

Differentiating dysfunction: Domestic agency,
entanglement and mediatised petitions for
Africa's own solutions

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Differentiating dysfunction: Domestic agency, entanglement
and mediatised petitions for Africa's own solutions

By

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Declaration

I, Mutinda (Sam) Nzioki [UFS student number 2015107697], hereby declare that *'Differentiating dysfunction': Domestic agency, entanglement and mediatised petitions for Africa's own solutions* is my own work, and has not previously been submitted for assessment to another University or for another qualification. Further, all the sources that I have used and/or quoted within this work have been clearly indicated and acknowledged by complete references.

July 2018

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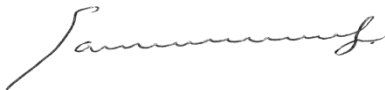


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Abstract

Africa's optimistic expressions of a reawakening, a rising, to its own solutions remain nervously alive, albeit haunted by the reversals that quenched all previous enthusiasms concerning a rebirth. Still, this study draws creative impetus from African wisdom voiced in the Akamba idiom, *Mbéé ndi Mwéné* (No one can claim ownership of what lies ahead/the future). Being so, this study proceeds as a contemporary re-entering into part of the existing terms which calibrate the question of how to get Africa right. This process obliges consultations with earlier African voices and ideas that committed to 'own solutions' to post-independence problems, or rather more unflatteringly, 'dysfunctions'. As a contemporary inquiry, this effort contends that posing adequate questions that can get to the heart of present normative life or public culture – as Lewis Gordon and Achille Mbembe put it – requires thinking in African scholarship and practice proceeding in ontological commitments which enable sharper specification of Africa's difficult situations: for instance, bursts of ethno-religious violence, perilous migrations, xenophobia/Afrophobia, and corruption. However, seeing that many an Africanist scholarship makes these very claims, key to this challenge are the terms and approaches developed for sharper specification and adequacy, as these relate to locating, affirming and/or disregarding numerous important processes immediate to Africa's conditions. In this regard, key concepts in this study are *Africarise*, *differenciación*, mediatisation, ground, and *our way*, with the central approaches being co-theorisation and relatedly, transversalism which involves creative interconnection with ideas and practices. Further still, because current life has increasingly seen mediatised expressions dominate social production, sharper specification of Africa asks of this African scholarship to connect with other generative grammars and methods of encountering Africans and Africanity. Those connections draw on established concepts that have often spoken Africa, alongside African ideas whose capacity remains un-utilised, as well as mediatised expressions in the street. However, while this process of connections and openings

will unveil ugly clashes and contradictions, it offers even greater cause for affirming possibilities in Africa's future.

Key words: difference, *differentiation*, Africanity, mediatisation, calibration, *our way*, media, journalism, *Idea*, ground, event, intensity

Africans might attribute opinions to ancestors, thereby implying that the opinions are ageless or immutable...however, “ancestors” cannot be taken in a literal sense. If we so took it, we would need to determine who the ancestors were, when they lived, and by implication when original thinking ceased and why.¹

(Owomoyela, *Africa and the Imperative of Philosophy: A Skeptical Consideration*, 1987)

Introduction

This effort seeks to contribute to ongoing conversations on the future of Africa-purposed scholarship. Located within African studies, it pursues a partial re-opening² of space in the scholarship and practice of media in Africa. Immediately, it is thrust into the broader challenge posed by historian Tiyambe Zeleza and philosophers Kwasi Wiredu and Paulin Hountondji, on rethinking knowledge production for Africa. For Zeleza, appropriate response to Africa’s complex situations will require African scholarship to *formulate* rather than *translate*.³ This entails revaluating privileged Euro-American frameworks, by stripping down and correctly situating their provincialisms, those which are authorised as universal ideals of enlightenment (*Aufklärung*). At the same time, it entails unveiling the diversity of African modes of knowing – textual, oral and archaeological. For Hountondji this is imperative because for a long time, African scholarship has been massively *extraverted*,⁴ that is, externally orientated; which has

¹ Oyekan Owomoyela, Nigerian critic and historian of African traditional literature in critical response to African professional philosophers on ethnophilosophy and other modes of African of thought in “Africa and the Imperative: A Skeptical Consideration”, *African Studies Review* 30 no. 1 (1987): 79-100.

² The concept of re-opening is explained in Chapter 3, pg. 104 regarding the rationale, method and processes of difference, in the section titled “Difference in itself: Critique of philosophers of difference”.

³ Paul Tiyambe Zeleza, “Zeleza, Paul Tiyambe. “The Disciplinary, Interdisciplinary and Global Dimensions of African Studies”, *International Journal of African Renaissance Studies - Multi-, Inter- and Transdisciplinarity* 1 no. 2 (2006): 195-220

⁴ Paulin Hountondji “Knowledge of Africa, Knowledge by Africans: Two Perspectives on African Studies”, *Revista Crítica de Ciências Sociais - RCCS Annual Review* no. 1 (2009): 1-3. For this study, Hountondji’s argument on epistemic extraversion is considered alongside J. F. Bayart’s argument on Africa’s history of post-independence political extraversion, in order to nuance perspectives around coercion into relations of dependency, versus contradictory strategies for deliberate ‘collaboration’ by Africans in power. See Chapter 2, Claude Ake’s discussion on founding elites’ reliance on the military pg. 82-83, and, Mobutu’s *recours a l’authenticité* pg. 91.

seen Africa serve theoretical and material needs of Northern societies. And thus for Wiredu⁵ and Hountondji, it means empowering indigenous conceptual frameworks and languages to inspire deeper understanding of Africa, as coequal among other established modes of knowledge production, in the world.

With that in mind, this study constitutes a re-entry to thought on Africa's rebirth, in a review of the contemporary expression of "Africa rising" to its own solutions. It re-encounters a legacy of ideas and meanings of African renaissance, which erupted in the 1800s, and passed through moments of political vigour and sputter until the 2000s. In Abiola Irele's account of evolutionary tests to African thought, this effort echoes the continuous confrontations with pre-existing "terms of the African problematic", provoked by postcolonial experience.⁶ And so it draws on the following reflection by Kenyan journalist Patrick Gathara: "just who does get Africa right? Is there even such a thing as getting Africa right?"⁷ Besides, should Africa still commit to notions of African solutions to Africa's problems?

In order to respond accordingly, the central task of this study attends to the injunction by anthropologist and media theorist Francis Nyamnjoh that current African scholarship and media practice should "De-Westernise", and instead "Co-theorise".⁸ Such an approach would offer a way to address insensitivities within normative, or universalised, frameworks in their treatments of African situations, without undermining the pursuit and legitimacy of Africa-sensitive frameworks. This is because, Africa cannot simply wish away the long history of entanglements

⁵ Kwasi Wiredu, "Toward Decolonising African Philosophy and Religion", *African Studies Quarterly* 1 no. 4 (1998): 17-19. Available at <http://www.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v1/4/3.pdf>. Accessed September 17, 2017.

⁶ Abiola Irele, "Contemporary Thought in French Speaking Africa", in *Africa and the West: The Legacies of Empire*, ed. Isaac J. Mowoe and Richard Bjornson (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1986), 122.

⁷ Patrick Gathaara, "Why Do African Media Get Africa Wrong?", *Al Jazeera English Online*. January 8, 2014. Available at <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2014/01/why-do-african-media-get-africa-wrong-20141863843603366.html>. Accessed August 12, 2014.

⁸ Francis Nyamnjoh, "De-Westernizing Media Theory to Make Room for African Experience", in *Popular Media, Democracy and Development in Africa (Internationalizing Media Studies)* ed. Herman Wasserman (London: Routledge, 2011), 19-31.

with the West which is now deepened by contemporary technologies of communication. This is demonstrated in Chapter 2 in three moments of Africa's pursuit for rebirth, and in Chapters 4 and 5, which analyse the multiplicity of contested ideas, socio-cultural practices and political activisms, as Africans seek to formulate their world. Co-theorisation implies, first, a commitment to critical interaction with approaches and methods of encountering Africa, and African ways of being, including those considered as relating to nothing other than African societies themselves.⁹ Secondly, it implies locating other grammars (discourses, activisms, artistic expressions) of Africa which enable and advance African humanity. In the closing chapter, this latter process is conceived as *our way*. Nyamnjoh once described such processes of co-theorisation as advancing *domestic agency*, with thinking and practice in *conviviality*. Taken in context, Nyamnjoh's co-theorisation in *conviviality* exceeds modest, genial exchanges of ideas. It embraces Achille Mbembe's¹⁰ articulation of *conviviality*, as involving a contradictory mutuality; an *entanglement* in power relations in the postcolony. Its dynamics are neither defined by endless hostility nor by subdued collaboration. Rather, both the dominant authority and the dominated have to cohabit the same space mutually exposed.

