus Pontifex* that was issued in 1455 justified conquest by violent means, on the basis that people outside of Europe were not fully human/uncivilized and enemies of christ. (RAMOSE 2018 and MILLER 2011). This is the ethically inferior view which was used to legitimise acquisition by conquest since 1652 in South Africa as part of the doctrine of Discovery as an international law of colonialism (MILLER 2011). This doctrine comprises of conquest (as one of the ten elements) in the form of military defeat (MILLER 2011), as a legitimate way of acquiring territory by “discovering” European nations. The worldview of the Afrikans/Indigenous people conquered in the wars of conquest, comprises of the philo-praxis of Ubuntu (RAMOSE 2002). One of the ethical aphorisms of this philo-praxis which negates the legitimacy of acquisition by conquest, is “feta kgomo o tshware motho” (RAMOSE 2002), which translates loosely into English as the moral dictum that “one must choose life over property as human life is more valuable than material possessions”. It is in this sense that in pre-conquest Azania

the acquisition of land was not premised on conquest. This is because Azanian law rejects conquest as contrary to the philo-praxis of Ubuntu. Based on the Azanian ethical and legal rejection of conquest and the idea that the Just war doctrine of the European conqueror triumphs *Romanus Pontifex*, the Indigenous people have a solid foundation for reparations against conquest in 1652.

Notes on Conceptual Decolonisation

This essay will critically examine how the colonisation of Afrikan jurisprudence, made it possible for the white settler coloniser to “legally gloss over” the urgent issue of the disseizing of land and the entrenchment of this legally through extinctive prescription and the constitution specifically, the “property clause” which we designate as the “injustice clause”. This is what we can designate as the “legal consummation” of white settler colonialism based on conquest, to rely on Hosea Jaffe (1988, 63). We use the term “constitution” with a small letter (c) deliberately, as a way to effect a “conceptual decolonisation”, which challenges the supremacy of the constitution of 1996. Most scholars in the literature on South African law and constitutionalism who use the term the “Constitution” give the impression of deifying it, as if there is a legal hierarchy in which Afrikan jurisprudence and law should be subject³ to Western law and jurisprudence, which are positioned in this fictional legal hierarchy, as the apex of all law and jurisprudence. This according to us is to defend the current white settler degradation of Afrikan law by re-naming it “Customary law”, a racist invention of white settler colonialism since 1652, which is said to be “subject” to the constitution. One should not fail to notice the colonial power connotations attached to the word “subject” to the constitution.

It is through this white settler colonial “subjugation” of Afrikan jurisprudence and law that the Indigenous conquered people are legally “silenced” in their endeavours to attain historical justice of the restoration of their sovereign title to territory, humanity, and dignity. In an excellent article, Ramose constructs a philosophical refutation of extinctive prescription, which is a basis on which the white settler coloniser came to acquire ownership of the land, deprived immorally from the Indigenous conquered people. His philosophical refutation is based on Afrikan jurisprudence which is currently colonised by the constitution of 1996.

Ramose relying on his conception of law through Afrikan philosophy, posits that “the paradox of democratisation and independence in South Africa is that the compromises which the political representatives of the conquered made are philosophically inconsistent with their people’s understanding of historical justice. Philosophically, the people hold that *molato ga o bole* that is “extinctive prescription is untenable in the African understanding of law” (RAMOSE 2002, 20). The underlying thesis is that for Europeans the passage of time is capable of

³ We are referring specifically to South Africa as a white settler colony unlike other African countries which were colonized without whites settling through land dispossession and the attendant distortion of Indigenous law and the imposition of the law of the European conqueror such as Roman-Dutch and common law in the case of South Africa.

investing one with ownership over conquered land, because of their linear conception of time which contradicts that of the Indigenous conquered people, who view time as circular and symbolic in nature, thus incapable of endowing one with ownership based on historical injustice. We now turn to the last section to critically analyse this in detail.

