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## About the Journal

*Calabash: Indigenous Studies Journal* is an international multi-disciplinary journal dedicated to the study of the life and culture of indigenous people with special emphasis to Africa. It is published annually in September.

*Calabash: Indigenous Studies Journal* publishes scientific and scholarly articles based on in-depth original research and book reviews on indigenous studies spanning agriculture, anthropology, economics, education, environment, folklore, health, languages, law, literature, management, mathematics, philosophy, psychology, and social work.

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- Titles of books should be set in italics.
- Quotations of two lines must be incorporated into sentences of the article and set off in

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- Notes must be avoided.
- Only publications and sources referred to or quoted in the article must be included in the list of references which must be given the heading, 'Works Cited'. The references and sources must be arranged alphabetically according to the surname of the author, e.g. Mofolo, T. 2001. *Pitseng*. Pretoria: JL van Schaik.
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## **EDITORIAL**

The main focus of many articles in this volume is assessment of the achievements made since the 1990's in integrating indigenous knowledge systems into mainstream curriculum. Almost all the papers acknowledge that the principle of integrating indigenous knowledge systems into mainstream curriculum is now incorporated into the activities plans of institutions; yet not much advance has been made in implementation.

# THE 'MIX AND MATCH' APPROACH TO HEALTH CARE FOR IMPROVED HEALTH OUTCOMES

By

SF MATLALA

## ABSTRACT

The Mix and Match approach to health care refers to a practice by which people alternate between indigenous and biomedical health care services depending on the nature of their illness. The paper explores the conditions which have made this mix and match approach possible and discusses the possibilities of traditional health care practitioners administering indigenous medicine side by side with 'Western' health care practitioners in health care institutions.

## INTRODUCTION

Postmodern health philosophy has revolutionised attitude to health care. In the past, most health care practitioners believed that orthodox Western medicine was the only valid type of medicine. Postmodern health philosophy however argues that there are several other valid medicines in the world such as Chinese medicine and indigenous African medicines. This change in thinking has immensely influenced health care and has introduced variety into health care services. This has in turn led to a situation of consumerism and individuals now have gained the right to choose the type of health care services best for them.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has also contributed to this shift in thinking. Since 1977, WHO has been supporting the use of indigenous medicine and health care and encouraging countries to integrate indigenous medicine into their health systems to enable patients to benefit from a variety of health systems.

The benefit of this change has been tremendous. Many people now have positive attitudes towards indigenous medicine and health care. In a survey conducted in 2008 among 618 patients in three KwaZulu-Natal public hospitals, it was discovered that 51.3% stated that they had used indigenous medicine and health care and were very satisfied with the outcome

(Pelzer, Preez, Ramlagan & Fomundam, 2008). The respondents cited the following as their reasons for using indigenous medicine and health care:

- Traditional therapies are congruent with their own belief systems.
- Traditional medicines do not have painful side effects.
- Traditional health care is affordable.
- Traditional health care focuses on wellness rather than illness.
- Traditional health practitioners are easily accessible.

## AIM

The aim of this paper is to discuss the use of indigenous and biomedical health care services side by side together to bring about an improved health outcome. The paper provides definitions and discussions of indigenous health care and medicine, biomedical health care and medicine, postmodern philosophy of health, the ‘mix and match approach’ to health care and improved health outcome, and discusses their relative advantages and disadvantages and ends with a conclusion that indigenous health and biomedical health systems must be combined in order to improve health care.

## DEFINITION AND DISCUSSION OF CONCEPTS

### **Indigenous healthcare and medicine**

The term ‘indigenous health care and medicine’ in this paper refers to a group of health care systems that include traditional African medicine and what is known as complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) such as Ayurveda, Chinese medicine and acupuncture, chiropractic, homoeopathy, naturopathy, osteopathy, phytotherapy, therapeutic aromatherapy, therapeutic massage therapy, therapeutic reflexology and unani-tibb and ethno-medicine. The term is used broadly to include the practice and administration of the medicine as well as the behaviour of the practitioners and that of the patients. An indigenous, or what is commonly referred to as traditional, health practitioner could therefore be of African, Chinese, Indian, or of any nationality or origin (WHO, 2002: 2; Peltzer, 2009: 176; the Allied Health Professions

Council of South Africa (AHPCSA, 2011). In South Africa this term is used specifically in reference to traditional health care practitioners registered with the Allied Health Professions Council of South Africa.

### **Biomedical healthcare and medicine**

Biomedical health care and medicine refers to the use of health care and medicine as practised by 'Western'-trained medical doctors and allied health professionals such as physiotherapists, psychologists and nurses. In South Africa this refers to services provided by professionals registered with the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) and the South African Nursing Council (SANC). These two organisations are statutory bodies governing the practices of 'Western'-trained medical doctors, physiotherapists, psychologists and nurses respectively.

### **Postmodern philosophy of health**

Postmodern philosophy involves the rejection of the philosophy of modernism. Modernism involves the use of Western scientific method and theories to understand reality (Mitchell, 1996: 201). According to modernism, biomedical doctors are experts and for that reason they are placed in a strong position of authority to make all decisions relating to a patient's health. Conversely, because patients are not biomedical experts they cannot be allowed to make decisions relating to their own health. Postmodern philosophy rejects this assumption and states that patients and biomedical doctors are equally in a strong position of authority as decision-makers in health and health care (Larivaara, Kiuttu & Taanila, 2001: 8). Modernism also pays very little attention to culture and the social environment in its attempt to explain reality. Postmodernism however rejects this and stipulates that culture and the social environment are immensely influential in understanding reality (Grey, 1999: 150).

### **The mix and match approach**

This term, as already mentioned, refers to a practice by which people alternate between indigenous and biomedical health care services depending on the nature of their illness. It must



be stressed that this ‘mix and match’ approach does not imply the rejection of one system in preference for another but rather a combination of available health systems in order to obtain a complete cure and relief. (See Box 1 below). This is what is referred to as integrative medicine or medical pluralism (Shih, Su, Liao & Lin, 2010; Moshabela, Pronyk, Williams, Schneider & Lurie, 2010).

**Box 1: A STORY ILLUSTRATING THE USE OF BOTH INDIGENOUS AND BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES FOR COMPLETE CURE AND RELIEF**

Sebatana Phiri, a professional educator (high school teacher), was once attacked and robbed as he was walking home from a store one late evening in 2008 in Polokwane. His watch, cell phone and money were stolen. He struggled with his attackers and he suffered a fractured femur. He was admitted to a well-equipped private hospital where he stayed for two weeks. On discharge he went to consult an indigenous health practitioner (traditional doctor) while he also continued consultations with the orthopaedic surgeon (biomedical doctor) who had treated him in the hospital. Mr Phiri consulted the indigenous healer to understand the spiritual aspects related to his attack and in particular to find protection against witchcraft in case the attackers had used witchcraft when they attacked him.

The back-and-forth pattern of use is influenced by the type of illness or condition, its perceived cause, its seriousness and duration. A person can also use indigenous medicine in combination with biomedical medicine to satisfy a specific socio-cultural need.

The decision to use either indigenous or biomedical care when faced with an illness or disease condition also depends on the costs associated with each care, the type of illness and the perceived success rate of each care in treating that particular illness or in satisfying the health maintenance need (Wade, Chao & Gronberg, 2007: 274). Sometimes a person will switch from one type of care to the other if he or she or someone known to the person has used the particular type before system and found it effective.

### **Health outcome**

Health outcome refers to the result of a medical condition that directly affects the length or quality of a person’s life. Health outcome is indicated by the cure and relief of symptoms as well as by the improvement in the quality of life of a person who has suffered from a particular

illness or disease and has been treated and cured.

## POSTMODERN HEALTH PHILOSOPHY

Postmodern health philosophy comprises of the following new set of health beliefs and values which according to O'Callaghan and Jordan (2003) lead to an increase in popularity and use of indigenous health care and medicine:

- a rejection of Western scientific authority relating to health
- a rise of an attitude of consumerism with regard to health service
- an enhancement of the position of the patient with regard to his or her own health
- a great reliance on nature and natural remedies for cure and relief of illness
- a great emphasis on holistic healing.

### **Rejection of Western scientific authority**

As already mentioned, this is a scenario in which society rejects the principle of modernism which in general stipulates that it is only Western scientific knowledge explains reality and in particular stipulates that 'Western'-trained medical doctors are experts so they alone have the authority to decide how a patient is to be treated. Those who reject this principle argue that Western scientific knowledge is not the only system of knowledge that explains reality; they argue that indigenous knowledge is also able to explain reality. Furthermore, the proponents of postmodern health philosophy argue that biomedical science does not yet have the cures for many present illnesses and diseases so 'Western'-trained medical doctors cannot be regarded as experts who can treat and cure all diseases.

### **An increase in consumerism**

This is a situation created by postmodern conditions in which people shop around for health care just as they would shop around for regular consumer items such as soap and food items. In this scenario, people treat health services like these other consumer items and opt for the specific health care items that they think will satisfy their specific needs. Like consumer

habits, people can change their preference suddenly so it is difficult to predict which health product or health system will satisfy the demand of the public in this situation of consumerism on a permanent basis.

### **Importance of individual responsibility for health**

Postmodern health philosophy believes that each individual, and not the health practitioner, is responsible for his or her health and well-being. It argues that it is the individual, not the biomedical doctor or the health institution, who has the responsibility and authority to bring about his or her good health and this requires that the individual must constantly do an introspection about his or her lifestyle. This attitude is summed up in the slogan: ‘we are what we are because of the choices that we make’.

### **Emphasis on nature and natural remedies**

In this scenario, people regard nature as a benevolent force. Hence, instead of going to a biomedical health institution for cure, some people will go and expose themselves to nature. For instance, they will immerse themselves in a river or the sea; climb to the top of a hill or mountain; or, leave the urban area for their rural home on a temporary basis. With respect to natural remedies, some people opt for indigenous medicine extracted from herbs and barks of trees over and above chemical drugs manufactured in laboratories because they believe that these natural remedies have minimal side effects.

### **A holistic view of health**

In this scenario, people view health as more than just keeping the body fit. They view health as entailing harmony between body, mind and spirit. By this attitude, illness is thought to be caused by imbalances in the harmony between body, mind and spirit. Emphasis is therefore placed on wellness, rather than illness.

### **Improved health outcome**

This is a situation in which indigenous and biomedical health and medical services are combined to achieve a faster relief of symptoms with a view to achieving an improvement in the quality of life for patients (Richter, 2003; Moshabela, Pronyk, Williams, Schneider & Lurie, 2010).

## CONCLUSION

Advances in technology have made many people aware of the causes and treatments of many diseases. With that awareness, many patients now wish to be informed by their medical practitioners about the causes and cures of their illnesses. Hence, patients now derive a sense of empowerment from being able to engage in an assessment of the risks and benefits of the indigenous and biomedical health systems in relation to their health and well-being. The story of the professional who goes to consult an indigenous healer to find out if witchcraft was in any involved in the attack on him is a clear indication that many Africans combine biomedical science and indigenous African health systems for effective cure. The fact that a majority of patients opt for both systems indicates the need for the two health systems to be combined for effective health care delivery. In the primary health context (PHC), this integration is vital because over 60% of patients combine the two (WHO, 2002).

This statement is not new. Since 1977 the World Health Organization (WHO) has not only been supporting the use of indigenous healthcare and medicine but has also been encouraging countries to integrate indigenous medicine into their own health systems so that patients will obtain the health benefits from both.

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# INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS IN OUTCOMES BASED EDUCATION AND CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT POLICY STATEMENT

By

MJ THEMANE

&

JM MAMABOLO

## ABSTRACT

Outcomes Based Education (OBE) and Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) are grounded in the postmodern principle of diversity which seeks to create space for non-Western and indigenous cultures to operate within the global arena. These two educational policies are in turn grounded in the assumption that there would have already been in place new epistemologies of ontologies that recognise divergent ways of learning. This paper argues that OBE and CAPS, although they are in concept supposed to be flexible and accommodative of diversity, are applied so rigidly that they have failed to incorporate indigenous knowledge into the curriculum.

## INTRODUCTION

The African child lives in two worlds: the Western world which is promoted by the school that he attends and his own African world in which he lives at home. The best curriculum is that which creates space for the African child to think in ways that are consistent with his knowledge and experiences. Such a curriculum would accommodate divergent views that learners bring into the classroom. It would also enable teachers to critique the old epistemologies of theory and practices that they were taught at college or university.

## AIM

This paper argues that such a curriculum is not yet established in South Africa. The paper analyses the concepts and applications of Outcomes Based Education (OBE) and Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) in the context of postmodern educational philosophy and argues that the OBE and CAPS have failed to incorporate indigenous knowledge systems into the curriculum.

## BACKGROUND

Education provides access to various forms of discourses which enable individuals to define themselves in ways that defy the state's classification of them. From a Foucauldian vantage-point, this kind of self-determination is tantamount to the exercise of freedom (Howley & Harnet in Katharin, 1996). Hence, Peters (1977) regards education as the training of minds in order to make an individual think and act in that individual's own way. This concept of education gives scope for both teachers and learners to create their own space.