Explained further, relations of *conviviality* reveal that the modes and *Ideas* that brace authoritarian control are also key components in the life of the dominated. And so the dominated continually appropriate these to recompose their impaired existence, in processes which at key moments, get charged with opprobrium, to diminish the repressive grip of the dominant. For Nyamnjoh, it is thought and practice that should enable Africans to Africanise modernity and modernise Africanity.¹¹ These ought to repel assumptions that there is one best way of being, to which Africans must aspire and be converted. In this regard, for this re-entry to enunciations

⁹ Achille Mbembe, *On the Postcolony* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 5, and Jean-Francois-Bayart, "Africa in the World: A History of Extraversion", *African Affairs* no. 99 (2002): 217-267.

¹⁰ Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, 110-111.

¹¹ Francis B. Nyamnjoh, "Journalism in Africa: Modernity, Africanity", *African Journalism Studies* 36 no. 1: 37-43.

of African solutions, the notion of *differentiating* dysfunction considers Mbembe's African *postcolony* not only as a social reality whose emergence and existence constitutes exclusively, of regimes of intemperate violence and predictably permanent things called African dysfunctions. Rather, *differentiation* also entails a multiplicity of generative processes, involving events of procreative possibilities for African solutions, which reside within the internal coherences that seem to glue this postcolony's "chaotically pluralistic dispensation" – or unstable consistency.¹² It is upon these which such ideas of rising are inspired and can be pursued, despite the thing 'dysfunctionality' itself. As Mbembe himself sums it up, the fluctuations and indeterminacy, the unexpected turns of complex life, do not necessarily amount to lack of order,¹³ or paralysis. Put otherwise, contemporary African sites reveal moments of violent paradox and tragic situations, which coerce the formerly oppressed to formulate liberation in the form of "unjust justice", a pathos that produces its own catharsis, and at times, extracts horrible interventions as it formulates itself against a global hegemonic order.¹⁴

As a re-entry to the above-described complex currents, this study will draw upon texts and concepts relating to key arguments on encountering Africa, which some may regard as 'old'. I contend that although these texts and concepts are known, and despite their great potential for opening future paths for thought, these pioneering ideas by Africans are yet to be accorded the affirmation they deserve. This is to say, despite decades of shelf-life in libraries, and modest mention in discussions on Africa in Euro-American academies, these incisive African ideas appear to be largely ignored within African scholarship in Africa. This raises another question: if the intention here is to advance new ways of thinking Africa, why these sources still? Did "original thinking cease" as Owomoyela wonders? On the one hand, deliberate reencountering

¹² Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, 8, and Achille Mbembe, "On the Postcolony: A Brief Response to Critics", *African Identities* 4 no. 2 (2006): 148.

¹³ Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, 8.

¹⁴ Lewis Gordon, "Tragic Dimensions of Our Neocolonial 'Postcolonial' World", in *Postcolonial African Philosophy: A Critical Reader*, ed. Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1997), 242-243.

of Africa with these sources shows the difficulty of trying to “get Africa right” with any sense of finality. On the other hand, frustration in this regard likely instigates the tendency among some to keep these African ideas as only sometimes-useful ancillary referents, while engaging Africa using authoritative universal theories. This study adds that an Africa-purposed scholarship seeking to get Africa and Africanity right, ought to continuously reaffirm, re-open and repurpose these already-existing terms of (African) knowing, alongside consonant established (more universal) ideas, despite contradictory moments that may arise from these encounters – not to mention that forcing such contradictions can indeed be generative or catalytic in the most positive senses possible. Reconsideration and creative appropriation of existing terms of knowing could assist individual Africans in performing their Africanity differently, and to pursue solutions that transgress axiomatic confines of ideological and disciplinary ‘truths’ – even those of Africans themselves.

Repurposing and creative re-opening¹⁵

Accordingly, this process of re-opening thought and practice necessitates creative experimentation through a *transversal* method of analysis. It is a process of interconnecting diverse modes of thought and individual experiences to examine how recent enunciations of Africa’s rising or reawakening, even if they display contradictions, can incite or impede new thought with which to constitute African solutions. This implies “transcending discursive frontiers”¹⁶ in a transdisciplinary method that embraces media practices and popular politics ‘in the street’. Quite strategically for this study, transversality comprises three principal features. First, it discloses the centrality of the ontology of *difference and becoming* for this study, as

¹⁵ The idea of re-opening draws on Mbembe’s argument for a method that affirms difference, by critiquing African ideas without erasing them, and instead opens more questions with that very process of critique and those ideas. For Gilles Deleuze, it is a method of recognising the often less privileged processes and ideas relating to the major issue, without negating the dominant ones. For Ato Quayson it is actively heeding the restless transactions incited by many, and often unnoticed, processes, inside the already-known political and cultural things in everyday African life.

¹⁶ bell hooks, “Black Women Intellectuals”, in *Breaking Bread: Insurgent Black Intellectuals*, ed. bell hooks and Cornel West (Boston: South End Press, 1991), 147-165.

these are articulated in the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze, and Achille Mbembe's different discourses of the contemporary African postcolony. As Deleuzian scholar Ronald Bogue explains, transversal modes of thought and action are propelled by *desire*, a disposition to continually "think otherwise", to overcome pre-existing alternatives.¹⁷ This demonstrates the above ontology by suggesting openness to change, and to push boundaries to the realm of ideas through intensifying connections between the arts, sciences, politics and other spheres of action, to give expression to new problems, and variety of possibilities for future life.¹⁸ Key to this is the concept of *differenciation*. While the term deals with differentiation of unfolding process within complex phenomena or systems as considered in differential calculus, used here in Deleuze's philosophical framework, it concerns a method of differentiating problems, or questions through establishing multiple and incisive connections among fields, ideas and action in transdisciplinary or transversal movements as will be discussed. This is elucidated below by Bogue's, Holland's and Deleuze's observations of connecting with other fields of thought and action – including mathematical concepts in response to complex problems – beyond established rules set in specific disciplinary fields.

One part of Bogue's description refers to academic transversality, as expounded in Wiredu's argument on intellectual pursuit of truth. Wiredu states that, even though problems around being human might be universally common, or evident across different cultures, for instance, identity, freedom, equality and pain, meanings and truths on these remain unresolvable due to diverging points of view from historical experience. Thus, thinking and treatment of the problems when encountered are often framed rationally along contrasting conceptual foundations, and language filters. And so Wiredu urges that, in order to better clarify such problems, rational understanding would be enriched and expanded with comparative evaluation of these

¹⁷ Ronald Bogue, *Deleuze's Way: Essays in Transverse Ethics and Aesthetics* (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2007), 6.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 2-4.

commonly-known problems, recognising and elevating the local content of the immediate conditions, and their conceptual and language registers, as the most appropriate resources of treatment.¹⁹ Mbembe sums it up as the opening and grasping Africa using other languages of encountering life by an evolving African subject, in ways that profoundly question both African thought, and Western modernity's assumptions of universal custodianship of processes of rational argument, in relation to all key aspects of social life.²⁰

Pakistani academic and social activist Hamed Hosseini gives a more practical conception of transversality, one that is also echoed by Ghanaian award-winning investigative journalist Anas Aremeyaw Anas, whose work is analysed in Chapter 5. It is framed in view of aims and exchanges of ideas across cultural, communal and academic fields of resistance. Cognisant of propounding the tepid notion of a global cosmopolitanism anchored in notions of parity in collaborative programs, and representativeness of discourses, Hosseini's description offers key defining features of complex engagements considered for this study. For Hosseini, transversality in practice involves:

- (1) recognition of diversity and difference, (2) dialogue (deliberation across differences), (3) systemic self-reflection, (4) intentional openness (intention to explore the reality of the Other), (5) critical awareness of the intersectional nature of power relations that affects interconnections, and finally (6) commitment to create alterity through hybridization and creolization of ideas and deeds.²¹

Hybridisation here does not refer to a final state called hybrid, but rather processes of ongoing connections. With regard to African solutions, Anas likewise says, "one person cannot solve

¹⁹ Kwasi Wiredu, *Cultural Universals and Particulars: An African Perspective* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 3-7.

²⁰ Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, 10-11.