Time and historic justice in law

This section will contend that the Indigenous conquered people's idea of time, is the basis on which they conceive of the idea of justice. The European conqueror's notion of time is one predicated on linear modality. What this means is that the European conqueror views time as a process of progression from one point to another point. This is the European conqueror's idea of time which is abstract and "rational". The abstractness and the "rationality" of linear modality is devoid of the idea of a symbolic connection between the past and the present. This is because what the European conqueror observes is a teleological and successive motion towards an unknown future. The basis of this linear temporality is the European conqueror's metaphysico-epistemological paradigm, which differs from that of the Indigenous conquered people as Afrikans and remains embedded in the Afrikan worldview and culture, despite epistemicide since 1652.

The relationship between the natural and the supernatural, can only be conceived based on complementary dichotomy which characterises the Indigenous conquered people's metaphysico-epistemological paradigm, which seeks harmony with humanity and nature as per *Maat* as encapsulated in the notion that "as above so below" (ANI 1994). The European conqueror's metaphysico-epistemological paradigm, especially as embodied in the materialistic epistemology of modern science, prohibits the inclusion and connection with supernatural. It regards the connection thereof as "irrational" and "primitive" and not conducive to the passion for control and domination, which characterise the European conqueror's "civilisation" in general and its overt manifestation in scientism. This is the substratum, on which the idea of an abstract and "rational" time is constructed and endowed with the ideology of progress. Progress here, for the European conqueror implies a movement away from the "irrational" and the "primitive" in terms of evolutionism, as peddled by Anthropology, which ultimately leads to the severing of the connection between the natural and the supernatural.

In a nutshell, the European conqueror's notion of time is predicated on his metaphysico-epistemological paradigm. The European conqueror rejects the connection between the natural and the supernatural, by regarding it as "irrational" and primitive and thus, endeavour to construct a linear temporality, which he deems as progress-driven and therefore rational. This is a result of the European conqueror's materialistic worldview, which strips the universe of spirit and escapes his quantitative/mathematical epistemology. In this sense, that which is regarded as still operating differently from the European conqueror's linear temporality, which is abstract and rational is subjected to violence and destruction as unleashed by his rationality which seeks to transform everything into its own image.

The Indigenous conquered people, on the other hand, conceive of time very differently from how the European conqueror conceives of it. The former's notion of time is fundamentally but not completely circular and symbolic in

nature. The symbolic and the circular time of the Indigenous conquered people, is predicated on their metaphysico-epistemological paradigm, which is premised on binary-complementarity. The metaphysics on which they derive their notion of time is holistic in nature, as it involves a connection with the “realm of invisible beings” or “triadic ontology” (RAMOSE 1996), in the form of the living-dead, the living and the yet to be born” (RAMOSE 1996). What this means is that for them, there is a cosmic connection between the natural and the supernatural. Thus, their notion of time is informed by this cosmic connection between the natural and the supernatural. This symbolic nature of their notion of time, entails a constant communication and relationship between the natural and supernatural, that is, the yet-to-be-born, living and living-dead, who were also subjected to the unjust conquest. The symbolic nature of time of the Indigenous conquered people is based on the “ontology of invisible beings” as discussed by Benezet Bujo in the *Ethical Dimension of Community* (1998). This ontology implies the connection and acknowledgement of the influence of the supernatural entities such as ancestors, spirits, and Gods of the Indigenous conquered people. Thus, the connection between the ancestors of the Indigenous conquered and the living Indigenous conquered people is always maintained. This is precisely how the Indigenous conquered people conceive of justice. For the living Indigenous conquered people, justice invokes the memories of the historic injustice, the Indigenous conquered’s ancestors suffered at the hands of the European conqueror. Thus “memory is a weapon” (MATTERA 1983, 25).