This emphasis on the ability of people to create their own space is a feature of post-modernity. Postmodernism entails a paradigm shift from the rigid traditional disciplines to a new cultural landscape of diversity. Therefore, to believe in postmodernism is to engage in modes of cognition and analysis which reject the rigidly stratified and over-centralised conceptions of reality upon which the theory of modernism is based (Pinar & Reynolds, 1992; Cherryholmes, 1988; Jameson, 1991).

Such a postmodern concept of reality has far reaching implications for teaching and learning. It was Taubman's doctoral dissertation entitled *Gender and curriculum: Discourse and the politics of sexuality* (University of Rochester, 1979) that laid the foundation for the application of postmodern concepts to the field of curriculum. Also worth mentioning is Doll's *A post-modern perspective on curriculum* (1993) in which he argues that in the postmodern era curriculum should shift from the separation of subjects to integration characterised by openness, indeterminacy and self-regulation.

Pinar (2004) has coined the term *currere* for this type of integrated curriculum characterised by openness, indeterminacy and self-regulation. He describes it as a curriculum in action involving that which we do in the classroom and also that which we talk about outside the classroom. Similarly, Nieto (2004) argues that the goals of education which society has established are clearly written in the daily interactions between teachers and learners in the classroom. This is *currere* in the clearest sense.

## OBE AND DIVERSITY

At the core of OBE is the principle that all teaching and learning experiences must be incorporated into the education process in order to make learners develop their fullest potential. OBE proponents believe that all students can learn, regardless of ability, race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, and gender. Furthermore, OBE recognises that a complex organization is more likely to produce what it measures, and to downplay anything it considers unimportant. This emphasis on openness suggests that OBE has much in common with the *curre* concept of curriculum and also therefore that it is a postmodern concept.

OBE seeks to clearly define aims and goals by demanding that teachers and learners work within clearly defined pathways and with specific outlines of each and every unit of work together with a clearly defined assessment blueprint (Spady, 1994). The adoption of measurable standards is a means by which OBE seeks to ensure that both content and skills are accorded high priority in the learning process. Within this OBE paradigm teachers and learners have specific roles and responsibilities that are pre-determined.

This is where OBE has fallen short. Its pre-determined format has created canonisation rather than free thinking which is at the core of postmodern strategies of education. To state it differently, there is a contradiction between the idea of OBE and its execution. While the idea frowns on positivism and prescription and promotes innovation and free thinking, its execution frowns on innovation and free thinking and rather promotes positivism and prescription.

## OBE AND IKS

In the OBE scenario in which format is pre-determined, the teacher has very little room to be indeterminate, open, unpredictable, and self-organising in his or her approach to teaching and in turn to encourage his or her learners to also be indeterminate, open, unpredictable, and self-organising in reflecting upon what they have been taught. The result is that many teachers 'play safe' in their teaching strategy and stick to the old Euro-centric formats.



Under these Euro-centric formats, most of the indigenous knowledge that is brought into the classroom is classified as invalid and illegitimate. For instance, if an African learner in a rural school misses a class and upon return informs the teacher that he/she had lost a family member and had to go to participate in a traditional ritual, the explanation may not be taken as valid and legitimate because it does not fall within the valid Euro-centric reasons for absence. Such a rural African learner will therefore be deemed to have been absent for no valid reason.

Far from freeing the curriculum from the old conservative system, OBE has in its execution rather legitimised the Euro-centric models and placed them at the centre stage and has marginalised indigenous knowledge. Government may have become aware of this and other shortcomings of OBE because the Department of Basic Education has outlined a policy framework for it to be replaced in schools by Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS).

## CAPS AND DIVERSITY

CAPS seeks to provide a portfolio of coherent and systematic content and knowledge to satisfy the aims of the curriculum. In particular it seeks to define curriculum policy, to explain assessment guidelines and to clarify technical categories such as the difference between grades and phases and between learning and teaching support materials. One core concept of CAPS is that it is intended to give flesh and blood, so to speak, to the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS). To put it differently, CAPS is designed as an improvement upon RNCS.

In theory CAPS is intended to give teachers the latitude to interpret the curriculum the way they think fit. Many teachers were delighted with the phrase “the way they think fit” and thought that it meant that the curriculum could be modified to suit provincial, district and local needs. Department of Education (2010: 27) has however closed that window of opportunity for creativity and free thinking by stating that it is erroneous to interpret the phrase to mean that a teacher is free to modify the curriculum because as a matter of fact the curriculum is fixed.

Hence, although in theory CAPS is intended to create room for flexibility, in its execution it

rather does the reverse. Thus, teachers are still burdened with a myriad of planning that should be done and noted down. For example, a teacher is required to make a separate plan for a learning programme, a separate plan for work schedule, and another separate plan for lesson. All these plans are prescriptive to the finest detail and do not allow a teachers any room for creativity. Then there is the planning for assessment, which further complicates matters. The plan format for assessment is standardised and centralized and does not leave any room for provincial, district and local modification. While this rigid standardised and centralised format is good in ensuring that a single yardstick is used nationwide, it however fails to promote diversity which is one of the fundamental goals of the national educational policy.

## CAP AND IKS

One fundamental feature of CAPS is methodology. CAPS treats content as neutral fact. This concept of content as neutral is characteristic of the philosophy of modernism. Postmodernism rejects it on because it regards culture and environment as very influential to fact. This is what postmodernism describes as ‘constructions and interpretations’ and it is these which create diversity. Indigenous knowledge is located within these ‘constructions and interpretations’. By stipulating that fact is neutral, CAPS contradicts its underlying philosophy and in the process marginalises indigenous knowledge and perpetuates the status core which it is intended to transform.

## CONCLUSION

This analysis of OBE and CAPS, the two educational policies that are designed to propel South Africa into the twenty-first century multi-cultural world, reveals that the policies fall short of their own aims of promoting diversity. The paper demonstrates that this shortcoming is due to the fact that there are contradictions between concepts and applications of the two educational policies. OBE and CAPS share many fundamentals with other postmodern ideas of education; hence, they cannot be regarded as postmodern concepts. The applications of these concepts however stress canonisation and rigidity which are characteristics of modernism. The two philosophies are fundamentally different both in concept and also in application. The problem is that OBE and CAPS have merged these two fundamentally different concepts and

applications. As a result, the question of which knowledge is valid is still being answered in the same old way. In order to integrate indigenous knowledge into the curriculum, curriculum designers and policy makers would need to shift the tools of methodology from the philosophy of modernism to that of post modernism and move away static and prescriptive formats to more open formats.

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# THE RELEVANCE OF INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE IN NAMIBIAN SCHOOLS: THE CASE OF MAKANGA AND SIKUBI COMBINED SCHOOLS IN THE CAPRIVI REGION OF NAMIBIA

By

JM LILEMBA

## ABSTRACT

Although indigenous knowledge has been in existence for centuries, it is only in the post-colonial era that it has gained legitimacy. Yet, as a result of the pervasive influence of the epistemologies of Western education, the methodologies by which this legitimacy is articulated are still being contested. Educational institutions in Namibia, as in other African countries, are heavily influenced by these Western epistemologies. This paper is based on a research conducted in March 2010 into the utilisation of indigenous knowledge in secondary schools in Mafwe, a rural community in the Caprivi Region in Namibia. The Mafwe community is largely indigenous. The research revealed that the secondary schools in the community made very little use of indigenous knowledge for teaching in this rural community. The paper recommends that indigenous knowledge should be incorporated into the techniques of teaching to improve learning.

## BACKGROUND

Fanon (1957) argues that Africans had a long established system of education of their own before the coming of colonisers. He explains that colonisation destroyed this system of education and as a result Africans lost their ability to control their environment and this drove them into a state of despair. Similarly, Rodney (1973) argues that colonisation destroyed the consciousness of Africans and as a result they lost their sense of identity. Also, Barker (1999), Salio-Bao (1991) and Amukugo (1993) argue that colonisation destroyed the moral values of Africans. Furthermore, Nyathi (2005) argues that colonisation undermined the languages of Africa to the extent that Africans now use European languages as their languages of communication and interaction.

Namibia, like all other African countries, is still suffering from these ill-effects of colonisation. United Nations Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and World Health Organisation (WHO) in 1977 adopted a resolution that the erstwhile colonised nations can only achieve sustainable development through the revival of their indigenous cultures. Since then, several research projects have been conducted to ascertain how these indigenous cultures could be revived in the erstwhile colonised countries.

Davis and Ebbe (1993) argue that indigenous knowledge is not lost in sub-Sahara Africa and that it is still influential on the lives of the people of Africa. Barrow (1996) and Boffa (1999) concur and argue that indigenous science and technology are used extensively in sub-Sahara Africa for farming, food preservation and health. Similarly, Burger (1993) argues that people in sub-Sahara Africa still hold indigenous views concerning land by attaching mystical values to land. This observation is true. For Africans the land is the source of life; it is a gift from the creator; it nourishes and supports life and it also teaches people the value of the environment to them. Many Africans believe that the Earth connects them with their past (as the home of the ancestors), with the present (as provider of their material needs), and with the future (as the legacy they hold in trust for their children and grandchildren).

This observation is also true of the people of Namibia. The people of Namibia in general and the Mafwe community in particular attach mystical values to land and the physical environment. For example, the baobab is regarded as a sacred tree, so children are not allowed to touch them or play near them. The ant-hill is also regarded as sacred. There is a proverb in the Sifwe language, one of the languages in the Caprivi Region of Namibia, which describes the ant-hill as '*masamu onse ala hunga, siluzumina ka hungi*' which translated literally means 'all trees can be shaken by the wind but the ant-hill is never shaken'.

## AIM

The main aim of this paper is to investigate the level of utilisation of indigenous knowledge in schools in the Caprivi region in Namibia. The paper is based on a research conducted in March 2010 in the Caprivi region to ascertain the level of utilisation of indigenous knowledge in the curriculum in Namibia. The research was made necessary by the fact that, although the

government of Namibia has since 2009 adopted a policy to incorporate indigenous knowledge into the curriculum, there is scant information on the subject.

## METHODOLOGY

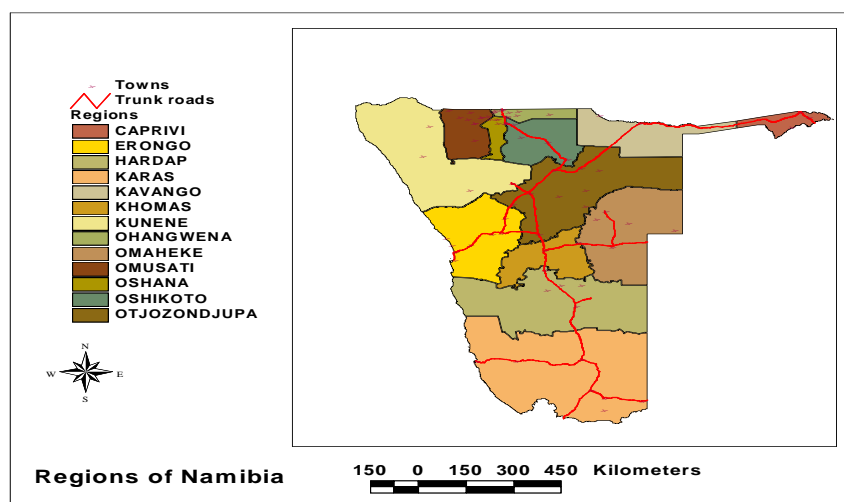
### Research assumptions/hypothesis

As already mentioned, the Mafwe community is a rural community. The main assumption or hypothesis upon which the research is based is that the Mafwe community, being a rural community like all rural communities in Africa, has strong moral values and believes that these moral values are crucial for the survival of their society.

Another assumption or hypothesis of the research project is that the Mafwe community, like all rural and indigenous communities, is well versed in traditional discourse in the form of proverbs, riddles and pithy sayings and that the children of the community have also acquired these skills of traditional discourse from an early age.

### Research area

The research was conducted at Makanga and Sikubi Combined Schools in the Caprivi region. A map Namibia appears below.



[illegible]

According to Tuckman (1979), in order for a research evidence to be credible, the size of the survey should be a ratio of the actual population size. The total population of the Caprivi region is 79, 000; the vast majority of which are black Africans. The total number of learners in the combined schools is 800; all of whom are black Africans. The total number of teachers in the combined schools is 10; all of whom are black Africans. There are two main combined schools in the region: Makanga and Sikubi Combined Schools. All teachers in the two combined schools or 100% of the teachers were consulted for the research project.

McMillan and Schumacher (2001) use the term ‘research design’ in referring to the plan and structure of the investigation used to obtain evidence. Similarly, Bieger and Gerlach (1996) explain that research designs are the procedural details of a study by which a researcher collects data. Following these two sources, the researcher uses the term ‘research design’ to refer to the

research plan or design of the project.