²¹ S. A. Hamed Hosseini, "Transversality in Diversity: Experiencing Networks of Confusion and Convergence in the World Social Forum", *International Multidisciplinary Journal of Sciences* 4 no. 1 (2015): 58.

the problems of our continent [Africa]. We need everybody from every discipline to come on board.”²²

Bogue’s definition draws in both these conceptions and advances them. Here, academic disciplines, theories, methodologies and political action, are not considered merely in their ordinary forms, of packaged arguments, products of approved disciplines, or responses to particular political incidents.²³ Rather, it is what each can do to enable change in life, the capacity they imply beyond adherence to disciplinary correctness, and episodic outbursts of ameliorative action. That is to say, in transversal mode these possess power to transform life with the different speeds and intensities they can bring to thought processes and practice, to force a permanent challenge to think differently. Each power enables the capacity of others to holistically tackle problems, as each contributes relational parts and reciprocal points for a multiplicity of effective responses to inevitable changes of life. Using the example of mathematics, Deleuze explains such transversalism by stating that, “just because mathematicians are able to develop or modify a problem of a very different nature, does not mean that they have arrived at a mathematic solution, it means that the problem contains a mathematical sequence that can be combined with other sequences.”²⁴ Stated differently, this power of transversals refers to a multiplicity of meanings and effects – both constructive and destructive – to life’s processes at unseen/indeterminable levels, when these disciplines and connections are stretched. Such transversal process also accords with that evinced in the attitude of insurgent “Public Pan African intellectuals” petitioned by Zeleza: one of surrendering academic rituals of ‘tinkering with broken machinery’ of academic production, to

²² Anas Aremeyaw Anas, “Why I Name, Shame, and Jail”, *The African Perspective* no. 7, Interview with Moses Mutabaruka, December 2016. Available at <https://www.tapmagonline.com/anas-aremeyaw-anas/>.

²³ Claire Colebrook, *Gilles Deleuze* (London: Routledge, 2002), 12-14.

²⁴ Gilles Deleuze, *Two Regimes of Madness*, trans. Ames Hodges and Mike Taormina, ed. David Lapoujade (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2007), 146. Here Deleuze emphasises the need to facilitate the creative power of interconnecting ideas and concepts, in order continually transform life, as opposed to attaching the role of ideas to personalities – that is, elevating the power of creative ideas, and less emphasis on the author.

consciously and critically immerse academics in community and popular politics in creative pursuit of a humane social order.²⁵

Second, described this way, transversalism specifies the methodological attitude of a partial re-opening or *extension* of scholarship adopted in this study. In the spirit of *difference*, a transversal re-opening strives for creative production of ideas, of originality of solutions through responsive thought connected to the immediate problem.²⁶ This involves negotiating opposition without seeking erasure.²⁷ That is, it remains mindful not to simply discredit existing ideas, concepts and their generative contradictions in a manner that might lead to their obliteration as that would supposedly propose a final solution to unending questions of life. Instead, a transversal re-opening locates active concepts, those which contribute to expressing the problem in a manner that would maximize (or extend) its capacity for highest comprehension, and in the process unveil more areas to the problem. And so, this study begins with the admission that those existing approaches encountered do not constitute fixed theories, methods and thought. Rather, they emerge through historical events, comprising multiple interlinked concepts that stem from complex interconnections between past and present ideas, feelings, attitudes and language as thinkers respond to their ever-changing material situations.²⁸ Besides, a re-opening itself comes saddled with its own tensions as it offers partial solutions and exposes its inadequacies in relation to certain areas of the problem. This is because, being historically and materially embedded, it cannot achieve total disengagement from parts of the predicaments common to its context and to existing thought.

²⁵ Tiyanbe Zeleza, *Manufacturing African Studies and Crises* (Dakar: CODESRIA, 1997), 22.

²⁶ Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 162.

²⁷ Erasure negates any effort to open possibilities as it undermines the arguments central to difference, that changes in life are unavoidable, and stasis is denial of reality. Robert Morrell and Brenda Cooper, "The Possibility of African-Centred Knowledges", in *Africa-Centred Knowledges: Crossing Fields and Worlds*, ed. Brenda Cooper and Robert Morrell (Woodbridge: James Currey, 2014), 2, and Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, 15, explain this regarding Africa-centered studies in the problem section below (pg. 26-27).

²⁸ Claire Colebrook, "Introduction: Deleuze and History", in *Deleuze and History*, ed. Jeffery A. Bell and Claire Colebrook (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), 5-6.

When contextualised, this second feature of re-opening speaks directly to the third one, thus accentuating an anxiety that haunts me as an African scholar in the current postcolony, pursuing as I am, affirmative “co-theorisation” within African studies. This third feature concerns tensions and dread of befouling the current decolonisation register, which is often characterised by swift indictments of betrayal of African scholarship. As Owomoyela describes it, it is being caught in the bind of having to hunt with the hounds, while at the same time running with the fox.²⁹ This is elaborated upon in the later section – on page 34 – where the burden of Nyamnjoh’s co-theorisation is discussed.

Overview of chapters

The first chapter offers a contextualisation and a general overview of this study.

In turn, the second chapter of this study employs a relatively non-standard format to offer some background to the idea of Africa’s reawakening or rising. In two parts, it weaves together selected narratives highlighting the conceptual precarity and tensions around ‘getting Africa right’. The first part presents specific episodic observations of Africa across decades, starting in the 1960s. These will be connected to contemporary media narratives, especially recording exchanges between the *New African* publication and Euro-American media following the pronouncement of Africa as a “hopeless continent”. The second part of the chapter presents three major moments that came to define historical trajectories of the idea of African renaissance/rising in the 1900s’ Pan-Negro moment, the pre-independence Pan-Africanist 1940s, and Thabo Mbeki’s 2000s. Emphasis is placed on convergences and divergences between philosophical and political ideas, echoing some observations highlighted in the first

²⁹ Oyekan Owomoyela, “With Friends Like These...A Critique of Pervasive Anti-Africanisms in Current African Studies Epistemology and Methodology”, *African Studies Review* 37 no. 3 (1994): 95.

part of the chapter. Very importantly, this second section of the chapter highlights instances where political expressions of rebirth in these three early moments intersected with related media productions.

The third chapter expounds in greater detail than that offered in Chapter 1, the methodology adopted for this study. Since this effort ventures into creative interdisciplinary reflection within African scholarship, it is necessary that this chapter offers deeper explanation of key areas around the bases of these frameworks, as well as why they were adopted. To this end, the discussion draws connections between the Deleuzian idea of *differenciation*, expressed in the ontology of difference and becoming, along with the conceptual framework of assemblages in mediatisation, and the analytical technique of ‘mapping’ the assemblage. Thereafter, the discussion proceeds to how this framework corresponds with Mbembe’s concepts of reading the contemporary postcolony, and particularly, with the contextual relevance of all these adapted concepts.

Chapter 4 presents an analysis or mapping of the *New African* as an embodiment of the *Africarise* assemblage. It draws in the concepts of difference in itself, and becoming in processes of mediatisation, in order to explore what a *New African*, Africa-centred enunciation brings to contemporary expressions of African solutions. This is undertaken in two phases. Phase one involves a mapping of the institution itself, taking into consideration beginnings, and how key strategic decisions made across five decades around personnel and editorial content shaped its overall discourse. The second phase focuses on one of Africa’s prominent media practitioners, Baffour Ankomah, entailing an analysis of his actions and texts as both editor and analyst in the *New African* during the most prosperous years of the publication and institution, which propelled it to prominence in Africa.

Chapter 5 comprises a shorter critical discussion of the notion of legitimate African representations. It revisits the persistently-contested notion of cause and effect with regard to the question of Africa's 'dysfunctions' as either fictional inventions of media misrepresentation or harsh realities whose narratives remain difficult to convey explicitly among Africans. This chapter focuses in on the rationales behind the African Journalist of the Year award system as an embodiment of the increasingly popular call for dedicated African media systems. Here the discussion will highlight the work of Ghanaian investigative documentary filmmaker Anas Aremeyaw Anas and Kenyan photographer, or more precisely, photo-activist, Boniface Mwangi. According to the creators of the CNN Multichoice and BBC's Kumlor Dumor African Journalist of the Year awards, the intention of these awards was to give Africa voice; or in Chinua Achebe's idiom, to let the lion tell its *version* of the hunt. However, following global traction generated by Anderson Cooper's 2013 CNN documentaries on war and rape in the Congo, and the reviled documentary *Kony 2012* which focused on the precarious lives of children under the Lord's Resistance Army in Uganda, nationalist calls for detached African media have grown. These maintain that Africans will tell their realities more accurately, and also invent new, albeit 'horrible' and difficult, ways of speaking to Africa, despite being detached from close ties with such institutions.

Chapter 6 opens with a consideration of the concept *our way* as offering a requisite ontological commitment to African solutions and knowledge production in Africa, or 'writing Africa for itself'. While acknowledging contradictions and criticisms that this might provoke, the discussion in this chapter presents different proposals for methodological and experiential approaches that can open possibilities for more responsive treatments of African problems, particularly ones related to the practice of media. Proposals and recommendations include unlearning ritualistic behaviours, edicts and axioms of knowledge production and practice within current discourses that think Africa. Among other aspects, what will be powerfully

advocated will be proposals for continual experimentation through co-production of study material and media content, alongside the ordinary (not formally trained) African, and any person whose ontological commitments are disposed towards enabling Africa and Africanity.