The possibility of the invocation of the memories of the Indigenous conquered’s living-dead/ancestors in the conceptualisation of justice, is predicated on the symbolic nature of their notion of time. Thus, for the living Indigenous conquered, the ideology of progress is a colonial strategy employed by the European conqueror to extirpate the memories of historic injustice and thus, to sever the connection between the Indigenous conquered living and their living-dead/ ancestors. The invocation of the memories of the historic injustice as suffered by the Indigenous conquered’s living-dead/ancestors, is not probable in the abstract and rational linear temporality which grounds the European conqueror’s notion of law. If it is ever alluded to, it is often disdainfully treated as a past event of misguided resistance to civilization or collateral damage of the inauguration of this civilization.

This is why even the current white beneficiaries of white settler colonialism can merely dismiss this past event, by claiming with barefaced insouciance that they were not there (they never occupied that point in time, but only have to do with current point in time which is disconnected from the former) and thus have nothing to do with it, despite benefiting as successors-in title to conquest (RAMOSE 2007) daily, at the expense of the Indigenous conquered people, from the very system of white settler domination which is based on this past event. They will continue to enjoy white privilege precisely because as Patrick Wolfe (2006, 388) argued, white settler colonialism is not an “event” but a “structure”, and thus it persists over time. In this abstract and rational linear temporality there, is preoccupation with progress which leads to the legal insignificance of what happened to the Indigenous conquered’s ancestors as the European conqueror’s time marches forward to an unknown future. The logic behind Truth and Reconciliation Commission was based on the white settlers’

notion of time, which understandably led to their “exoneration” from their “past brutalities” against the Indigenous conquered people, according to whose notion of time this “exoneration” is a farce. This also explains the vicious tendency among the European conqueror/current white beneficiaries of conquest and their colonial discourse, to refer to the historic injustice of the Indigenous conquered people’s loss of sovereign title to territory and epistemicide as “past injustices, “wrongs of the past” and “past discrimination”. And to misleadingly classify the living Indigenous conquered people as “previously disadvantaged groups/people” as opposed to the historically correct phrase of “the conquered Indigenous people”/ “the conquered natives”.

This is the basis on which the European conqueror can conceive of the passage of time as capable of endowing him with ownership of the land, unethically dispossessed from the Indigenous conquered people’s ancestors during conquest in the unjust wars of colonisation (RAMOSE 2007). For the European conqueror, the passage of time can “bring into extinction” the legal right of the Indigenous conquered living to the land of their living-dead/ancestors. This is the substance of the European conqueror’s rationalistic/reason-obsessed jurisprudence which is markedly dissimilar to the Indigenous conquered people’s Afrikan law and jurisprudence, which are premised on *Ubu-ntu* as Ramose (2002, 7) so convincingly demonstrated.

The Indigenous conquered people, who were deprived of their land, hold that *molato ga o bole*. This *Ubu-ntu* legal aphorism in a nutshell, posits in this context, that time cannot endow the European conqueror with a legal right over the land which was taken away from its rightful owners since time immemorial, namely the Indigenous conquered’s living-dead/ancestors in unprovoked and unjust wars of colonisation since 1652. This aphorism also captures the argument that memories inform the Indigenous conquered people’s notion of justice. This means that despite the passage of time since the dispossession of land from the Indigenous conquered’s living-dead/ancestors, the Indigenous conquered living will not forget that a historical injustice was committed against them and their living-dead/ancestors. This is notwithstanding attempts on the part of the European conqueror to make the Indigenous conquered living, sever their symbolic connection and communication between them and their living-dead/ancestors. The attempts at the severance of the symbolic connection and communication between the living Indigenous conquered people and their living-dead/ancestors, through the rationalisation of the law is futile as far as the use of “memory as a weapon”, is concerned in the Indigenous conquered people’s struggle for post-conquest *Azania*. The Indigenous conquered people will always maintain the symbolic connection and communication between them, and their ancestors and they do this based on what Ramose (2002, 5) designates as “triadic structure”.