The research design of the project was based on the quantitative research method. Quantitative research requires that raw data should be in the form of numerical codes. It uses statistical methods to analyse data, and at the same time uses statistical inference procedures to generalize findings from a sample to a defined population (Gall et.al, 1996). The researcher collected data from the 10 teachers by using the questionnaire technique. Bruyns (1997) argues that questionnaire technique is one of the most reliable tools by which information can be gathered. Two types of questionnaires were used. For questionnaires which involve measuring traits, characteristics or attributes of things (Bieger and Gerlach, 1996), the interview type based on open-ended questions was used. For questionnaires leading to numerical answers, printed questions were distributed to the teachers and were collected later. The basic format of the questions appears below.

How do you understand indigenous knowledge?  
Give a brief statement about the meaning of indigenous knowledge.  
What are the perceptions of parents, teachers and learners of indigenous knowledge?  
What is the importance of indigenous knowledge in your community?  
Are formerly colonised communities using other people's knowledge?  
What makes indigenous knowledge to be knowledge?

### **Data collection**

Patton (1990) argues that one important way to strengthen a study design is through triangulation. Triangulation shows how different data agree and disagree; it is a measurement tool which is used to evaluate two or more distinct methods like semi-structured interviews, observations, qualitative and quantitative approaches from different angles. In this regard, the researcher used the quantitative method in obtaining the information. The researcher then used statistical methods to analyse the data, and statistical inference procedures to generalise findings from a sample to a defined population (Gall et al, 1996).



## RESEARCH FINDINGS

### **Basic assumptions/hypothesis**

The research confirmed the basic assumptions or hypothesis of the research project. The data confirmed that moral values are of immense significance to the community. One respondent had this to say: ‘Morality was supreme among in the community in the past. It was required of young girls and boys to behave in a morally acceptable way. Virginity was a source of pride and young girls tried by all means to preserve that, until the day they were married. Even now, parents still want their children to grow up as responsible adults. But because of Western culture the cultural values are being lost; this is manifested in the high pregnancy rates among young girls. In the past when traditional education was reigning supreme, very few or no cases of pregnancy outside marriage were heard of or reported.’

The research also confirmed the basic assumptions or hypothesis of the research project that traditional discourse is of immense significance in the community. One respondent had this to say: ‘When we were still growing, the use of riddles and proverbs was necessary in terms of casual conversations and traditional initiations. We were taught how to talk so that one who did not come closer to the elders to learn idioms could not understand a thing. These conversations were made to hone our brains and to know the basics of our mother tongue. The community admired and respected the one who could best play around with words full of wisdom. It was the wish of every young one those days to know and speak fluently using idioms and proverbs. Today those idioms are gone with Westernisation.’

### **Questionnaire findings**

On the question of including indigenous knowledge in the school curriculum, all respondents agreed that it is the right thing to do. They gave the following reasons to substantiate:

- Indigenous knowledge should be included in the school curriculum so as to impart learners with the knowledge which will assist them in becoming responsible citizens.

- It will help the youth to be aware of protecting their bodies by not misusing them before marriage.
- Elderly people know a lot of things in life; they are like a library and therefore can help the young with a lot of relevant information including wisdom.
- It will enable learners to progress systematically from known to new knowledge and develop conceptual understanding.
- Since young ones are losing out on opportunities intended to prepare them for manhood and womanhood like ceremonies of first menstruation periods and cattle post training, it is necessary that this knowledge be included in the school curriculum.
- The fact that cultural values and norms are embedded in indigenous knowledge makes it imperative that this valuable knowledge should have a place in the school curriculum.

On the question of the purpose of indigenous knowledge in schools, the following were the responses:

- It should provide/teach respect for each other.
- It should serve as foundation for formal education.
- It should serve as a source of cultural knowledge.

On the question of the purpose of indigenous knowledge in the community, the respondents had the following to say:

- It creates better relations between people in terms of manners, attitudes and cooperation.
- It helps the community to understand the environment.
- It imparts knowledge of their past history, living styles and culture.
- It prepares young people for challenges ahead in life.

On the question of how indigenous knowledge can improve learning, all respondents gave the following affirmative responses:

- Learners will be building on already existing knowledge upon entering formal schools.
- It teaches self-respect which is the core for learning. There will be discipline and order in

schools as the learners have already been instructed in those aspects at home.

- It will arouse the interest and views of learners.
- It will enhance participation in class and the learner will not be just an empty vessel.

On the question of what is indigenous knowledge, all the responses suggest that the teachers have adequate knowledge about it. Some of the responses are as follows:

- Knowledge from elders at home from those who never heard a school bell.
- Knowledge obtained through informal learning from the community where one lives.
- Knowledge within the community.
- Knowledge possessed by ancestors which enabled them to sustain and cope with their environment, interact, communicate and understand each other as social beings.
- Norms, values, traditions and culture.

On the personal perception about indigenous knowledge, some negative views were expressed. The following are some of the negative views:

- It is gender-biased; it disregards women.
- It is old fashioned knowledge.

The question whether the formerly colonised people use other people's knowledge was answered in the affirmative. Many respondents cited the use of European languages as an example.

On the effect of learning without the use of indigenous knowledge learning methods and resources, the respondents had the following to say as per the Table 1.

Table 1: Effects of Learning without Indigenous Knowledge

Respondents	Cited responses
1	Negative effect as indigenous knowledge bridges the gap between what learners need to know and what they know already.

2	Hard to control learners as they do not understand that parents have better ideas for them, if these learners were not exposed to indigenous aspects like respect values and norms. Consequently it will be difficult to have discipline in the school when indigenous knowledge is not encouraged at all levels.
3	Learners will embrace rote learning because they will think that the text book is the only source of information, as no comparison will be made.
4	Learners always understand their parents better than their teachers.
5	Learners fail to know different backgrounds they come from.
6	It creates knowledge gap as learners will learn without precise understanding.
7	Learners lose self-respect, lose respect for elders and teachers lose control of young ones.
8	Learners may not see, visualise and recall about what is being taught and what they already know.
9	Learners fail to perform well as they lack the background of the indigenous knowledge.
10	Difficult for learners to learn, because learning process will be new, difficult to cope with teachers, not easy to socialize with other learners.

On whether indigenous knowledge resources are utilised for effective teaching, it became clear from the discussions with the teachers that not much was utilised. The reasons given for non-utilisation can be summarised as follows:

- the time allocated for subjects is too short.
- the content that must be covered in each subject is fixed; that content does not include experiential resources under which indigenous knowledge falls.
- the teaching techniques are fixed.
- no financial resources are provided for the procurement of indigenous learning aids.
- the school authorities and the Department of Education will penalise any teacher who does not stick to the fixed content and techniques of teaching and learning.

## CONCLUSION

The respondents expressed themselves clearly on all the aspects of the research and thus gave the impression that they had satisfactory knowledge of the value of indigenous knowledge for effective teaching. Many of them, including even those who entertained personal negative attitudes to indigenous culture, expressed the feeling that they would like to make use of indigenous knowledge resources in their teaching should the opportunity arise. The consensus of opinion is that there is no such opportunity in the present school curriculum. This paper therefore recommends that the government of Namibia should design curricula which include indigenous knowledge to enhance teaching and learning.

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# THE QUEST TO INSCRIBE INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN EDUCATION SYSTEM

By

TJ LEBAKENG

## ABSTRACT

The article analyses the efforts made by the South African democratic government and South African higher educational institutions since 1994 to transform higher education and to mainstream indigenous knowledge systems into the curriculum. The article argues that, despite extensive financial and infra-structural investments by the South African government since 1994 to upgrade the erstwhile predominantly black institutions and to transform the erstwhile predominantly white institutions, the subject contents and research priorities of the institutions have changed little; and they are still dominated by Western educational epistemologies. The article concludes that the only strategy that can bring out meaningful change to the higher educational structure is that as Black South Africans form the majority of the country's population on the basis of natural justice their indigenous epistemologies should be inscribed as the core epistemologies in the institutions of higher education.

## BACKGROUND

Colonial and apartheid education have had a damaging effect on Africans. In the post-colonial era, several institutional structures have been created to repair this damage. The South African constitution is one of these structures. The South African constitution requires that education must be transformed from the shackles of the colonial-apartheid system and made responsive to the needs of the democratising nation. This requirement is clearly reflected in the Vision of the Department of Education.

Our vision is of a South Africa in which all our people will have access to lifelong learning, education and training opportunities which will, in turn, contribute towards improving the quality of life and the building of a peaceful, prosperous and democratic South Africa (<http://www.education.gov.za>).

In order to bring about this transformation, the government has invested heavily in the educational sector. Teffo (2009: 37) explains:

Since 1993, the Government of South Africa has been investing between 20-26%

— between one-fifth and one-quarter — of the national income and about 6% of the gross national product (GDP) on education. In addition, the provincial governments have also since 1993 been investing about 40% of their income on education. Education, therefore, accounts for the largest single item of state and provincial expenditure in the country.

A random check in three South African electronic journals on opinion about education revealed the following results:

- “Despite sound education policy SA is not able to follow through. Leading education experts cannot explain how SA’s education system is less successful than those of many developing countries, despite well-crafted policies and enviable resources.” (Why is SA losing literacy war? *Business iafrica.com*. <http://business.iafrica.com>; 12:39pm 17 Apr 2012)
- “According to a 2009 study commissioned by Higher Education South Africa, the majority of first-year students enrolled at institutions of higher learning could not read and write proficiently. More than 73% required short to long-term additional support if they were to pass. However, the problem in South Africa is not just about the large numbers of people who cannot read and write; it is that many of those who are literate are too lazy to read and write. In society in general, in academia and in politics, the culture of reading and writing is lacking.” (Education in South Africa. *Southafrica.info*. <http://www.southafrica.info>; 11 April 2012)
- “SA is not doing enough to ‘grow its own timber’ and support black local doctoral and post-doctoral students, says higher education and training portfolio committee chairman Ishmael Malale.” (MP wants SA black doctoral students helped. *DispatchOnline*. <http://www.dispatch.co.za>; 2012 04 18).

These opinions, some of which reflect the views of senior personalities in government, suggest that, in spite of this massive year-on-year fiscal investment since 1994 by government to transform education, the achievement has been negligible. Teffo (2009: 38) explains the situation well:



The achievement has so far fallen short. The annual reports from 1996 to date by the Department of Education on performance at basic education portray this grim situation in spite of the massive fiscal and legislative attempts to transform the sector: the erstwhile model C schools have continued to perform very well; the schools which were under-funded during apartheid times and did not perform well have continued to under-perform in spite of the massive post-1994 investments...These disappointing shortcomings are not confined to basic education. The higher education sector also shows that erstwhile predominantly black tertiary institutions have persistently lagged that the performance of the erstwhile predominantly white institutions, in spite of the massive fiscal investments into the erstwhile predominantly black institutions since 1994.

The Department of Education has itself acknowledged this slow pace of redress and transformation. The Department of Education commissioned a report on the progress of transformation ten years after 1994. The report entitled *An Assessment of ten years of education and training in South Africa* makes the following conclusion (2004: 14-15):

Despite the massive inputs directed towards education and training, including a substantial increase in the annual investment in textbooks and substantial increases in the number of young people and adults across the system who were able to access and participate in learning activities, challenges persisted. Inequality was still a problem faced within the system and in society, and the poor still experienced an unacceptably low quality of education service delivery. These people also suffered the greatest disadvantages in terms of social and economic opportunities at school, and after leaving the system, in life and the world of work.

Teffo (2009: 38) attributes this disappointing phenomenon to the psychological damage of the consciousness of black South Africans caused by the apartheid regime.

The apartheid regime created a condition of sustained poverty in which most South Africans lived. This poverty was physical as well as psychological. The physical features took the form of over-crowded classrooms, over-crowded housing, unemployment, and poor health facilities. The psychological features took the form of low self-esteem, low esteem of one's own culture, and disrespect of one's own traditional norms. The physical features of this condition of sustained poverty are being addressed through the fiscal year-on-year investments... [but] ...for the psychological features to be addressed, an Afro-centric approach to education is needed.

Similarly, Seepe and Lebakeng (1998), Ramose (2002) and Lebakeng (2004) argue that the changes which have been made have not addressed the root causes of the problem. They

explain that in many of the tertiary institutions the changes have involved merely transforming the racial composition of management, academics and students in the institutions and leaving intact the pedagogical and epistemological structures which had been in existence since the apartheid era. Hence, they together with Alatas (1972; 1974) trace the poor performance rate of black students to alienation and argue that black students are made to feel inferior through the Western epistemologies which dominate the pedagogies in the educational institutions. They therefore conclude that by inscribing indigenous knowledge into the epistemologies and pedagogies the problem of alienation will be solved and black students will begin to participate fully in the learning process.