Chapter 1: Key Concepts and Questions

This chapter aims to introduce and gradually lay out the key components to this study's conceptual framework and rationales, and, the questions upon which those rationales are connected to the method of analysis. In broad strokes, the process of analysis for re-opening entails two integrated movements. The first one involves a critical interrogation of contemporary petitions and expressions for African solutions, transmitted through an emergent collective of likeminded Africa-centred enunciations by Africa-centred media and activism. In technical terms, these expressions are conceived as constituting a macro *assemblage of enunciation* of mediatised discourse and activism of "Africa rising". In this study this collectivising enunciation is conceptualised as *Africarise*. Viewed through the concept of "calibration"³⁰ by literary theorist Ato Quayson, *Africarise* consists of attitudes, concepts and ideas of *calibrating* a new orientation to African solutions by media institutions, practitioners, and, textual and audio-visual analyses, in processes which identify, categorise and counsel on the notion of dysfunctions in contemporary Africa. On another level, *Africarise* also infers an attitude of adopting as ameliorative modes of thought and methodologies for African solutions, what is presented by those Africa-centred media institutions, practitioners and their productions. Overall, the term *Africarise* aims to capture the provocative impulses and unsettling paradoxes raised by the notion of "Africa rising". This is particularly seen in the scepticism it activates among some Africa-centred media. As the Pan-African magazine *New African* illustrates, the proclamation of "Africa rising" by the renowned publications *The Economist* and *Time*³¹ triggered massive uproar among *New African* contributors like editor

³⁰ Ato Quayson, *Calibrations: Reading For the Social* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003). Quayson's theory of *calibration* uses the scientific concept of calibrating – i.e. to determine, gauge the calibre of, the correct position of something, while making allowance for irregularities – as the proper way of close reading, and analysing the formation postcolonial sociality, where being entails processes of "restless transaction" with translation and comparison using languages and discourse.

³¹ *The Economist* published an editorial titled "A Hopeless Continent" in May 13, 2000, and then recanted this view with a story titled, "Africa: There is Hope", October 9, 2008, which was followed by "Africa Rising: The Hopeful Continent" on December 3, 2011, and thereafter, "Aspiring Africa" on March 2, 2013.

Baffour Ankomah and fellow Africanist commentators, with many denouncing it as a hollow patronizing fabrication. However, in a more critical view, *New African* editor Parselelo Kantai observed that “Africa rising is not an African invention, yet it has invented us”.³²

The importance of this first movement lies in the foundation it lays for the second movement: that of a re-entry into theorisation of media and media practice in Africa. The first movement begins by restating the growing significance of mediatisation and mediatised discourses in contemporary life. As argued here, *Africanise* as a mediatised phenomenon has remained the most visible site and expression of African solutions, outside the academic discourse of politics, which political scientists Patrick Chabal and Jean-Pascal Daloz describe as a “world of shadows.”³³ Mediatised expressions have become the actual place of understanding intricacies of everyday African experience. They are distinctive dimensions of the historical transformations, discourses, actions – political processes of the era in question, in which these media, including technologies, coevolve. So, this step begins by addressing the question, why the media and reawakening? And, why do the media matter? Media scholars Nick Couldry and Andreas Hepp observe, due to the “brute reality” of media pervasiveness, mediatised discourses and events increasingly assign importance to meanings of history and everyday reality. This dynamic constitutes a basic feature of contemporary neoliberal democracies where free flow and over-supply of information by “collective technologies of information”, increasingly produce mediatised subjectivities mostly through affect/sense.³⁴ This fact has seen media routinely taking blame for something, as they have become the almost-inescapable point of reference at every level of social process.³⁵ Deleuze puts it more explicitly by stating that due

³² Parselelo Kantai, “Beyond Africa Rising”, *New African* no. 558 (February 2016): 6.

³³ Patrick Chabal and Jean-Pascal Daloz, *Africa Works: Disorder as a Political Instrument* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press 1999), xvii.

³⁴ Félix Guattari, *Chaosmosis: An Ethico-Aesthetic Paradigm*, trans. Paul Bain and Julian Pefanis (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 9.

³⁵ Nick Couldry and Andreas Hepp, “Conceptualizing Mediatization: Contexts Traditions, Arguments”, *Communication Theory* 23 no. 2 (2013): 191-192

to the immensity of media presence, a reversal happened where media, journalism, and journalists, have discovered an autonomous and sufficient thought, as it creates more and more cultural events itself, thus requiring less endorsement by expert analysis or intellectuals.³⁶ Yet, common views pertaining to media-driven expressions tend to restrict them to types of neutral linguistic or graphic representations of reality or truth, producing cause and effect; or imperative “order-words”.³⁷ That is, as objective, informational representations communicating truth about historical event or directives which society is expected to accept, or pretend to act as accepting.³⁸ This is disclosed by an increasingly visceral annoyance at critical media, and criticism in media, using vocabulary such as unpatriotic, adversarial or counterrevolutionaries, based on enduring common-sense which considers a critical posture as being unfaithful to neutrality or fairness. In this common view, media are confined to ‘mouthpiece’, or routine products of information including news and investigative reports. Generally, when media products are regarded in this way, meanings of most socio-political occurrences remain inadequately addressed or explained. This is especially evident when media artefacts incite uneasiness and fissures, through unanticipated reactions and ideas which do not fit with the formally-recognised communication or representation sequences.

As philosopher Dismas Masolo points out, this is a common flaw in representational thinking where belief that simulations of reality constructed through one’s mental pictures and language, can constitute a sufficient reference point, to any given situation.³⁹ In such cases people forget that communicated ideas are abstract symbolizations by language, and their estimations are always accessed by minds of others.⁴⁰ Put another way, representational thought and representational approaches to media fail to show that media expressions do not channel or

³⁶ Deleuze, *Two Regimes of Madness*, 143.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 325.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ Dismas Masolo, “Some Misleading Abstractions About Identity” in *Postcolonial African Philosophy: A Critical Reader*, ed. Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1997), 295.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 285-287.

provoke single meanings. Such thought overlooks those traces of meaningful processes and important layers of unique experiences and effects, including senses, activated by media technology, formats of packaging, distribution and content, which extend beyond the intended dominant linguistic and visual expression. As shown by Mbembe and Deleuze, this is because all those aspects of media constitute multiple practices of social production, those layers of meaningful human expressions that create social subjects; and like a book, media and its expressions are not an image of the world, they co-create with the world in *aparallel* evolution.⁴¹ Thus each media copy or event carves its own unique ‘realities’ in different contexts. A few prominent incidents illustrate this: the phenomenon of ‘post-truth’ “fake news”, televised election debates, reality TV, the violent protests against Charlie Hebdo cartoons triggered by what some regarded as mere representations of religious figures, and the ensuing freedom-of-speech internet activism *Je Suis Charlie*.⁴² These have recast media productions and media-centred events as actual distinctive facets of the historical changes and meanings of socio-political processes of their time, in which these media are also forced to evolve.⁴³ They stimulate diverse beliefs about possibilities in everyday concrete experiences, provoking new forms of politics and media practice within the familiar, capable of inciting total transformation, or, simply reconfiguring the status quo.

This latter point is significant because, from the outset, media expressions have remained most visible in laying out the complex and contradictory trajectories of the idea of Africa’s rebirth. Historical accounts support this because media, after all, evolved as a distinct field, whose dynamics correlated with those processes surrounding the production of formal ideas and understandings of society, as a result of the exigencies of European clashes for global

⁴¹ Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, 6, and Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 11.

⁴² *Je Suis Charlie* is a slogan created by French artist Joachin Roncin. It evolved into a global internet-driven campaign in support of the democratic principle of freedom of expression in solidarity with the satirical cartoon publication Charlie Hebdo, following the January 2015 shootings at their premises, where twelve people died.

⁴³ Couldry and Hepp, “Conceptualizing Mediatization”, 196.

supremacy since the mid-15th century.⁴⁴ This way, media alongside intellectual discourse were central to colonial expansion in Africa. Despite this significant role of media in the unfolding of events in Africa, including that of mobilising support by eminent Africans, mediated discourses around Africa-centred designs for Africa's transformations barely received attention in scholarly literature. As Zeleza⁴⁵ has comprehensively shown, the notion of renaissance has a five-decade-long scholastic and political pedigree, with the most prominent enunciations being in politics, history, development studies, and sociology.