This, according to Ramose, is composed of the living, the living dead and the yet-to-be-born and the accompanying communication between them. This is in accordance with the Afrikan worldview that is fundamentally spiritual. Thus, the search for justice is premised on this “triadic structure” as Ramose calls it. Mogobe Ramose posits that:

justice is determined by supernatural forces. Their determination seeks to restore harmony and promote the maintenance of peace. This

determination by the supernatural forces is consistent with metaphysics of *Ubuntu* law. This consists in a triadic structure of the living, the living dead (supernatural forces) and the yet-to-be-born. This metaphysical structure ensures communication among the three levels of being. Based on this structure, justice determined by the supernatural forces is declared on their behalf by the living who are in authority. (2002, 5)

The entire current constitution of 1996 and its predecessors of which it is a mere reconfiguration are epiphenomena of conquest. This is because their condition of possibility for existence is land dispossession and epistemicide. Their fundamental objective is to preserve white settler colonialism, both materially and epistemologically. The name “South Africa” is based on and embodies loss of sovereign title to territory by the Indigenous conquered people, thus the current constitution of “South Africa” is a legal mechanism, which sustains conquest and not a legal framework which inaugurates a “structural rupture” with 1652. Thus, both the white settler’s colonial name “South Africa” and the current constitution epitomise a material and epistemological symbiotic relation of what Francis Cress Welsing (1991, ii), designates racism/white supremacy, in Afrika since the “catastrophic” coming of the Europeans and conquest.

Thus, because *molato ga o bole*, the move to the “new South Africa” is not an authority on which the European conqueror can argue that acquisition of the legal right to the land is attained “constitutionally”. What this means is that section 25 of the constitution of 1996 is an “injustice clause” as it is a colonial legal mechanism, through which historic injustice of land dispossession is “constitutionalised” based on the white settlers’ notion of linear temporality. This section 25 embodies succinctly the white settlers’ jurisprudence and notion of time which sustain legal epistemic violence since 1652.

The intimate imbrication of these two, is captured by the white settlers’ notion of extinctive prescription, which is the exact antithesis of *molato ga o bole*. In terms of this notion, if one loses possession of a certain property over time, one eventually loses the legal right over this property. Thus, because the Indigenous conquered people lost possession of their territory during the time of unjust wars of white settler colonialism and its concomitant legislative consolidation through Acts like The Glen Grey Act of 1894 and The Land Act of 1913, they have lost sovereign title to it which is now vested in the white settlers who are now regarded as the rightful owners. These criminal owners whose property is regarded as expropriated and therefore the rider of with/without compensation. This section forecloses the fundamental question of historic justice, namely, when and how did white settlers come to be property owners and whose property is assumed to be expropriated?

Our radical postulation in this regard is that the fundamental question is not one of land redistribution but one of restoring “untrammelled” sovereign title to territory. Then the Indigenous people as the rightful holders of “untrammelled” sovereign title to territory, since time immemorial, can re-exercise one of its privileges, namely the absolute collective right to decide what to do with their land without white settler colonial tutelage. Once the entire territory is restored to them and by them, they can then exercise Afrikan national self-determination by collectively determining on their own terms, how and to whom the land must be

“redistributed”. Thus, to speak of land redistribution before the restoration of “untrammelled” sovereign title to territory, is to put the cart before the horse, so to speak. First, the *Azanians* in terms of Race-first Afrikan nationalism and *chimurenga* must resolve the fundamental antagonism of “South Africa” as a conquest-based white settler State (MAGUBANE 1996), restore a post-conquest *Azania* in its place and then address issues of belonging and constitution which are usually categorised as nation-building (ALEXANDER 1979). This should entail the project of “nation-building” in terms of Afrika for the Afrikans and the *en masse* expulsion of all non-Afrikans such as whites, Indians, and Coloureds (Coloureds who accept their indigenous heritage will be integrated on the terms of the Afrikan majority). In other words, the end of “South Africa” is coterminous with the demise of the non-Afrikans. The war and violence which brought about the antagonism (WILDERSON 2020) between Afrikans and non-Afrikans in “South Africa” must be reversed by the Indigenous people through a *chimurenga*. Since central to settler colonialism as argued by Patrick Wolfe in *Traces of History* (2016) is the antagonism between the native and the settler and that settler colonialism is resistant to regime change. Revolutionary violent confrontation between white settlers and the Indigenous people is the only way to break this resistance.