Similar statements have been made by Adesina (2006), Agrawal (2002) and Mafeje (2002). Many African thinkers have also stressed the need for educational institutions to be transformed to reflect the needs of Black Africans. Es'kia Mphahlele, Robert Sobukwe, Bantu Biko, Wally Serote, Herbert Vilakazi, Bernard Magubane, Mogobe Ramose, Pitika Ntuli, Malekgapuru Makgoba, Nokulunga Mkabela, Mirriam Tlali, Zakes Mda, Sam Raditlhalo, Siphon Seepe, Mogomme Masoga, Kenneth Payle, Obakeng Ntsoane immediately come to mind. By insisting on the indigenisation of knowledge and its institutional foundations, these scholars are by implication also arguing that Western epistemology is not the only valid system of rationalisation.

## AIM

This paper agrees with the afore-mentioned views that the root cause of the problem of the slow transformation in the educational sector is the inability of the Department of Education to overhaul the epistemology of education. This paper however takes a radical stand in relation to the afore-mentioned references and argues from a position of natural justice that as black South Africans are the majority in the country it is their world-view which must dominate the intellectual landscape of the nation. Hence, this paper argues that it is imperative that indigenous African epistemology must be inscribed into the core of education.

## INSTITUTIONAL ADVANCES

### **Cabinet indigenous Knowledge strategy**

In line with the redress and transformation principles of the South African constitution, the South African government has initiated measures aimed at revitalising indigenous culture. One of these measures is the indigenous knowledge policy formulated in November 2004 which aims ‘to recognize, affirm, develop, promote and protect indigenous knowledge systems in South Africa’ (Department of Science and Technology, 2004: 36). The government regards its Indigenous Knowledge Policy as one of its critical activities in the sense that through this policy the government is able to affirm the country’s African cultural values in the face of globalisation. This initiative by the central government is of immense significance because it has created the necessary legitimacy for indigenous knowledge systems to be institutionalised.

### **Department of Science and Technology (DST)**

The Department of Science and Technology was mandated by the government to implement the Indigenous Knowledge Policy. The Department of Science and Technology has established an indigenous knowledge systems unit called National Indigenous Knowledge Systems Organisation (NIKSO) within the department to spearhead the implementation of the national Indigenous Knowledge Policy. Since 2006, NIKSO has been successful directly in setting up structures to help manage existing indigenous knowledge resource centres and indirectly by giving grants-in-aid to organisations already managing such centres. For instance, NIKSO has been organising forums annually for indigenous health practitioners to organise themselves so that in the future they could establish a national governing body which would provide accreditation for individual indigenous health practitioners. NIKSO has also been providing grants-in-aid to science and humanities faculties in many of the country’s universities to assist them in their indigenous knowledge generation strategies.

### **National Research Foundation (NRF)**

The National Research Foundation (NRF) is a unit of DST. The main task of the NRF is

promotion and management of research. Since 2006, the NRF has provided research grants to individuals —undergraduate students, postgraduate students, academics, indigenous health practitioners —and organisations for research into indigenous knowledge systems. Since 2006, the NRF in close collaboration with DST has also since been working with the Universities of North West, Limpopo and Venda for the establishment of a centre of excellence for indigenous knowledge studies in those three universities in order to mainstream indigenous knowledge systems in the curriculum of those universities.

### **University of the North/University of Limpopo Spring Lectures Conference**

For the past thirty years, the Faculty of Humanities of the University of Limpopo (previously, University of the North) has been organising an annual conference, called Spring Lectures, on topics of national and international significance. This is a free-entry conference which provides a platform for administrative staff members, postgraduate students, academic staff members, and the public at large to express their ideas freely on the topics under discussion. This conference has over the years attracted some of the intellectual luminaries in this country and beyond and has created an opportunity for people to introspect on their own assumptions and to interrogate issues of national and international significance. It was at one of these Spring Lectures that the icon of the social sciences and humanities, the late Professor Archibald Boyce Mafeje, memorably declared that the raging debates of proving that African civilisation is a stepchild of neither Islam nor Western culture has finally been settled. He was referring to the preoccupation with disproving the idea that, prior to the coming of Arabs and Europeans to Africa, Africa was just a barren territory.

### **Proliferation of indigenous knowledge publications**

All these achievements have created a favourable environment for a fresh assessment of the value of indigenous knowledge systems. This has led to the establishment of journals specialising in indigenous knowledge systems. One such journal is *Indilinga: African journal of indigenous knowledge systems*; *Calabash: Indigenous studies journal* is another. These journals provide space for critical and rigorous engagement with indigenous knowledge on issues such as epistemology, methodology and ontology.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

In spite of these important achievements in the effort to mainstream indigenous knowledge systems, the consensus of opinion among intellectuals, scholars and key stakeholders is that the pace of main-streaming indigenous knowledge systems into the curriculum is still painfully slow. This is due to the fact that many of the academic research projects and practical developmental activities on indigenous knowledge systems are not co-ordinated. This paper therefore makes the following recommendations for the national co-ordination of indigenous knowledge systems projects and activities:

### **Co-ordinated financing of indigenous knowledge systems Academic research projects and practical developmental activities**

Presently, these projects and activities are funded by different organisations: academic research projects are funded by the NRF, and practical development activities are funded by small-scale industries enterprises fund. As a result, many of the academic research projects do not progress into practical development activities for poverty alleviation and sustainable development; while the practical development activities also do not benefit from the findings and recommendations of the academic researches. By merging all the funding agencies into one main organisation, indigenous knowledge systems academic researchers and entrepreneurs would be pooled together to work together.

### **Co-ordinated check of government departments and educational institutions for indigenous knowledge incorporation compliance**

As already mentioned, the South African government has in place a national indigenous knowledge systems policy. This national policy requires that all government departments and all government funded institutions must also formulate their own indigenous knowledge systems policies and set up goals for the implementation of their policies. Presently, it is NIKSO which is mainly responsible for ensuring that all government departments and government-funded institutions have in place their own indigenous knowledge systems strategies. But owing to the

fact that NIKSO is only a unit within DST, it does not have the statutory authority to force government departments and government-funded institutions to set up their indigenous knowledge systems strategies. A full-fledged governmental body with full statutory authority is therefore required to audit government departments and government-funded institutions to ensure that they comply with government policy on the setting up and implementation of goals for mainstreaming indigenous knowledge systems.

### **Re-positioning of universities**

Many of South Africa's universities envision themselves as African universities. For instance, the vision of the University of Limpopo is "to be a leading African university, epitomising excellence and global competitiveness, addressing the needs of rural communities through innovative ideas" and its mission is "a world-class African university which responds to education, research and community development needs through partnerships and knowledge generation continuing a long tradition of empowerment" (University of Limpopo Orientation Booklet 2011: I). The information sheet on "Governance" at the University of Johannesburg states that the University of Johannesburg "fosters ideas that are rooted in African epistemology, but also addresses the needs of South African society and the African continent as it is committed to contribute to sustainable growth and development. We continue to build a culture of inclusion, embracing South Africa's rich histories, cultures, languages, religions, genders, races, and social and economic classes" ([www.uj.ac.za](http://www.uj.ac.za)). The vision of the University of Pretoria is "to be a leader in higher education that is recognised internationally for academic excellence, with a focus on quality; a university that is known for international competitiveness and local relevance through continuous innovation; the university of choice for students, staff, employers of graduates and those requiring research solutions; a university with an inclusive and enabling, value-driven organisational culture that provides an intellectual home for the rich diversity of South African academic talent; and the premier university in South Africa that acknowledges its prominent role in Africa, is a symbol of national aspiration and hope, reconciliation and pride, and is committed to discharging its social responsibilities" ([www.up.ac.za](http://www.up.ac.za)). The vision of the University of KwaZulu-Natal is "to be the premier university of African scholarship" ([www.ukzn.ac.za](http://www.ukzn.ac.za)). The vision of UNISA is "towards the African university in the service of humanity" ([www.unisa.ac.za](http://www.unisa.ac.za)).

However, the present course offerings and research priorities of these universities do not differ much from those of universities elsewhere in Europe and America. The practical activities of these universities therefore suggest that they have not made much progress to turn their vision as African universities into reality. This has serious implications for the relevance of the universities. If the universities in South Africa are to respond to the needs of their communities, which are rural in many cases, it is imperative that they set up strategic goals to identify themselves as institutions promoting learning research in indigenous knowledge systems.

## CONCLUSION

If education in South Africa is to be relevant it must speak to the most pressing dilemmas facing the country, sub-region, and the continent. Implicit in this assertion is the position that there should be no tensions among these core imperatives of national relevance and regional or global necessities. Failure to do this would mean that the condition of de-contextualised knowledge remains unchanged in post-colonial apartheid South Africa from what it was during colonial and apartheid eras. In that respect, the call to inscribe indigenous knowledge in education is not just a theoretical academic exercise; it is based on the painful lessons of centuries of colonialism's efforts to methodically eradicate indigenous African ways of seeing, being, and interaction from the consciousness of Africans. Any viable transformation of educational institutions in South Africa in particular and in Africa in general should take the African experience in its totality as an inescapable point of departure for the critique and construction of new knowledge and praxis.

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# MODERNISING AFRICA'S CULTURAL ARTEFACTS

By

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&

D MUSINGUZI

## ABSTRACT

Cultural artefacts are the cultural heritage treasures upon which most societies derive their unique cultural identities and pride and therefore need to be protected and safeguarded from the threat of globalisation. The dilemma facing the stakeholders of cultural artefacts is that in order to protect and safeguard these artefacts some scientific technologies sometimes have to be used which invariably modify the originality of the artefacts. This paper discusses the salient arguments for and against modernising Africa's artefacts and concludes that both arguments are well balanced so no blanket policy for or against modernisation must be made and for that reason the paper recommends that each case for modernisation needs to be considered on its own merits.

## BACKGROUND

Cultural artefacts are vital components of a community's cultural property. Sheng (2010: 57) describes cultural artefacts as "cultural property that is an irreplaceable expression of, and testimony to, the cultural identity of a nation, people or group." Cultural artefacts can be categorised as intangible and tangible artefacts. Intangible artefacts are abstract artefacts such as verbal art and rituals (Blake, 2000; UNESCO, 2006). Tangible artefacts are physical artefacts such as plastic art and monuments.

According to the World Bank (2009; cited in Werna, 2009) culture is a vital resource for economic development. Werna (2009: 1) explains that communities that manage and preserve their cultural artefacts are in a unique position to reap economic gains from them: "cultural heritage creates employment, reduces poverty, stimulates enterprise development, fosters private investment and generates resources for environmental and cultural conservation".

However, this idea of the cultural and economic significance of artefacts is sometimes

contradicted by the need for globalisation. Black (1966) and Inglehart & Baker (2000) argue that many developing countries are urged by donor nations to abandon their traditional procedures and practices and to adopt Western processes in order to develop. In that respect, Latham (2000) argues that in this twenty-first century there is hardly any country or society which has managed to escape from the influence of globalisation.

## AIM

The conflicting needs for the preservation of cultural heritage and globalisation pose a challenge to custodians and managers of cultural artefacts. Due to the incursion of globalisation, many artefacts are becoming modernised and their unique identity is steadily getting lost. Out of the need for sustainable economic development, there is intense pressure in many emerging countries to throw away all traditional practices and procedures and adopt Western culture (Krishnan, 2003). The purpose of this paper is to analyse the arguments for and against modernising cultural artefacts and to suggest which one is more likely to promote sustainable economic development for societies and countries.

## ARGUMENTS FOR MODERNISING ARTEFACTS

One argument for modernising cultural artefacts is the need for proper preservation. Inglehart and Baker (2000) argue that it is sometimes necessary to use modern chemicals rather than traditional or indigenous devices to preserve artefacts. The availability and cost of modern chemicals are also a factor. For instance, it is relatively cheaper to use modern chemicals than traditional and indigenous preservation devices. Also, many local governments are strict in enforcing laws and by-laws protecting wild life so many craftsmen and women now find it difficult to obtain the plants that are used in preparation of the traditional and indigenous preservation devices.

A second argument concerns the commercialisation of artefacts. People who derive their livelihoods from making and selling artefacts are often faced with this challenge. If they stick to the traditional and indigenous methods of producing artefacts, they are not likely to produce many. But if they use modern methods, they would produce far more and make more money (Mbaiwa, 2004). Hence, many local craftsmen and women find themselves with no other

options but to use modern methods in order to earn a livelihood. Figure 1 shows baskets that are attractively coloured from modern colouring materials and not from traditional paints from plant extracts.