Then, if one intends to take mediated expressions seriously, one needs to heed the argument advanced by the former press aide to Kwame Nkrumah, Kofi Buenor Hadjor, in 1981. He restated Nkrumah's assertion that Africans should not believe that there are certainly two sides to a story.⁴⁶ Seized from that context which was laden with ideological binaries, and radicalised further, this insight allows one to expand the conceptual scope for examining Africa-centred enunciations for reawakening, or rising. They ought to account for other dimensions of mediated structuring of reality, and modes of expressions by present-day Africans on the street pursuing their rise. Pertinent here, is the observation that "the intellectual and theorist have ceased to be a consciousness that represents or is representative...and those involved in political struggle have ceased to be represented by any [social entity] that would claim itself a right to their conscience".⁴⁷ While scholarly production continues to seek coherence between material realities, and ideological questions on power of representation, language and identity inside Africa's re-imagining of itself, the rate at which elementary questions and common

⁴⁴ Texts dealing with European renaissance expansionism, show that reports sent back home by missionaries and explorers to Africa from the mid-1400s signalled the beginning of media reporting, as a discourse that buttressed the production of formal history. Such reportage evolved with intensified justifications for state-sponsored expansion propaganda riding on improvements in radio technology, especially in World War II.

⁴⁵ Tiyambe P Zeleza, "What Happened to the African Renaissance? The Challenges of Development in the 21st Century", *Comparative Studies of South Asia and the Middle East* 29 no. 2 (2009): 155-170.

⁴⁶ See Chapter 4 (pg. 156), and Alan Rake, "New African Story", *New African* no. 300 (September 1992): 14-16, 30-41.

⁴⁷ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 207, 209.

opinion (*doxa*) in relation to important/intransigent issues recur within the popular sites, signals the inadequacy of such scholarship to address unresolved issues of self-definition and emancipation. These appear to elude elite political speak, and academic or philosophical treatments. So, if this inadequacy in academic and formal political discourses leaves unanswered questions relating to important issues in the street, then the surge of *Africarise* needs close attention. This is because, as distinctive dimensions of popular expressions of African solutions, *Africarise* often reveal their own inadequacies, linked to universal representational, functionalist thought.

As will be demonstrated in the upcoming exchanges between the *New African*'s audience and the editorial cohort, or reactions and counter reactions to the work of Ghanaian investigative reporter Anas Aremeyaw Anas, popular thought and activism for African solutions tend to cling to common slogans manufactured from prominent ideas of Africa's nationalist reawakening. For the *New African*, it appears to be as a result of the magazine's attempts to conceptualise a permanently consistent, unequivocal, Pan-Africanist message to material questions about postcolonial self-sufficiency. Anas, on the other hand, frequently spurns conventional bounds of ethical investigative practice in defence of the welfare of ordinary people, whose plight is neglected by the post-independence political bureaucracy. And so, reactions by both institution and audience continually entail polemical positions on common issues, often disregarding clear contradictions where nationalist ideology and contemporary material exigency are irreconcilable. The options are either unwavering loyalty to African causes, or adoption of universal values of modern socio-political life. In the end, if these audience exchanges were to be interpreted as 'simplistic' rantings of the 'herd', the counterargument is that, it is these exchanges none the less, which give expression to these African subjects' lived experiences, their memories about the past, and their present aspirations, in whose name both academic and

popular political media analyses claim to speak. The many for whom this reawakening is articulated are yet to be taken seriously.

Becoming *different*: Africa Rising and de-Westernisation

The re-opening must also occur at a conceptual (meta-theoretical level) within scholarship and the practice of media in Africa. For the task outlined in movement one, this study introduces the ontology of *difference in itself* and *becoming*. As already noted, it interweaves key concepts of *difference* and *repetition*⁴⁸ developed by Deleuze, with Mbembe's related but pioneering discourse and writing on contemporary Africa. The move to enlist Deleuzian thought together with Mbembe's concepts is informed by the affinity in their ontological dispositions and method. To use James Williams's expression, both present a rigorous revaluing of the structure of reality with innovative terms about values and action in response to an existing sense of life, how to live and create it – extending beyond scholarly exercise.⁴⁹

In Deleuzian philosophy of difference, thinking is in itself an event of life, and life consists of processes which compel constant change:⁵⁰ “True thinking is to respond to problems in new ways to invigorate life through the problems that give rise to them”.⁵¹ This is Williams's interpretation of Deleuze's urging that “what is essential is that there occurs at the heart of problems, genesis of truth, a production of the true in thought”. So, thinking that will respond to, and transform life, positively, ought to seek difference in its own processes and the immediate world, by disregarding privileged truths, or axioms of social organisation (common sense). Instead, such thinking needs to be open to entangle rigorously with contradictions which

⁴⁸ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition* (1994). It is important to note that Deleuze's philosophy of difference and repetition is primarily developed in this text, Deleuze points out that all concepts and thought in subsequent, and indeed in his earlier, work derive from this philosophical impulse.

⁴⁹ James Williams, *Gilles Deleuze's Difference and Repetition: A Critical Introduction and Guide* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2003), 1.

⁵⁰ As will be explained at the beginning of Chapter 3, this study draws on the work of Deleuzian scholars James Williams and Manuel Delanda for clarification in the reading of Deleuze's concept of difference.

⁵¹ Williams, *Gilles Deleuze's Difference and Repetition*, 2, and Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 162.

emerge with change, because “a problem does not exist, apart from its solutions”.⁵² Consequently, it experiments creatively with new concepts to locate degrees/layers of difference, for alternative possibilities within thought, action and meanings that pervade familiar situations.

Correspondingly, in *On the Postcolony*, Mbembe invents new concepts that enable him to set different ground for an intense evaluation of Africa’s complex situations. He commences with a quest to shock African modes of thought from a “long dogmatic sleep”, something epitomized in struggles with normative ontological foundations of Western (Hegelian) meta-theory that “stubbornly damns Africa to chaos”. Simultaneously, in this process, he intends to reaffirm that Africa can create discourses about itself.⁵³ For Mbembe, this approach opens avenues through which to think and encounter Africa and its complexities in their own difference, which may not make sense to everyone in the same way. Put another way, thinking in difference increases possibilities of continually responding fittingly/dynamically to a complex and unfolding world; to force new thought that can enable continual creation of Africanity, through temporary moments of contradiction or ‘dysfunctionality’.

The transversal process that is this thesis, brings a Deleuzo-Guattarian methodological framework of *assemblages* and the analytical technique of *mapping a plateau* (the principle of cartography and decalcomania) to the analysis of *Africanise*. It involves a methodology of processes that is sensitive to continuous recreation.⁵⁴ This is because in terms of assemblage theory, transformations entail processes of obligatory interaction among unique elements – as both Mbembe and Deleuze say, other lines and domains of understanding the world within the same problem, focused on locating multiple trajectories for possible solutions. And so adopting

⁵² Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 163.

⁵³ Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, 3-4.

⁵⁴ The theory of assemblages and the “principle of cartography and decalcomania” have been developed collaboratively by Deleuze and Félix Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus*, 5-15.

this methodology and technique grants this study the richness of transdisciplinary thought, drawn from African philosophers, political scientists, media theorists, journalists, scientists, sociologists and philosophers of art. Re-emphasised, allowing the thought of these seemingly disparate figures to open up each other, is the very substance of thinking difference. It is indeed the process of life itself.

Accordingly, for analysis, the concept *Africarise* is treated as a collective which describes a growing Africa-centred community of associated ideas, or an *assemblage of enunciation* pursuing African solutions. Its distinctiveness in current portraits of Africa's rising, is the result of interconnections with prominent expressions of postcolonial rebirth,⁵⁵ popular emancipation politics, and legacies of slavery, colonialism, nationalism and apartheid, as well as how those are packaged for popular consumption. Significantly, this enunciation also receives recognition from the African Journalism and Media Awards system (Cable News Network and Multichoice awards, now called CNNMultichoice, and, the British Broadcasting Corporation's (BBC) Kumlor Dumor awards). The presence of *Africarise* is announced by deliberate Africa-centred branding, for instance, in *New African*, *The Africa Report*, *Africa Independent*, *Think Africa Press*, and *Africa Confidential*. These textual productions are closely related to television and radio ventures by globally-renowned media aimed at giving Africa voice,⁵⁶ most notably: *Focus on Africa* (BBC), *Inside Africa* and *African Voices* (CNN) and Al Jazeera's *Africa Investigates*. As will be explained in Chapters 4 and 5, the examination of *Africarise* focuses on the *New African*, award-winning documentaries by Ghanaian investigative journalist Anas Aremeyaw Anas, and photography by Kenyan activist-photojournalist, Boniface Mwangi. These were selected among all other options available because, individually, they enfold the fundamental

⁵⁵ Some of the most notable expressions of Africa's reawakening include Edward Blyden's "Recovery of the African Soul", Pixely Ka Isaka Seme's "Regeneration of Africa", Cheikh Anta Diop's "Renascent Africa", and Thabo Mbeki's "I am an African".