The post-1994 compromised dispensation due to democratisation concessions made by the African National Congress under Nelson Mandela and reconciliation under Desmond Tutu, only postponed the inevitable confrontation between the natives and the settlers. The white settlers who invented this violent form of colonialism regard the land they have dispossessed as their fatherland, thus are willing to die for the ill-gotten white power. This is also because many of the white settlers in South Africa who are unapologetic about white power and privilege stemming from conquest are what Albert Memmi in [The Colonizer and the Colonized] (1991) calls “the colonizers who refuse”. It is in this sense that Frantz Fanon in [The Wretched of the Earth] (2001) is correct to say that decolonisation must be a violent event since it is responding to colonisation as a violent process.

There is no rational discourse but a “violent cleansing force” (FANON 2001,74) which will cleanse the Indigenous conquered people of what Steve Biko in terms of the Black Consciousness Movement called “inferiority complex” (MORE 2004,97). *Poqo* as a liberation movement in South Africa encapsulated this need for a violent collective self-defence and Fanonian violent decolonisation in terms of the slogan of one settler one bullet, which still resonates with the Indigenous people today. The prominent example is the Black First, Land First embrace of one settler, one bullet as part of the heritage of the Azanian political and national liberation movement. Nothing short of the war and violence of reconquest can bring an end to “South Africa” and restore an independent Azania solely for the natives and people of Afrikan descent currently in the diaspora, in terms of Marcus Garvey’s battle-cry of “Africa for the Africans those at home and abroad” (VINSON 2019,68). For “South Africa” is not a society but a structural relation of a race war between Afrikans and Europeans and “non-Europeans such as Indians” (LEMBEDE 2015,181).

Conclusion

By way of conclusion, it is important to underscore the fact that the dangerous fiction of the “transition” to the post-apartheid “new South Africa”, is premised on the misleading ideology of progress, which, in this case, implies that the movement from the point of apartheid to the point of democracy as per the linear temporality of the European conqueror signifies improvement. Besides for the Afrikanist (Anton Lembede) and Azanian liberation movement (Robert Sobukwe and Steve Biko), the fundamental problem was never apartheid, which was just a vulgar and clumsy manifestation of an inherently racist white settler colonialism, but conquest since 1652, which is the foundation of white settler colonialism and legal epistemic violence.

However, this “transition,” which was nothing, but the reconfiguration of white supremacy has been demonstrated to be a glaring fallacy which is based on the celebration of Black economic empowerment and imaginary Rainbow nation in the midst of “South Africa” being subject to US-led Imperialism under Neoliberal free market fundamentalism and “business-managed democracy” (BEDER 2010, 1). The urgent need for Decolonization *ala* Fanonian revolutionary violence in the form of the restoration of sovereign title to territory and epistemological autonomy, which will liberate the living Indigenous conquered people, is probable through the abolition of the entire current constitution of 1996 in the wake of a liberation war of land restoration and de-settlement of all non-Afrikans. The Indigenous people can then restore their material and epistemic autonomy beyond conquest and white settler colonialism, which have victimised them in several ways as discussed above. Until then it is not yet *Uhuru* and thus, the urgent revolutionary imperative for another *chimurenga* for a post-conquest *Azania*, which must precede the abolition of the constitution of 1996 as the embodiment of legal epistemic violence in conqueror South Africa.

Declarations

The author declares no conflict of interest and no ethical issues for this research.

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This issue is dedicated to our Assoc. Editor and a second-generation member of the Calabar (Conversational) School of Philosophy (CSP): **Prince. Prof Mesembe Ita Edet (1965-2023)**