Figure 1

‘Semi-modernised’ artefacts from Africa (Source: Novellino and Ertu, 2006)



Libya



Ethiopia



Kenya



South Africa



Table 1

Mats and baskets from Pondoland in the Eastern Cape, South Africa, and their isi-Xhosa names

English	isiMpondo (isi-Xhosa dialect)
Sitting mat	<i>ikhuko or icantsi</i>
Sleeping mat	<i>ikhuko</i>
Food mat	<i>isithebe</i>
Collecting basket	<i>iingceke</i>

Source: Kepe (2003)

A third argument concerns the need to satisfy the interests of tourists. Many local craftsmen and women produce artefacts to sell to tourists. Tourists are increasingly becoming a major market for artefacts. Wicks et al (2004: 3) attest to this by stating that “souvenirs have been central to the tourist experience. In general travellers want to have a tangible object to take home with them that represents the places they have been, the things they have seen, and the memories they have made.” Hume (2009) argues that the economic potential of tourists for the local craftsmen and women who produce artefacts is so huge that many local craftsmen and women modify the traditional specifications in order to accommodate the needs of tourists. For example, tourists are attracted to artefacts that can easily fit into their travel bags. As a result, many local craftsmen and women reduce the size and weight of artefacts to meet the travel demands of tourists. As tourists buy more and more of these artefacts, the craftsmen and women make more money for themselves, their families and their communities. This attracts more people in the community into the trade and eventually sustainable development is generated. Inglehart and Baker (2000) argue that as the tourists buy more and more artefacts they become knowledgeable about the traditional designs of the artefacts and pay frequent visits in order to learn more about the cultures that have produced the artefacts. This leads to a ‘win-win’ situation in which tourism fosters and promotes traditional artefacts and the artefacts in turn encourage tourists to take interest in the preservation of traditional cultures.

A fourth argument concerns the idea that artefacts are regarded as a link between the past, the present and the future. Pahl (2004) argues that artefacts are vivid representations of narratives that tell the past and the present of communities and because all nations and societies have been influenced by globalisation artefacts can also be used to tell the stories of how nations and societies have adapted well to globalisation.

## ARGUMENTS AGAINST MODERNISING ARTEFACTS

One argument against modernising artefacts relates to the problem of fusion or hybridity. An artefact by definition is a cultural item that has certain unique qualities that are associated with the locality or community from which it comes. Swanson and Timothy (2012) argue that when artefacts are modified for the purposes of globalisation, they lose their uniqueness and also their attachment to their locality or community and become stereotypes.

A second argument against globalisation of artefacts relates to the destructive effects of globalisation on local ingenuity. Some of the destructive effects of globalisation on local ingenuity are evident among the Nyonya/Peranakan people in Asia. Their traditional costume is called *baju panjang*. According to Kim (2008: 165) the traditional *baju panjang* is “shapely, figure-hugging attire with intricate embroidery at the neckline, sleeves and hem.” Doing the embroidery alone is a delicate task so it takes a long time to finish one costume. As a result of globalisation, the young Nyanyas/Peranakan have abandoned this traditional costume with the result that the traditional cloth-making industry is now in decline.

A third argument against globalisation of artefacts relates to the use modern chemicals on artefacts. Each and every place has its own unique environmental habitat which has enabled it to survive over the centuries. These habitats produce their own chemicals which local craftsmen and women use for their artefacts. When a foreign chemical is introduced, it brings in foreign vapours which damage the eco-systems of the habitat. For instance, modern chemicals applied to artefacts of wool, leather and feathers emit corrosive sulphur compounds and modern chemicals applied to wooden artefacts emit volatile organic acids that can damage metals (The Henry Ford, 2010). With time, these foreign gases destroy the flora and fauna of the local habitat.

A fourth argument against globalisation of artefacts is driven by personal and cultural intention that can be termed as productive intention. This intention is tied to the maker and the cultural context in which artefacts are made and conceptualised. The characteristic of the intention should be preserved in a cultural context. Thus, artefacts have a dependence condition (DEP) on the intentions. Hilpinen (1992: 65) argues that “an artefact is the product of a producer’s intention to make an object of certain kind”. As such, artefacts are to be regarded as “creations of the mind” (Thomasson, 2007: 52) and accorded the necessary copyright protection. Hence, artefacts need to be accorded copyright protection so that their creators and the communities would derive maximum benefits from them.

Figure 2  
Samples of 'unmodernised' artefacts from various parts of the globe  
(Source: Novellino and Ertu, 2006)



Table 2

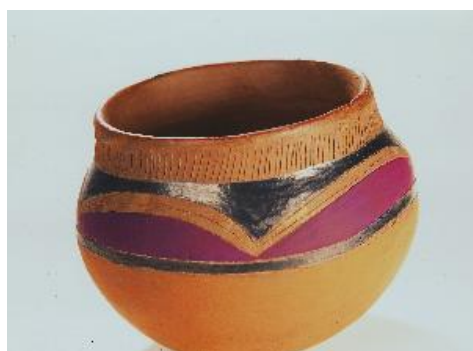
Sources of “imizi”, property regime and number of collectors from Pondoland, South Africa

Location	Property regime	Collectors	Age
		(n=49) %	
Along river/stream	Communal	76%	37
Home (gardens)	Private	14%	7
River/stream & Home (gardens)	Communal & Private	10%	5
<b>Total</b>		<b>100%</b>	<b>49</b>

Adopted from Makhado & Kepe (2006)

Figure 3

Traditional pot (Isepedi: moeta or nkgo) for Pedi people in Limpopo, South Africa  
(Source: Israel Kibirige, 2010)



Another example of a traditional artefact that needs copyright protection is *Moeta* or *Nkgo* which is used by the Pedi and the Venda people in Limpopo as a pot.



## CONCLUSION

Arguments for and against modernising Africa's artefacts present a dilemma for the custodians of cultural heritage resources because the benefits and hazards for each scenario are well balanced. Both scenarios can lead to the sustainable development of communities and can also lead to the destruction of the local habitat and the impoverishment of communities. Faced with this dilemma, this paper recommends that custodians of artefacts and policy makers should carefully examine each case on its own merits and also take into consideration the future generation before making a decision on whether to modernise or not to modernise artefacts.

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# THEORY OF CHARACTERISATION IN THE AFRICAN NOVEL: A CASE OF EURO-CENTRICISM

By

SA DSEAGU

## ABSTRACT

The paper discusses the well-known theory of characters as being either flat or round and argues on the basis of literary evidence that the theory is based on the principle of art for art's sake and is heavily influenced by the Western concept of individualism. The paper further argues that theory is discredited by many European critics. The paper concludes that its widespread use in Africa for the assessment of characters in African literature poses a danger to the proper understanding of African literature because African literature is influenced by the indigenous African principles of functionalism of literature and communalism of characters; principles which are in direct contrast to the Western principles of art for art's sake and individualism upon which the theory of flat and round characters is based.

## INTRODUCTION

One theory of characterisation that almost every teacher of literature knows is Forster's (1974: 46; first published, 1927) categorisation of characters in fiction into flat and round characters.

We may divide characters into flat and round. Flat characters were called "humours" in the seventeenth century, and are sometimes called types, and sometimes caricatures. In their purest form, they are constructed round a single idea or quality...We must admit that flat [characters] are not in themselves as big achievements as round ones...[because they are] apt to be a bore. A round character has the incalculability of life about it.

This theory propounded close to one hundred years ago is probably taught in every secondary education class and every tertiary education lecture on the art-form of the novel in almost all corners of sub-Saharan Africa.

As the theory is so very well-known and it is so extensively applied in the analysis of texts, many teachers and students of the novel assume that it is a theory that is globally valid. If these teachers and students of the novel were to examine the theory closely, they would probably find that the statement applies well to only modern avant-garde novels belonging to the 1875-1920 era.

EM Forster was one of those modern avant-garde writers. He belonged to an exclusive circle of English writers known as the Bloomsbury Circle. Virginia Woolf, well known for her stream of consciousness novels, was also a member. EM Forster, Virginia Woolf and other members of the Bloomsbury Circle shared a common interest with other avant-garde writers in Europe and America in the sense that they all believed in principle of *l'art pour l'art* (art for art's sake) and dedicated themselves to the propagation of modernist literature.

## AIM

The aim of this paper is to adduce background information and literary evidence from contemporary records to argue that Forster's theory of characterisation is only valid when it is applied in the context of avant-garde modernist writing and also to argue that the theory, as a global theory that applies to all works, has been consistently refuted by critics even from the very first time that it was stated.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### **Definition of modern avant-garde writing**

*Wikipedia encyclopaedia* defines modern avant-garde writing — or modernist writing, for short — as follows:

Modernist writing is a literary style that emerged after the First World War. Modernistic literature tends to revolve around the themes of individualism [and the] mistrust of institutions (government, religion). Modernism as a literary movement reached its height in Europe between 1900 and the middle 1920's. The Modernist emphasis on a radical individualism can be seen in the many literary manifestos issued by various groups within the movement. At this point, people began to doubt everything they were supposed to believe in surrounding ideas associated with the government, politics, religion, and everyday societal norms. Trust in higher powers and authority figures began to falter, and the inability to sort through the chaos of these mixed emotions left people disheartened, confused, and angry. This feeling of betrayal and uncertainty towards tradition influenced the writing of British authors between 1914 and 1919 stylistically as well as in form.

## Individualism

The *Wikipedia encyclopaedia* definition mentions that the main feature of this modernist writing is individualism. Witcombe (1995) while acknowledging that individualism is a fundamental aspect of modernist writing nonetheless argues that it is a phenomenon which took root in Europe as far back as the sixteenth century.

The roots of modernism lie much deeper in history than the middle of the 19th century. For historians the modern period actually begins in the sixteenth century, initiating what is called the Early Modern Period, which extends up to the 18th century. The intellectual underpinnings of modernism emerge during the Renaissance period when, through the study of the art, poetry, philosophy, and science of ancient Greece and Rome, humanists revived the notion that man, rather than God, is the measure of all things, and promoted through education ideas of citizenship and civic consciousness.

Similarly, Fox (1979: 44) identifies individualism as a phenomenon characteristic of and peculiar to Western societies.

The [Western] novel deals with the individual, it is the epic of the struggle of the individual against society, against nature, and it could only develop in a society where the balance between man and society was lost, where man was at war with his fellows or with nature. Such a society is capitalist society.

Lugowski (1990: 83) makes the same point that individualism is peculiar to Western culture and asserts that “the ability to assert oneself over and above others in the community in which one lives is not universal.”

## Art for art's sake

The *Wikipedia encyclopaedia* definition also mentions that, due to disillusionment with cultural and political traditions, many Europeans turned away from religion and politics. As they turned away from religion and politics, many of the writers turned their attention on to the philosophy of art for art's sake. The philosophy of art for art's sake originated from France and was popularised by the French writer, Théophile Pierre Gautier. The notion of *l'art pour l'art* (art for art's sake) was already in existence in France by the beginning of the nineteenth century but it was

Théophile Pierre Gautier who gave it a definition. In his Preface to his *Mademoiselle de Maupin* (1835) he defined the term as “art that need not bear any deep meaning or be for any purpose other than its own beauty in order to be important”. This statement became an instant reference-point throughout Europe and the theory of *l’art pour l’art* (art for art’s sake) was born.

Barth (1984) and Keep, Laughlin & Parmar (2000) argue that there is a direct link between the theory of art for art’s sake and many modernist avant-garde writings. For instance, Barth (1984: 68) identifies the complex styles and techniques of many modernist novels with the theory of art for art’s sake which and states that these novels have no “deep meaning or purpose other than to display beauty”. Similarly, Keep, Laughlin & Parmar (2000) argue that the complex styles and techniques of modernist writing are indications that the avant-garde writers “have abandoned the social world in favour of narcissistic interest in language and its processes.”

## CONTEMPORARY EVIDENCE

### **Published statements by modern avant-garde writers advocating modernist techniques**

Many of the modern avant-garde writers were aware that their contemporary reading public was not conversant with their modernist styles, techniques and themes. They therefore undertook to explain their aims in manifestoes. In France, this practice was so common that almost all the writers published their manifestoes. Henry James, the American avant-garde novelist, was the first of the English-language writers to publish a manifesto on his intentions in 1884.

There are bad novels and good novels, as there are bad pictures and good pictures; but that is the only distinction in which I see any meaning, and I can as little imagine speaking of a novel of character as I can imagine speaking of a picture of character. When one says picture, one says of character, when one says novel, one says of incident, and the terms may be transposed. What is character but the determination of incident? What is incident but the illustration of character? What is a picture or a novel that is not of character? What else do we seek in it and find in it?

In that manifesto, he made it clear that his intention was to focus on psychologically dense and exquisitely presented characters. He used the term ‘portrait’ for this type of character and justified his sole interest in this type of character by asking the rhetorical questions: ‘What is

character but the determination of incident? What is incident but the illustration of character? What is a picture or a novel that is not of character? What else do we seek in it and find in it?' The term 'portrait' became famous and several novels including Joyce's *The portrait of the artist as a young man* (1916) were published with similar titles.

Virginia Woolf, for her part, aimed for novels which would reflect the complex workings of the mind. She too explained her intentions in a 1919 manifesto published in a literary journal.