⁵⁶ Couldry describes voice in media spaces, as a site of continuous struggle by human beings to be heard and recognised and not to be silenced. Nick Couldry, *Why Voice Matters: Culture and Politics After Neoliberalism* (London: Sage, 2010).

components which make the entire assemblage of *Africarise*, and thus contain elements pertinent in the various above-mentioned media products.

In recent times, the *Africarise* enunciation has also emerged as both a trendy descriptor for aspirational ideas that regard themselves as neo-developmental, and a sign of renewed activism advocating critical reflection on African solutions through popular discourses. Examples include the Multichoice Africa rising campaign urging Africans to rise up and make positive change, embodied in a continent-wide music project,⁵⁷ as well as Ndaba and Kweku Mandela's Africa Rising Foundation.⁵⁸ Among the more comprehensive propositions is Africa Check:⁵⁹ a deliberate move by African media practitioners to counter a tendency for casual allowance of inaccuracies in most typical commentary on Africa's 'dysfunctionality'. Another is the *Kilimanjaro Declaration* by Africans Rising of 23 June 2016, which coincided with UNESCO's August commemoration of the abolition of slavery and the slave revolt at Santo-Domingo (Haiti) during 1791-1804.⁶⁰ The *Kilimanjaro Declaration* describes a coming together of likeminded African professionals to forge a continent-wide movement for African-own solutions. Although not explicitly stated, it echoes Kwame Nkrumah's main contention in his bleak prognosis of the Organisation of African Unity. A disappointed Nkrumah noted that perhaps Pan-African unity for African prosperity was possible, not through the state system but through solidarities of likeminded individuals and politico-militant groups across the continent.⁶¹ Significantly, in relation to *Africarise*, its distinctive internet-based or spatio-temporal modes of mediated activism embody what media researcher Inka Salovaara

⁵⁷ Information on Africa Rising MultiChoice Africa is available at <http://africarising.dstv.com/>.

⁵⁸ See Africa Rising Foundation (<http://arfoundation.co/>).

⁵⁹ AfricaCheck (<https://africacheck.org/>) is supported by global partners AFP and Google, along with Wits School of Journalism.

⁶⁰ The *Kilimanjaro Declaration* is a founding manifesto for Africa-wide solidarity among descendants and citizens, seeking to build shared prosperity in defiance of and resistance against centuries of maltreatment. See <https://www.africans-rising.org/2016/08/24/the-kilimanjaro-declaration/>.

⁶¹ Kwame Nkrumah, *The Handbook of Revolutionary Warfare* (New York: International Publishers, 1968), 36-41, 56-58.

describes as contemporary political and cultural groupings, which gain unique visibility as socio-technical political systems, in an era marked by increasing difficulty to separate virtual and actual political systems.⁶²

While media-driven causes for Africa's reawakening are not new, the enunciation of *Africarise*, however, bears the distinction of 'outraged responses' and bold, unapologetic pursuits of social change. It is directed both outwardly to the West (global North), and inwardly at perceived domestic betrayals of Africa's cause. For instance, the preamble to the *Kilimanjaro Declaration* reads, "we, the citizens and descendants of Africa, as part of the Africans Rising Movement, are outraged by the centuries of oppression; we condemn the plunder of our natural and mineral resources and the suppression of our fundamental human rights". The *New African* especially, presents an important case. A glance at the publication's longest run of success reveals the overt enunciation to be assertively anti-Western and correlatively, fairly Afrocentric. It was during Baffour Ankomah's tenure as editor from July/August 1999 to February 2016, that the publication's message was that of an African subject refusing to be negated. Over time, themes of emancipation and redefinition became synonymous with the publication, to almost eclipse the rise of a more reflexive message which began in 2012/2013, to usher in Kantai's editorship. This bold Afrocentric expression was unsurprising, given how *The Economist* and *Time* announced "Africa rising" in 2011, a decade after they had declared Africa a "Hopeless Continent". Indeed, the latter declaration had capped an era's language on Africa, as evinced by texts such as *A Continent Self-Destructs*,⁶³ *The Shackled Continent*,⁶⁴ and "Aids in Africa: A Continent in Peril".⁶⁵ As Zeleza observes, "Africa was, [and still is] seen to persist with

⁶² Inka Salovaara, "#JeSuisCharlie: Networks, Affects and Distributed Agency of Media Assemblage", *Conjunctions: Transdisciplinary Journal of Cultural Participation* 2, no. 1 (2015): 103-115.

⁶³ Peter Schwabb, *A Continent Self-Destructs* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001).

⁶⁴ Robert Guest, *The Shackled Continent: Africa's Past, Present and Future* (London: Macmillan, 2004). Guest was Africa Editor at *The Economist* in the 2000s.

⁶⁵ Joanna McCreary, "Aids: A Continent in Peril", *Time*, February 2001.

inhospitable environments, entrenched tribalism, power hungry tyrants, sterile economics, deficient states, and deformed democracies”.⁶⁶

The general texture of *New African*'s responses is summed in Thabo Mbeki's "Who Will Define Africa?"⁶⁷ Appearing in one of the *New African* special editions titled "Reporting Africa",⁶⁸ Mbeki's message was simple – it was time that Africans took charge of how the continent is portrayed. For Ankomah, the countervailing tendency of negative reporting is enabled by "an inbuilt mechanism" that can be traced back to slavery and colonialism.⁶⁹ Its work is betrayed by a pessimistic stubbornness in Euro-American media, and by mimicry – "mental slavery" – by the African. This explains why after decades of heated exchanges, the dialogue and the "dross" called 'reporting Africa' remained unchanged. For *New African* deputy editor Regina Jere-Malanda, the reporting displays a "better-than-thou" attitude that dehumanises Africans through representations of poverty, instability, disease, illiteracy, and corruption (PIDIC).⁷⁰ Both Ankomah and Jere-Malanda conclude that the situation persists because of a disinterested Western audience whose media serve their national interests, and Africans who rely on others to tell their stories. Consequently for these editors, the future lay in pursuing *genuinely positive* Africa-centred commentary. This line of treatment recurs across themes in the publication, including reparations and "Crimes against Humanity" in Slavery and Black History editions (1999-2014), "Corruption Who Promotes It?" (November 2009), "The Masters at Work" (December 2009), "Bleeding Africa Dry" (July 2013), and "Politics of Pity: Inside the White Saviour Industrial Complex" (January 2015).

⁶⁶ Zeleza, "What Happened to the African Renaissance?", 156.

⁶⁷ Thabo Mbeki, "Who Will Define Africa", *New African* no. 474 (June 2008): 24-27.

⁶⁸ Broader discussions on the significance of *New African* special editions on "Reporting Africa": no. 387 (July/August 2000), and no. 474 (June 2008), are presented in Chapters 2 and 4.

⁶⁹ Baffour Ankomah, "What is Exactly Their Problem?", *New African* no. 562 (June 2016): 16-17.

⁷⁰ Regina Jere-Malanda, "And Now...Positive Africa", *New African* no. 474 (June 2008): 36-37.

Fundamentally, beyond the irritation over the appropriation of ‘Africa rising’ by Euro-American media, lurked unease around acquiescing to a popular discourse that entrenched negative messages about meanings of Africa’s dysfunctionality. The unease stemmed from the belief that this “rising” was a product of parochial comparisons. As Adam Greene pointed out in “*Africa Rising a Myth?*”, these new prescriptions for Africa’s new dawning were “airbrushed” valuations of the East Asian miracle”, based on “irrational exuberance” of European thinking.⁷¹ Remarkably still, in the face of collective displeasure with Africa rising among many *New African* commentators, incoming editor Parselelo Kantai launched his tenure in 2016 with a shift towards a more self-critical enunciation. He put across the question “if we had not been so described (i.e. hopeless then hopeful continent) what names would we have given ourselves?” He contended that regardless of the problematic cheerleading from outside, Africans ought to be enraged by the persistent lack of accountability in governance, and failures to offer viable African solutions after decades of plenty. In short, he dared Africans to invest in new ways of manufacturing their own reality, and to refuse to be paralysed by negative portrayals (of setback).⁷²

Laying out the process: Problems, questions and objectives

Notably, *Africarise*’s articulation of African solutions reveals a multi-layered precarity that stalks many Africa-centred enunciations. Typically, it manifests a well-written tensional tendency of either reverting to, or of disregarding, familiar ideological, philosophical and theoretical frames of explanation. As scholars on Africa, Brenda Cooper and Robert Morrell, as well as Kantai observe, it articulates a contradictory impulse: being wedged between a “bad place and immovable rock”.⁷³ In contemporary expressions, this precarious position is

⁷¹ Adam R. Greene, “Africa Rising A Myth? Bring on Authoritarian Capitalism”, *Think Africa Press*, January 28, 2013. Available at <http://thinkafricapress.com/development/africa-rising-myth-bring-authoritarian-capitalism-instead>. Accessed August 16, 2013.