The mediocrity of most novels seems to arise from a conviction on the part of the writer that unless his plot provides scenes of tragedy, comedy, and excitement, an air of probability so impeccable that if all his figures were to come to life they would find themselves dressed down to the last button in the fashion of the hour, he has failed in his duty to the public. Is it not possible that the accent falls a little differently, that the moment of importance came before or after, that, if one were free and could set down what one chose, there would be no plot, little probability, and a vague general confusion in which the clear-cut features of the tragic, the comic, the passionate, and the lyrical were dissolved beyond the possibility of separate recognition? The mind, exposed to the ordinary course of life, receives upon its surface a myriad impressions--trivial, fantastic, evanescent, or engraved with the sharpness of steel. From all sides they come, an incessant shower of innumerable atoms, composing in their sum what we might venture to call life itself; and to figure further as the semi-transparent envelope, or luminous halo, surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end. It is not perhaps the chief task of the novelist to convey this incessantly varying spirit with whatever stress or sudden deviation it may display, and as little admixture of the alien and external as possible? We are not pleading merely for courage and sincerity; but suggesting that the proper stuff for fiction is a little other than custom would have us believe it.

EM Forster aimed for extended symbols which would replace the conventional plot and characters of a novel. He explained his views in a series of public lectures to a distinguished audience at the University of Cambridge and these lectures were later published under the title *Aspects of the novel and related writings*. It was in the course of these public lectures that he made the statement on flat and round characters.

[A sophisticated novelist does not really need a plot because it is based on] curiosity [which] is one of the lowest of the human faculties...Now we must consider something which springs mainly out of plot, and to which the characters and any other element present also contribute. For this new aspect there appears to be no literary word—indeed the more the arts develop the more they depend on

each other for definition. We will borrow from painting first and call it the pattern. Later we will borrow from music and call it rhythm (p. 102).

## THE MODERNIST CONTEXT OF FORSTER'S THEORY OF FLAT AND ROUND CHARACTERS

Although all these modern avant-garde novelists had their own different ideas on the form of the modernist novel, they all shared a common aim of ensuring that the individual was the sole focus of the novel. Although each one of them described this aim differently, they all believed that the modernist novel should focus solely on the detailed and minute activities of characters. To this focus of attention, Henry James gave the term 'a portrait' because he viewed the modernist novel as a painting; to Virginia Woolf it was a 'a stream of consciousness' because she viewed the modernist novel as photographic representation of the human brain; and, to EM Forster it was 'a round psychological character' because he viewed the modernist novel, like Henry James, as a painting.

As already mentioned, this fascination with the detailed and minute activities of characters over and above social concerns displaced by these avant-garde modernist writers is a reflection of their obsession with individualism. Another remarkable feature of these novels of these writers is that very few of them display any 'deep social'. This neglect of social concern in favour of exquisitely described characters was deliberate on the part of the writers; it indicated that they subscribed to the theory of art for art's sake which demanded that literature should divorce itself from society: 'art need not bear any deep meaning or be for any purpose other than its own beauty in order to be important'.



As already mentioned, the theory of art for art's sake originated from France and many French novels were influenced by it. *Madame Bovary* (1856), a novel by Gustave Flaubert, is generally regarded as one of the most exquisitely drawn portraits of a character. Lubbock (1968: 60) praises its stylistic excellence in these terms: 'it is perpetually the novel of all novels; there is no further for [novelistic style] to go.' But Lubbock is inclined to ponder about the significance of this exquisitely presented portrait of a character that fills the entire novel: 'The book is the portrait of a foolish woman, romantically inclined, in small and prosaic conditions. But *why* is she there (p.78)?' Nowhere in the novel does Gustave Flaubert indicate the significance or 'deep social' meaning of this exquisitely presented character.

The question posed by Lubbock is significant because it applies not just to the central character of *Madame Bovary* but also to almost all the other modern avant-garde novels which stress that a novel should be concerned with portrait/round characters only and nothing else. In particular, the same question can be asked about what the portrait characters favoured by Henry James, about what the stream of consciousness characters favoured by Virginia Woolf and about what the round characters favoured by EM Forster signify. Like Gustave Flaubert, neither Henry James nor Virginia Woolf nor EM Forster does give any social or moral significance to their exquisitely presented characters. They do not because they assume that the reader will know and understand that they subscribe to the philosophy of Théophile Pierre Gautier that 'art need not bear any deep meaning or be for any purpose other than its own beauty'.

## EUROPEAN OBJECTIONS TO THE THEORY OF FLAT AND ROUND CHARACTERS

FR Leavis, an influential academic figure at the University of Cambridge at the time that modernist writing was in vogue, attended the public lectures given by EM Forster at which he made the statement on flat and round characters. He can therefore be regarded as a reliable first-hand listener of the lectures. He ridiculed the statement on flat and round characters in these terms:

The resultant book [of the public lectures] at once became a nuisance: all the girls' school English mistresses in England seized on the distinction between flat and round characters.

One other notable European literary critic who has refuted this theory of flat and round characters is Roland Barthes. In his *Writing degree zero and elements of semiology* (1967), Barthes cautions against using narrow European sentiments as global standards for assessing the novel. He develops this argument further in his *S/Z* (1974) where he declares that “what is obsolescent in today’s novel is not the novelistic, it is the character (p. 95).”

Todorov (1977) is another notable European critic who has refuted this theory of flat and round characters. Todorov does not specifically direct his attack to Forster’s theory; he rather attacks the ‘portrait’ theory developed by Henry James in 1884 because that theory preceded Forster’s theory and most critics regard Forster’s theory as a mere elaboration upon Henry James’s theory. Hence, most critics assume that by attacking Henry James’s theory, Todorov is also invariably attacking EM Forster’s theory. Todorov (1977: 66) quotes James’s 1884 manifesto extensively before launching his attack.

“What is character but the determination of incident? What is incident but the illustration of character? What is either a picture or a novel that is *not* of character? What else do we seek in it and find in it?” These questions occur in a famous essay by Henry James, *The Art of fiction* (1884). We rarely have occasion to observe so pure a case of egocentricity presenting itself as universality. Though James’s theoretical ideal may have been a narrative in which everything is subservient to the psychology of the characters, it is difficult to ignore a whole tendency in literature, in which the actions are not there to “illustrate” character but in which, on the contrary, the characters are subservient to the action; where, moreover, the word “character” signifies something altogether different from psychological coherence or the description of idiosyncrasy. This tendency, of which the *Odyssey*, the *Decameron*, the *Arabian nights*, and *The Saragossa manuscript* are among the most famous examples, can be considered as a limit-case of literary *a-psychologism*.

The references cited by Todorov are worth commenting on. The *Odyssey* is an ancient Greek text, the *Decameron* is an early Italian Renaissance text, the *Arabian nights* is an ancient Arabian text, and the *Saragossa manuscript* is an ancient Franco-German text. Each one of these texts is universally treasured intrinsically as a classic text of literature and also extrinsically as an example of the sophisticated writing of the ancient world. The point which Todorov is making in citing these references is that all the characters in all these works are what EM Forster describes as ‘flat’ characters and by conclusion the characters in these works are ‘boring’ and therefore the works which contain

these characters are sub-standard. Todorov concludes his argument by stating that it is 'egocentricity presenting itself as universality' for any Western critic to regard these classics as sub-standard.

Other European critics have also denounced the use of the theory of portrait/flat and round characters as a global theory. Among these critics are Chatman (1978), Genette (1980) and Bal (1985). Rimmon-Kenan (1991) is one of the latest critics to have denounced this theory. He argues that from a global historical perspective and states characters have always been flat rather than round or portrait. He cites Aristotle (384 BC- 322 BC) as one of the earliest critics to have stressed the need for characters to be flat.

## PERSISTENCE OF FLAT AND ROUND THEORY IN AFRICA

These European refutations of the theory of flat and round characters have been in the public domain for a long time and they, rather than Forster theory, dominate thinking on the subject of characterisation in many European and American universities. In Africa, however, it is the theory of Forster that is dominant. The following statements in academic dissertations, academic journal publications and books attest to its widespread influence:

- EM Forster approximates the length of a novel to above 50 000 words (Mawela, 1977: 46).
- It should be realised that according to me, character depiction in Venda novels as well as in those of other Black languages in South-Eastern Zone, is rather a foreign creation which originates in European literature. This is perhaps the reason why very few of the authors in Luvenda and those of other writers of novels in South African Black Languages have so far not succeeded fully in presenting characters which are worthy of the name (Makhado, 1980: 26-27).
- Major characters may further be divided into flat and round characters. Flat characters centre on a single idea. These are simple characters who do not perform any surprising actions. They are easily recognised by readers because of their simplicity. Round characters on the other hand are characters who show growth and complexity in their actions. Round characters focus on different ideas and are capable of performing surprising actions. Their motivations are more

realistic and believable (Mathye, 2003: 57).

- Chakaipa also uses type characters to denigrate African traditional religion and belief systems. A type character is one who stands as a representative of a particular class, ideology or group of people (Mawere, 2011: 7).
- Perhaps the most striking difference the reader of African fiction immediately notices is the often limited importance of characterization. From a Western point of view, many African novels are almost totally devoid of characterization—especially character introspection and character development (Larson, 1978: 17).

#### HARMFUL EFFECT OF THEORY ON PROPER STUDY OF AFRICAN LITERATURE

It is tempting to agree with Kane (1966: 61) and attribute this widespread influence in Africa of a theory that is discredited in many European and American universities to the sheer power of Western pedagogy.

The problem would be less important if the African public were not reduced to a state of strict subordination and deprived of all autonomy, as European tastes are forced on it.

Whatever the cause of the persistence of this discredited theory in Africa, it poses harm to the proper analysis and understanding of African literature because it diverts attention away from the indigenous theories which shape the literature. Many of these indigenous African theories have been in the public domain for a long time but have not gained much attention. Some of these indigenous African theories which relate to characterisation are summarised below.

#### **The Principle of Character as an Agent Illustrating an Idea**

This principle is in fact not indigenous to Africa; it is also a principle that guides all the ancient literatures. As already mentioned, Aristotle's *Poetics* attests to this fact. Kunene (1986: 1022 ) explains how this principle is realised not only in the African novel but also in all other African arts.

It is significant that the modern African-language writer, like his oral counterpart, almost invariably has two sets of characters: those who are villains because they deviate from what is defined as behaviours required to ensure the continued well-being of society, and those who are considered to be heroes because their behaviour is a constant reinforcement of the society's ethos.

### **The principle of characters as an affirmation of communal culture**

This is one of the core principles guiding African literature. Contrary to the Western notion that individualism is the cornerstone of life, indigenous African culture frowns upon individualism and upholds communalism. Kunene (1986: 1021) explains the sociological background to this principle.

The oral traditional verbal art developed its shape in the course of many centuries in the midst of pre-urban, pre-industrial society, human groups that were comparatively small and therefore highly vulnerable, not only to human enemies, but also to the caprices of nature and especially to the vagaries of the climate. Strong group consciousness — that is, national unity, which for some reason is called “tribal” when dealing with Africa — was felt and understood to be quite essential if the group was to survive. Tribal oral art, therefore, is constantly directed towards the clear definition of moral-social issues, with a view to bolstering solidarity among all members of the community.

This is realised in the African novel through what Nzamane (1991: 66-67) calls ‘no s/heroes’.

In writing about revolutionary novels, especially about the novel since Soweto, it is equally amazing that Shava should propound bourgeois liberal techniques, which espouse the epistemology of the individual over the collective ethic that marks the new form of the African novel in South Africa...There are no s/heroes, in the classical sense, in these novels. Although we meet flesh and blood characters with real desires and distinctive eccentricities, their individualism is submerged beneath, or shines through, the collective predicament. The community as a whole is the s/hero of these novels. Collective concerns triumph over purely personal aspirations. Thus the social environment itself, in so far as it determines our being and consciousness, becomes the central protagonist in the unfolding events.

### **CONCLUSION**

This analysis of Forster's theory of ‘flat’ and ‘round’ characters has shown that the theory is applied mainly to modernist writing and that many European critics have cautioned that it should not be

regarded as a global theory. The paper recommends that African critics, scholars and teachers of the African novel in particular and African literature in general should avoid using the theory as a yardstick for assessment of African literature because the principles and assumptions behind the theory are different from and contradictory to the principles and assumptions behind the oral and written African literatures.

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# THE ROLE OF INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS IN REVITALISING AGRICULTURE IN AFRICA

By

K-C SEGAGE

## ABSTRACT

Agriculture in Africa provides livelihoods for about 60 per cent of the continent's active labour force and contributes 17 per cent of the continent's total gross domestic product yet many African governments devote less than 1 per cent of their budgets to it. Total fertilizer input in sub-Saharan Africa is just 9 kilogrammes per hectare, compared with 100 kg in South Asia, 135 in East and Southeast Asia, 73 in Latin America and 206 in the industrialized countries. On average, cereal yields in Africa reached just 1,230 kg per hectare in 2001, compared with 3,090 kg in Asia, 3,040 kg in Latin America and 5,470 kg in the Europe. Food production in Africa has therefore not kept pace with Africa's increasing population with the result that Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) has classified one-third of Africa's population to be chronically hungry. This grave situation calls for urgent action. This paper suggests some practical measures to make Africa achieve increased and sustainable agricultural production.

## BACKGROUND

Agriculture is one of the most vibrant sectors of the economies of most African countries. It is also practised by virtually all segments of the population: children, men, women, rural people, urban people, young people, old people, poor people, rich people, peasant farmers, plantation farmers, subsistence farmers, and cash crop farmers). According to *Comprehensive Africa agriculture development programme* (CAADP, 2003), "agriculture still provides livelihoods for about 60 per cent of the continent's active labour force, contributes 17 per cent of Africa's total gross domestic product and accounts for 40 per cent of its foreign currency earnings."

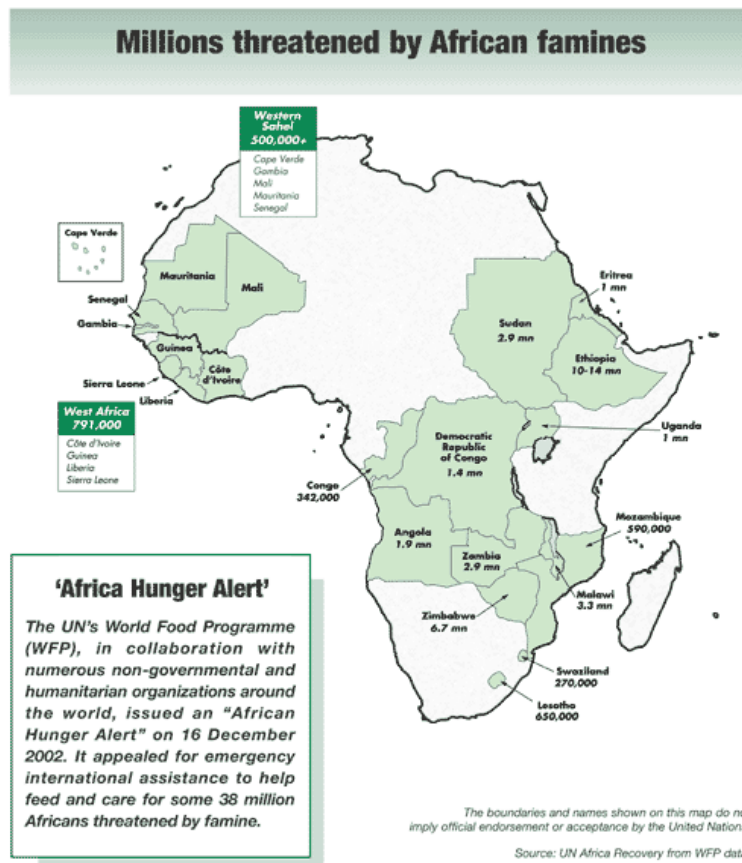
Yet in almost all African countries, the agriculture sector of the economy is not well supported by the governments. Harsch (2004: 13) explains:

Many African governments devote less than 1 per cent of their budgets to agriculture. Not only have overall donor aid levels declined, but donor priorities have simultaneously shifted away from agriculture toward other sectors. Worldwide, the



amount of aid allocated to primary agriculture declined from \$11 billion in 1990 to \$7.4 billion in 1998. The decline has been especially sharp in the case of the World Bank, which provided 39 per cent of its total lending to agriculture in 1987, but only 7 per cent in 2000 (Harsch: 13).

As a result, famine has been widespread in many African countries. Below is a map of Africa. The areas of famine in 2003 are shown in green.



The World Food Program (WFP), a division of the United Nations, described this situation in a 2003 report as follows: "As many as 38 million Africans are living under the threat of starvation. This is an unprecedented crisis, which calls for an unprecedented response (wfp.org)."

The African Union (AU) has also shown concern and has drawn up strategies for food security in the countries. Through its division of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the AU has urged African governments to raise their investments in agriculture to about 10% of their budgets.

In 2003 NEPAD created an inter-national agency called Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) to monitor agricultural development in all African countries to ensure that the agricultural development goals of the AU and NEPAD are achieved.

CAADP in conjunction with Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) released the following 2003 report on the state of agriculture in African countries:

Farmers' yields have essentially stagnated for decades. Although total output has been rising steadily — often by simply extending the land area under cultivation — this growth has barely kept pace with Africa's increasing population. Food production in particular has lagged, so that the number of chronically undernourished people increased from 173 million in 1990-92 to 200 million in 1997-99, the latest years for which accurate figures are available. Of that total, 194 million were in sub-Saharan Africa. This growth in hunger has come despite high levels of food imports — costing \$18.7 billion in 2000 alone. Some 874 million hectares of land are deemed suitable for agriculture, but 83 per cent of that area is subject to serious limitations such as poor soil fertility. About 16 per cent of Africa's soils are categorized as “low nutrient,” compared with just 4 per cent in Asia. Each year, the depletion of existing soil nutrients brings crop losses estimated at between \$1 billion and \$3 billion. These nutrients are not being replaced. Total fertilizer input in sub-Saharan Africa is just 9 kilogrammes per hectare, compared with 100 kg in South Asia, 135 in East and Southeast Asia, 73 in Latin America and 206 in the industrialized countries. One-third of sub-Saharan Africa's population is chronically hungry. On average, cereal yields in Africa reached just 1,230 kg per hectare in 2001, compared with 3,090 kg in Asia, 3,040 kg in Latin America and 5,470 kg in the European Union.

In that report CAADP calls for an integrated approach that combines much greater use of organic matter and mineral fertilizers, higher-yielding hybrid seeds, small-scale irrigation and, in general, use of low-cost and simple methods of agricultural production to replace the high level of food imports in many African countries. A summary of the CAADP recommendations is as follows:

- adopt low-cost methods to improve acreage
- adopt simple methods to improve soil fertility
- encourage more people engage in farming
- broaden the link between agricultural research stations and local farmers.

## AIM

CAADP has identified that presently there is very little two-way communication between agricultural research stations and peasant farmers and as a consequence peasant farmers do not benefit much from the agricultural research stations. As a result, the peasant farmers who produce the bulk of the food in many African communities do not have access to many of the improved varieties of crops which are found at the agricultural research stations. Hence, only about 20 per cent of crop-land in Africa is sown with improved cereal varieties. Many new varieties of maize and rice have been developed in laboratories, but many of the peasant farmers are not aware of them. CAADP therefore recommends that governments should make it a priority to improve that two-way communication between agricultural research stations and peasant farmers. The aim of this paper is to suggest some practical measures to make this two-way communication possible between agricultural research stations and peasant farmers for the sustainable development and improvement of agriculture in Africa.

## PRACTICAL MEASURES

### **Emic/etic approach to data collection**

According to Williams and Muchena (1991), an emic analysis of behaviour or phenomenon is based on internal structural or functional elements of a particular cultural system while an etic analysis is based on predetermined general concepts external to that cultural system. Williams and Muchena argue that when the emit-etic analysis is applied to agriculture in Africa, it creates a good understanding of the role and value of indigenous African methods and techniques in comparison and contrast to the role and value of Western methods and techniques in agriculture in Africa.

This emit-etic analysis can be used as a practical method to gather information about what farming methods are in use in any specific area. This information is vital because it will valuable data on a whole range of issues such as the following: accessibility and cost of indigenous inputs relative to Western inputs; adaptability of soil to indigenous inputs relative to Western inputs; and, the yield from indigenous inputs relative to Western inputs. This information will enable farmers, researchers and government to make the necessary interventions to ensure that there is increased and sustainable

agricultural production.

### **Broad-based curriculum**

A curriculum combining both the key elements of indigenous knowledge systems with an emic-etic perspective is likely to produce professionals who can manage knowledge and information systems for farmers, agricultural research stations and government. Hence, Williams and Muchena (1991: 52) argue that this scenario requires a broad-based curriculum that includes formal, non-formal and informal types of knowledge. This they term a 'confluent curriculum'.

Through both the non-formal and formal agricultural education programs in curricula, indigenous knowledge systems can contribute systematically to the study of sustainable agriculture. In-service training programs can provide opportunities for making professionals conscious of indigenous knowledge systems and of the contribution of these systems to sustainable agriculture.

According to Williams and Muchena, the elements of this confluent curriculum involve the principle of sequencing in curriculum development starting with the farmers' indigenous knowledge, and moving on to Western and other global forms of knowledge. In other words, this type of curriculum enables educators and learners to move from the familiar to the unfamiliar and from the concrete to the abstract in the process it facilitates understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the theories and practices of the indigenous as well as the Western and knowledge systems.

This strategy requires the adoption of an indigenous approach to education that involves the contextualisation of the school curriculum by integrating indigenous knowledge with other relevant and useful knowledge into formal education with agricultural education being the centre of attention.

Zinnah and Steele (1999) propose a framework to guide universities interested in integrating indigenous knowledge systems into the educational curriculum of agriculture. The framework consists of six steps. Step 1 involves informal dialogue among key actors in selected agricultural sectors and development organisations as well as indigenous knowledge specialists. The aim of this step is to assist to the key university staff and administrators to reflect on their agricultural extension programmes. The University of Limpopo has already taken this first step.

Step 2 focuses on clarifying a vision. This step involves clarifying a vision for a more responsive extension training programme and confirming the stakeholders' belief that it is needed. To develop and deliver demand-driven extension training, stakeholders (particularly the ministries of agriculture, NGOs' engaged in agricultural and rural development, and African indigenous knowledge specialists) must approach a host university and express a need for a programme to train their extension staff.

Step 3 focuses on needs assessment of agricultural extension training. In order to provide information to guide the development of a curriculum, an extension training needs assessment is carried out by the host universities in collaboration with staff from the ministry of agriculture. Both qualitative and quantitative data are collected during this phase.

Step 4 involves a workshop on the above-mentioned three steps. The workshop provides an opportunity for the stakeholders to engage in dialogue, work towards consensus on the vision for the programme, courses and their context, develop criteria for the selection and admission of students, and establish programme linkages.

Step 5 focuses on the development of the curriculum. The development of the curriculum is guided by four important criteria:

- it must deal with the pragmatic needs of agricultural extension staff, including the acquisition of knowledge and skills in communication, problem-solving, and critical-thinking on how to learn with others.
- it must be closely related to the participants actual work environment.
- it must provide a dynamic interplay between theoretical and practical components.
- it must expose participants to issues of indigenous knowledge and food security, the role of women in agriculture and the relationship between population and food production.

Step 6 focuses on establishing a strong network among institutions and agencies. This initiative places emphasis on forging strong networks among local and foreign institutions and agencies (both

public and private) that are committed to the revitalisation of agricultural extension curricula in African universities. Forging strong linkages is intended to help stakeholders to recognise an enduring and shared commitment and the need for each of them to benefit from the diverse talents, resources, experiences and perspectives within the partnership.

### **Revised attitudes to indigenous knowledge**

The dominance of foreign teachers in post-colonial education system under the auspices of western aid to education, continued to influence the process of curriculum innovations posing great challenges to the indigenisation of the African school curriculum (Lillis, 1985: 20). Lillis asserts that “as teachers, course writers, project developers, disseminators, and inspectors of schools, expatriate educationists dominated these areas of curriculum while Africans played a subordinate role”. Thus, the absence of indigenous personnel to take charge of their own curriculum reconstruction process meant continued presence of foreign assumptions about what constituted valid school knowledge and valid means of assessing such knowledge (Lillis, 1985).

Most of Africa’s elite who were trained under this system of education visualise Western education and culture as the only gateway to economic development. Thus, they were sceptical of the significance of indigenous knowledge systems, ignored local conditions, local development needs, and the role of indigenous knowledge in developmental activities within regions such as rural, urban, semi-urban areas of most African states (Semali, 1999). It is for this reason that Owuor (2002) argues that most of Africa’s elite do not cherish their cultural heritage.

### **Sandwich courses**

One unique and very important element of curriculum revitalisation is the off-campus experiential learning component of the programme as highlighted by Zinnah and Steele (1999), which they refer to as ‘supervised enterprise’ and ‘experience projects’ (SEPs). After a period of study on campus, students should return to work in indigenous communities to conduct SEPs independently or in groups to narrow the gap between theory and practice. Other scholars have referred to this type of learning as ‘experiential learning’, ‘double-loop learning’, ‘knowledge-in-action’ and ‘learning as a

way of being'. These SEPs are a means to immerse students in valuable farmer focused, experience-based learning activities, reduce the discrepancy between training and the tasks the extension staff performing in their real work environment with inclusion of local people, and to avoid tendency of making training too theoretical. The essence of SEPs is to develop the students' ability to identify problems and explore practical ways to correct them.

### **Bottom-up approach**

Local people, including farmers, landless labourers, women, rural artisans, youth, students, and cattle keepers are all custodians of indigenous knowledge. Owuor (2007) argues that there is now a growing consensus that some of the solutions to problems that currently plague African societies and communities must proceed from understanding the dynamics within the local context and such dynamics include indigenous knowledge systems.

Akullo et al (2007) state that for centuries farmers have planned agricultural production and conserved natural resources with the instruments of indigenous knowledge. Indigenous knowledge systems in traditional Africa have been used by communities to protect natural resources from unsustainable exploitation thereby averting disasters that may have occurred from such exploitation. It is important that these indigenous knowledge systems should be integrated into the school curriculum. This can be done through a confluent curriculum which promotes the integration of informal indigenous modes of learning into the formal educational system.