⁷² Kantai “Beyond Africa Rising”, 6.

⁷³ Cooper and Morrell, “The Possibility of African-Centred Knowledges”, 2.

especially stark when ideas for African solutions encounter the dictates of the present global system around debt, financialisation, securitization and mediatisation.⁷⁴ The problem that arises can be understood in two observations. Firstly, drawing on Masolo's and Mbembe's allegory of an immovable corpse, it possible to trace an overwhelming urge to affirm Africanness by destroying the "ineliminable odour" of the dead father (*L'Odeur du père*): the corpse which "obstinately persists in getting up again every time it is buried."⁷⁵ That is, effort is dedicated to erase/reject lingering legacies of slavery, colonialism and apartheid, and relatedly, persistent inadequacies in dominant approaches of address. Put differently a significant amount of popular commentary sits agonizingly with difficulty to cede dominant notions of past trauma reinvented in current memory, due to indispensable neoliberal politico-economic arrangements of existence into which the African is compelled. As Toyin Agbetu calls it, having to make allowances for "Kipling's Whiteman's burden."⁷⁶ Masolo notes that often, such tensions spring from ideological disagreements over how to engage political, cultural and social ills of colonialism in the postcolonial life. So on comes pressure to regard the impact of colonialism univocally as a just cause for an overthrow. Thereafter, as the idea goes, one needs replace those colonial inheritances with an authentic African identity.⁷⁷

These tensions described above are powerfully illustrated in the polarised exchanges among readers, around the *New African's* 12-year thematic series on slavery and reparations, and a four-part debate titled "Africa: Who Says We Are Independent?"⁷⁸ These debates unveil a glaring difficulty in explaining the unabating wave of immigration to Europe by poor Africans, their frequent deaths en route and the violence dispensed to suppress their successful crossing.

⁷⁴ Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Declaration* (Argo Navis Author Services, 2012). Available at: <https://antonioneagrienglish.files.wordpress.com/2012/05/93152857-hardt-negri-declaration-2012.pdf>.

⁷⁵ Masolo "Some Misleading Abstractions About Identity", 284, and Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, 3.

⁷⁶ Toyin Agbetu, "Britain: Not In Our Name", *New African* no. 463 (June 2007): 83.

⁷⁷ Masolo, "Some Misleading Abstractions About Identity", 285.

⁷⁸ "Africa: Who Says We Are Independent, *New African* no. 420 (July 2003):12-15, and "Who Says Africa is Independent?", *New African* no. 427 (March 2004): 24-27.

These also throw a spotlight on the sharp formalisation of politicised ethnicity, including a resurgence of violent demands for cessation and new urgings for decolonised education. Thus, certain Africans support this move for an overthrow, expressing bitterness over the psychological damage caused by colonialism and cultural imperialism, yet others are frustrated with continued laying of blame on the West, to the point of proposing abandonment of “artificial Africanisation”, comatose emancipatory narratives,⁷⁹ and an embrace of recolonization on the grounds that it is better to be the colonised by foreigners than face “political and social haemorrhage” wrought by your own predatory elite.

Secondly, at a more difficult level, this precarity is maintained by a predicament of trying to deal with the traumas of a brutal history, while yet attempting to apprehend how contemporary Africans, the conscious bearers of that brutal history, as well as authors of their own liberation, can reproduce similar brutalities and victimisation against their own. Drawing on Cornel West, it can be expressed as the existential problematic of intransigent ‘illogicalities’ in the contemporary postcolony, that concerns violent experiences for those Africans whose bodies are deemed a problem. For instance, in *Africanise* it shows up as palpable apprehension, betrayed most saliently by an underwhelming concern with the ferocity with which homosexuality is treated, and how individuals with the skin pigmentation condition of albinism are ostracized, and not to mention the xenophobic/Afrophobic ethnically-defined clashes over entitlement to ancestral lands. Strained to explain the ‘un-Africanness’ of homosexuality, most discussions suppress their unhelpful contradictions by diverting attention to cultural imperialism. Blame is heaped on African collaborators, promoting an insidious, un-African neoliberal human rights mantra. Alternatively, most discussions on the LGBTIQ movement are preoccupied with legalese, and activist efforts are reported as oddities or a manifestation of impertinence.⁸⁰ Then,

⁷⁹ For discussion on these, see Chapter 4 discussions on “Solutions lie in our continent’, Home truths, and letters to the editor (Pg.177)

⁸⁰ These condemnations of homosexuality in Africa contained the *New African* appeared in a special report by Ife Kamau Cush in February 2012, a commentary by Akua Djanne in January 2012 and a column by Ankomah

debates around attacks on African migrants are often obfuscated by cyclic impotent squabbles over accurate terminology such as whether such incidents should be labelled xenophobia or Afrophobia. At best, such moves infer betrayal of Nkrumah's dream of a united Africa, and African self-hate inflicted by colonial borders.

Even more ominous is the underwhelming engagement with brutality against albinism. For instance, Anas's award-winning documentary *The Spell of the Albino*, on the killing of albinos in Tanzania: while the images and accounts are heart-rending, it offers an intensely critical African problematic in relation to this question.⁸¹ It raises two important issues which Africa centred commentary struggles to resolve. The first one concerns the struggle to coexist with, and to explain the place of, certain traditional beliefs among contemporary Africans. Considering the scale of violence inflicted on albinos when their body parts are harvested in the belief that they bring good fortune, Anas's exposé is remiss not to explain to African viewers, the complex entanglement between the persistence of such beliefs, poverty and neoliberal capitalism. Instead, the exposé seems to regard this violence as straightforward issue of greed, fuelled by primitive dogmas. The second concerns legitimacy to report on Africa as related to one's identity. Regardless of the argument that Anas's legitimacy to make this film rests primarily on his African identity, and that that the film's voice correctly relies on local languages, when critically examined, those scenes show little distinction from the ones captured by American journalist Anderson Cooper, in his CNN documentaries on rapes in the Congo⁸². A similar argument is made regarding Kenyan photographer Boniface Mwangi's haunting

in March 2016. This intensified after the presidents of Uganda, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Gambia – Yahya Jammeh – determined homosexuality to be a crime warranting death. It is also important to note that the criticisms of homosexuality in the *New African* constitute very few occasions the subject has appeared as part of the main features in the publication's history.

⁸¹ *The Spell of the Albino*, filmed December 2011, *Al Jazeera Investigates*, YouTube Video 24:59, posted by *Al Jazeera English* December 8, 2011. Available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BVAyFIVw_e8.

⁸² *Congo Sex Abuse*, filmed August 2008, Anderson Cooper, YouTube video 03:33, posted by AC 360 for CNN and CBS, August 20, 2008 Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tp5nk9ppQa4>, and *War Against Women*, filmed January 2009, Anderson Cooper, YouTube video 03:08, posted by CBS, January 21, 2009. Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=izTzCv4480k>.

images of torn limbs and burnt corpses due to political violence, and those of his celebrated forerunner, filmmaker Mohammed Amin, of starving populations in Ethiopia (“Biblical famine”), which inspired Bob Geldof’s *Live Aid* Movement in 1984. These images are considered as among the best of African responses to African issues. Yet in a *New African* special edition titled “Inside the White Messiah Complex”, Ankomah and others reject the *Live Aid* movement as drenched in white “messianism”, which exploits such portrayals of Africa to elevate the West’s sense of enlightenment.

Ultimately, despite noble intentions to elevate Africa through a strictly Africa-centred media discourse and enunciation, Africa may still look ‘sick’ if such enunciation does not produce or embrace fresh concepts to apprehend and rethink solutions within concrete socio-political realities. Mbembe and French thinker Jean-Paul Sartre⁸³ (in allusion to Immanuel Kant) correctly insist that the African subject, like any other human being, engages in their own meaningful acts of constantly recreating themselves to encounter changes in their world. For *Africarise* this suggests possibilities of exciting different thought and of crafting new trajectories for African solutions. Such possibilities reside within these *Africarise* institutions and practices because Africans can still invent. They can as Owomoyela and Masolo show, generatively affirm themselves in *spite* of the *dead* father *himself*.

Returning to the larger object of this study around getting Africa right, in view of the precarity surrounding the two movements of this study – that is, notions of African solutions laden with contradictory tensions, and the re-opening of African scholarship – this process is subdivided into specific themes, which are delimited by four questions. This is because *Africarise* is considered to be a repetition of preceding discourses on Africa’s rebirth, and so focus turns to

⁸³ Jean-Paul Sartre, “Black Orpheus”, *The Massachusetts Review*, trans. John MacCombie, 6 no. 1 (1964): 13-52. Here, the text is referenced in relation to Léopold Sédar Senghor’s *Anthology of Negro and Malagasay Poetry in the French Language* (1948).

ideological, theoretical and philosophical treatments, and meanings around recovery of the soul (dignity); self-determination (independence); and self-definition (identity). Accordingly, these focus areas are themed as the politics of invention in the more recent terms of political and cultural self-representation, politics of cultural imperialism, and struggles for political and economic sufficiency.