### **CONCLUSION**

The entrenchment within the curriculum and the educational milieu of structures for the critical evaluation, understanding, and revitalisation of African indigenous knowledge systems, must necessarily be an important challenge for 21<sup>st</sup> century policy makers and educationists. The result could be the consolidation of self-sustaining networks of local researchers, democratically engaged in research, and compatible with community values, aspirations and goals. It could also establish a pathway towards a consolidation of democratic forms of knowledge production, if done with the framework of openness, and empathetic critical research. Curriculum planning of the IKS must

always take into consideration existing power relations and the multiple centres of power involved in the process of decision-making and implementation. Political support has to be obtained for the adoption and implementation of the curriculum in terms of local students, faculty, library personnel, deans and school directors as well as the mass media. There is much to be learnt from the indigenous knowledge systems if we are to move towards interactive technology development and away from the conventional transfer of technology from the West to Africa.

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# A FRAMEWORK FOR DECOLONISING RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES

By

N GODUKA

## ABSTRACT

Western-based science promotes a hierarchical and linear form of knowledge construction that dismisses other forms of knowledge (Shiva, 1997; Desai, 2001), and does not deem important the process of knowledge creation and questions concerning cultural assumptions and appropriateness that are embedded in other ways of conducting research. This Western-based tradition is grounded in positivism which is based on the notion that facts can be measured and quantified. However, over the past decade, researchers have discovered that this Western-based approach does not adequately contribute to a full description of indigenous cultures which operate on a different notion of fact. Hence, various attempts have been made to develop an appropriate research methodology for these indigenous cultures. This paper is one such attempt. It advocates a decolonising approach to research in order to free research from the Western-based positivist paradigm. The paper also develops a framework for such a decolonised research methodology.

## INTRODUCTION

Western-based science promotes a hierarchical and linear form of knowledge construction that dismisses other forms of knowledge (Shiva, 1997; Desai, 2001), and does not deem important the process of knowledge creation and questions concerning cultural assumptions and appropriateness that are embedded in other ways of conducting research. This Western-based tradition of knowledge construction is grounded in positivism which is based on the notion that research is an objective and value-free activity that can make sense of natural and human realities. Positivism takes a position that just as the natural world can be analysed and examined in a mechanistic manner, the social world of human beings can equally be analysed and examined in the same mechanistic manner. This positivist paradigm is rooted in the values of reason, truth and validity and these values are guided by the principle that facts are gathered through direct observation and experience and measured empirically using quantitative methods that consist of surveys and experiments and statistical analysis (Blaikie, 1993; Hatch and Cunliffe, 2006; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2007; Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008; Easterby, Smith, Thorpe and Jackson, 2008).

These Western-based traditions of research have dominated and influenced research activities in many African countries which were in the past colonised by European countries to the extent that even the concepts of education in many of these countries are still shaped by Western-based paradigms. As a result, the western worldview which permeates throughout the academic institutions of these countries minimises, marginalises, undermines, and smothers the worldviews of indigenous African peoples. Also, the fact that curricular in schools in these countries are still based on Western models has encouraged the assumption that Eurocentric models of knowledge are superior to indigenous African knowledge.

## INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

Without doubt, this situation of the overwhelming influence of Western tradition in education in Africa is toxic because it has created an education system in which Africans are systematically taught to look down upon their own cultural values. Some institutional policies have been put in place to correct this mistake. South Africa's Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) policy approved by Cabinet in 2004 is one of those intervention measures. The policy aims at the integration of IKS in the arenas of education, commerce, agriculture, the sciences, law, languages, arts, social sciences, and health. A National Indigenous Knowledge Systems Office (NIKSO) was established in the Department of Science and Technology in 2006 to drive this policy. The creation of the South African Research Chairs Initiative (SARChI) by the National Research Foundation (NRF) and the Department of Science and Technology (DST), and subsequent the appointment of the Indigenous Knowledge Systems IKS Research Chair at Walter Sisulu University in 2009, are other intervention measures. All these measures are designed to ensure that indigenous knowledge systems are integrated with maximum urgency into the curriculum of South Africa's educational institutions.

In addition to these institutional interventions, some researchers are also making strides to develop appropriate methodologies that can be used to describe and analyse indigenous worldviews. One such innovative effort is the methodology developed for research on Maori culture. The Kaupapa Maori theory, as the methodology is called, is a holistic research tool that strives for balance among and between the diverse components that encompass indigenous cultural, political, spiritual and social frames of reference, as well as philosophical foundations that are rooted in the worldviews of

the indigenous Maori people. The Kaupapa Maori theory was formulated about ten years ago and it has been so successful in research activities that many researchers are adopting it as a global method for research on indigenous cultures (Irwin, 1994; Lopez, 1998; Tillman, 1998; Bartlett, 2003; Mahuika, 2008).

## AIM

This paper seeks to advocate a decolonising approach to research in order to free research from the Western-based positivist paradigm which has so far been regarded as the quintessence or archetype of scientific tool. The paper seeks to develop a framework for such a decolonised research methodology in order to create space within which indigenous people can revalorise or return to their own worldviews, cultures and languages. It is important to mention that this aim is contextualised in the historical realities of South Africa in which education in general was a tool of imperialism, colonialism and apartheid. The attempt to decolonise research is therefore not just an academic exercise; it is part and parcel of the struggle for social justice, cognitive liberation and empowerment for all indigenous Africans.

## DEVELOPING A HOLISTIC MODEL FOR DECOLONISING RESEARCH

Prior (2010) defines decolonising research as a process that involves developing meaning through relationships, trust, reciprocity and cooperatively evolved methods of research that respect and embrace indigenous community's worldviews and cultural values. Therefore, a crucial step for developing decolonising research methodologies is ensuring that the affirmation and validation of indigenous people's world views, cultural values and knowledge systems do not operate only in theory, but in practice as well. Hence, in decolonising research, the first step is to make an assumption that in any social context individuals and groups make sense of situations based upon their own individual experience, memories and expectations. These individuals construct their own meanings and over the course of time constantly reconstruct these meanings. It is these constructions and re-constructions of meaning which through experience generate a variety of interpretations for each individual; and it is these multiple interpretations that create a social reality

in the way these individuals think, behave and interact with others. This means that such an individual cannot adequately be described with the normal quantitative and qualitative methodology that is embedded in Western-based research.

A researcher would need to use a paradigm that can discover and understand these varieties of meanings that are embodied in each individual and also the contextual factors that influence, determine and affect the interpretations of these meanings that are made by the individual as well as by the community in which that individual lives. One such paradigm which has been proved to be useful for the purpose is interpretivism (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003). Interpretivism works on the basic assumption that there are multiple realities (Hatch and Cunliffe, 2006) and hence the process of understanding the meanings and interpretations of individuals involves accepting that these individuals are knowledgeable about themselves and their environment. Interpretivism therefore pre-supposes that a researcher would accept that indigenous people have knowledge which informs “a fundamental worldview, a unified trend of thought on life and world which inspires their thoughts, words, and actions” (Mosha, 2000: 7). This pre-supposition that indigenous people have knowledge about themselves and their environment would sound simplistic to many people; but it is precisely where the problem of research methodology begins. As a result of the Western-based tradition of research in particular and education in general, many academics make the opposite assumption and regard indigenous communities as ‘subjects’ and impose their prior assumptions and Western-inspired interview models on them.

Decolonising research aims to impact on theory and practice not only by articulating how researchers can draw on indigenous knowledge, but also through ensuring that the results of the research are channelled back to the indigenous peoples. By this is meant, the conclusions and recommendations which are made by the researcher would have to be channelled back to the indigenous community for their assessment and verification. Also, any material benefits that accrue from the research would be channelled back to the community on the basis of the code of ethics and conduct upon which the research was conducted. Thus, a conscious decision must be made early in the research process on who will become the first author in the process of disseminating the research.

It is clear from the analysis that the paradigm of Interpretivism regards the indigenous community, and not the researcher, as the first author because it upholds the principle that the knowledge which provides the basis of the research in essence belongs to community members. Although it is true that not all community members will have the latitude to endure the rigours involved formulating a hypothesis, writing down the tasks, carrying out the research in accordance with defined methodologies, completing the research, and eventually publishing the research findings, it is essential that the contribution by the indigenous community is appropriately acknowledged so that the indigenous community's share of the intellectual property would be duly recognised.

Hence, an important outcome of decolonising research project is reciprocal capacity building (Bartlett, 2003; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999). Involving the community in the research activity and regarding them as research partners is a vital capacity building process for all parties involved. The process of gaining research capacity from community members, rather than providing it to them, requires openness to diverse interpretations of life events. It is this openness to diverse interpretations which is lacking in the Western-based positivist traditions which dominate research in African universities; but it only through this openness that new information can be obtained about indigenous peoples (Glaser, 1978).

## PRINCIPLES OF DECOLONISED RESEARCH

This framework for decolonising research methodologies is modelled on the Kaupapa Maori theory and the approach of interpretivism and has been adapted from Kenny (2004). It is based on the pre-assumption that the research process must create space within which indigenous peoples can re-valorise themselves and return to their own life perspectives and culturally inculcated goals without the imposition of Western concepts and ideologies (Bartlett, 2003). Therefore, the first step when conducting decolonising research is that researchers whose training is steeped in the Western paradigm would need to unlearn those Western-based principles of positivism in order for them to be able to make the necessary prior assumptions.

The next step is to accept that the knowledge which the indigenous community possesses is a science. It is by this science that an indigenous community is able to make the right choice about

which specific process of knowledge is the most relevant to the needs of the community for purposes of farming, soil preservation, health, environmental preservation, and spiritual welfare. It is also by this science that the indigenous community is able to keep its world view unified in spite of the fact that each member of the community interprets life in a variety of ways. Local community elders in South Africa and elsewhere in the world are reservoirs of IK and wisdom which have for millennia been applied in areas such as traditional institutions (*intonjane nolwaluko*) for building character and ethnic identity among youth; health and healing; arts and crafts; food security and nutrition that are at the core of cultural and economic sustainable development in rural communities. It is multiplicity of interpretations existing in harmony within a unified world view which lies at the cornerstone of the indigenous African being.

This balance of multiplicity and unity is what makes indigenous African culture holistic. In this holistic culture, individual knowledge blends into communal knowledge and both are reinforced in ancestral and spiritual knowingness which altogether form the cornerstone of this unified indigenous worldview. Thus, indigenous people experience life not just holistically but also integratively. Everything that is thought, said, and done is done in relationship to the whole of life and world, and everything that is known is learned in the context of the entirety of life. This is a science that is unique; but unfortunately Africans are losing it fast because Africans have adopted a system of education that does not recognise this system as a valid body of knowledge.

Therefore, indigenous researchers and scholars need to be aware that to create the important discursive practices or conversations necessary for studying indigenous worlds in meaningful and enduring ways, they must consider diverse approaches to research that can address complexities of the world of indigenous peoples. They also need to be cognizant of the fact that indigenous people hold their own ontological, epistemology, and axiological assumptions of knowledge construction that can only be revealed thorough a reflection of their lives and traditions. Due to the fact that the primary goal of research is to contribute towards the improvement of the quality of life for indigenous people, claims of knowledge about indigenous people cannot be limited to foreign approaches or foreign worldviews. These claims must be grounded in indigenous worldviews, philosophical assumptions, and cultural values.

In view of the fact that the primary goal of any research is to contribute to the improvement of the quality of life, decolonised research places much emphasis on the outcome. Decolonised research aims to ensure that as a result of the research some tangible and quantifiable progress has been made in reciprocal capacity building (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999; Bartlett, 2003). This applies that within the indigenous community tangible improvements have been verified by the community to have been made in the quality of their lives as a result of the research activity. Similarly, the researcher too must have gained some new knowledge which would enable him/her to become an agent and an advocate of change in terms of research methodologies. The funding agencies of the research project, for instance, universities, DST and NRF, must also have gained some new models from that research which would enable them to plan and initiate development projects in the future.

Porsanger (2010) therefore argues that communal development is one of the core values of a decolonised research. Battiste (1998) suggests the following ‘must do’ requirements for a successfully executed decolonised research:

- The research hypothesis must emerge from indigenous ecological contexts
- The research assumptions must emerge from indigenous social and cultural frames of reference
- The research must embody indigenous philosophical foundations, worldviews and spiritual understanding
- The research must enrich, rather than diminish, the unique experiences of indigenous the indigenous world.

## CONCLUSION

It can be seen from this analysis that the framework for decolonising research is well structured. Bartell (2007) argues that the structure is driven by the following processes: enabling, facilitating, accepting, and enacting. This is to ensure that research within indigenous communities does not in any way disturb the fragile world of the indigenous communities. Universities need to take an aggressive approach to urge the integration of decolonising research methodologies that involve not only researchers and students from various disciplines, but also policy makers, practitioners, and,

importantly, indigenous community members. Such an approach to research would exemplify a collective decolonised indigenous framework that involves all who share common aspirations and goals for improving the conditions of the indigenous people of Africa.

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