However, it must be restated that the anatomy of precarity articulated by these tensions surrounding Africa-centred enunciations, also makes proportionately difficult any attempt to formulate a straightforward question. Nevertheless, at the risk of oversimplification, one may ask: Do the discursive and non-discursive elements within Africa-centred media discourses of *Africarise*, re-inscribe Africa as dysfunction? If so how? If not how?

Admittedly, the question “how?” as a concept of organising thought processes seems counterintuitive to this study’s ontology of difference. Yet, it remains inescapable if the scholarly objectives of this study hope to ultimately respond to the question of how to get Africa right. In other words, if regarded simply, the question “how?” will deceptively require straightforward, prescriptive responses in representational practice of media, whereby analysis relies solely on wordplay and selective images. That would result in the kind of erasure, or exclusion, of several complex layers of the tension within African problems which thought in difference seeks to locate. Critically, it would omit deeper explorations of sensibilities and actions that are not readily explicable, as evinced in the work of Anas and Mwangi. As explained in Chapters 3, 4 and 5, with regard to difference in itself, the responses provided to a question, do not offer a final solution to a problem. Rather, they offer a few among a broader set of solutions, whereby some of the components may incite generative contradictions, which can provoke new ideas. That is why it is necessary to open three sub-questions in relation to the

central question, in order to explore multiple layers of the “how?” in line with the thematic areas mentioned above.

The three sub-questions are:

- How do *Africarise* distinguish themselves in relation to arche-narratives of Africa’s socio-political redemption? Rephrased, how does *Africarise* repeat Africa-centred reawakening differently? This question accounts for attempts by *Africarise* to produce distinctive audio-visual commentary that opens other ways for Africanity to evolve, differently. Such consideration needs to account for what Mbembe calls an evolving subject’s “languages of life”; those distinctive material things experienced, imaginations, signs, superstitions and images⁸⁴ which give an enunciation a spirit of its time/age.
- If contemporary African situations are predominantly analysed against universal libertarian tenets of democratic culture, how does *Africarise* approach complex politics of belonging, governance, and ethics? This question digs into varied ways of performing Africanity, even those which scandalise the popular Pan-Africanist notion of a unified African Identity captured in the slogan “we are one”. It includes assumptions around autochthonous relations, especially in relation to claims of ethnic indigeneity and issues of land, homosexuality, immigration and xenophobia/Afrophobia. Lastly, it examines assumptions around patriotism and loyalty to political leaders, as features of political self-determination.
- If *Africarise* do indeed articulate complexities and contradictions against the notion of Africa as dysfunction, what characteristics of different thinking are demonstrated in conceptualisations of ‘own solutions’? In terms of this study’s conceptual framework, focus will be on processes and moments of deterritorialisation; that is, practice which

⁸⁴ Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, 15.

affirm modes of rewriting and performing Africanity in its own terms across different moments – *our way* as explored in Chapter 6.

The above-outlined efforts of this study are aimed at seizing and repurposing a contemptuous concept of ‘African thought processes’ as originally framed by British missionary to Africa Paul Foster. To Foster, an “African answer” was by definition, “off-centre”.⁸⁵ If so, it describes the transversal disposition of “rebellion” which is always off-centre. It comports with Mbeki’s petition that a truly African cause for renewal is a “call to rebellion”⁸⁶ against causes of devastation, including domestic ones. Accordingly:

- The study seeks to foreground an ontological attitude of difference in itself, and becoming, for methods and modes of thought that produce knowledge which grasps Africa in its complex ‘chaos’ of the postcolony. Thus the term Africa-purposed is linked to Kweyi Armah’s and Owomoyela’s concept of *our way*, which captures ontological commitments for an alternative prospective, performative, developmental outlook, which sustains a more humane Africanity. It approaches African life as unfolding processes, of learned ways and principles embraced by African beings, conscious of difficult pasts and pursuing an alternative reality sensitive to familial relations. As Senegalese philosopher Souleymane Bachir Diagne notes, this requires an attitude of continual recreation of “futable” processes in thought and practice,⁸⁷ in anticipation of future possibilities for the long haul, critically aware that the contradictions brought

⁸⁵ Paul Foster, *White to Move?: A Portrait of East Africa Today* (London: Billing and Sons Ltd, 1961), 11.

⁸⁶ The African Renaissance Statement of Deputy President, Thabo Mbeki. SABC, Gallagher Estate, August 13, 1998. Available at <http://www.sahistory.org.za/archive/african-renaissance-statement-deputy-president-thabo-mbeki-sabc-gallagher-estate-13-august-1>.

⁸⁷ Souleymane Bachir Diagne, “On Prospective Development and a Political Culture of Time”, in *Philosophy and African Development: Theory and Practice*, ed. Lansana Keita (Dakar: CODESRIA, 2011), 57-68. Diagne’s reading of *Age and Durée* coincides with Mbembe’s in the section “Time and Meanings of Rising”. It implies an understanding of change in time as nonlinear, and the future implies affirmative planning for Africa’s possibilities of development, by working with and through difficult inertias and reversal in present events.

by the temporariness of past and present will not halt the future from unfolding to desired changes.

- Taking from Zeleza, this study seeks to place emphasis on an Africa-purposed scholarship which creatively intersects African libraries, or repositories of knowledge, alongside resonant disciplinary methodologies. It entails opening up *intuitive* sources of self-critical and philosophical thought that Africans have largely embraced. As anthropologist Archie Mafeje⁸⁸ shows, these includes critical poetry and idioms from sages, traditional expressions by social commentators – Imbongi, Griots and prophets – who entangled with their societies both as ordinary constituents, and as truthful albeit uncomfortable critics.

Thinking apparatus of the enemy:⁸⁹ The burden of Nyamnjoh’s co-theorisation

How does one articulate constructive “co-theorisation” in a manner that does not unwittingly attract the indictment of performing “native ventriloquism”, which involves channelling elitist abstracted Euro-American affectations of “evolutionary experimentalism”?⁹⁰ An episode involving two luminaries central to this study – Zeleza and Mbembe – offers little certainty when attempting to give a straight answer. Briefly, despite the convergences in Mbembe’s and Zeleza’s arguments concerning the legitimacy of African thought – in their fierce criticism of Western modernity’s arrogance which decrees what all thinking and social practice ought to be, and of Africans conceding at times carelessly or passively – Zeleza nonetheless delivered harsh criticism of Mbembe’s application of major concepts in social theory. *On the Postcolony* was accused of being overexcited ‘narcissistic formalism’ that gratuitously overemphasised Africa’s

⁸⁸ Archie Mafeje, “The Role of the Bard in a Contemporary African Community”, *Journal of African Languages* 5 no. 6 (1966/67): 193-223.

⁸⁹ Sartre, “Black Orpheus”, 22-24.

⁹⁰ Zeleza, *Manufacturing African Studies and Crises*, 22, 51-52.

pathologies, and denounced African scholarship.⁹¹ Thus, given how briskly the charge of capitulation could be levelled at a figure once described as the “most articulate commentator of the African postcolonial era”,⁹² to act on Nyamnjoh’s call for co-theorisation, Africa-purposed scholarship and practice needs to make the following explicit.

First, co-theorisation in conviviality does not equate to betrayal, or self-sabotage out of naiveté. Rather, it infers a postcolonial vexation, an unavoidable paradox experienced by African scholars. It is that of continually thinking differently while using the “thinking apparatus of the enemy”; namely, their universalised disciplines and languages. As illustrated in Nyamnjoh’s own argument, African media scholarship and practice ought to abstain from mimicry of universal approaches, which are indifferent to diverse ideas of African personhood and African material experiences. However, engaging in an open comparative and reciprocal process by its nature leads to *entanglement* with contradictions of everyday ‘chaos’, in a manner that refuses to assign to Africa a “birthmark”. Else, mimicry and rigid engagements would reinforce academic cleavages that cast Africa as a peculiarity and indeed a curiosity to the rest of the world. They would corroborate a Hegelian, and the altogether overall charge by Western academic traditions that Africa is a fixed anomaly, outside world history – something which African thought precisely has long battled to rebuke.

Postcolonial theorist Alfred Lopez observes that this difficulty compels a healthy awareness of tense relations with dominant discourses, and also, of the extent of such dominance within the very attempts to resist.⁹³ So postcolonial co-theorisation endures ideological pressure for a Fanonian “overthrow” that would so to speak, relieve a slave’s frustration with the untenability

⁹¹ Paul T. Zeleza, *Rethinking Africa’s Globalisation: Volume 1 - The Intellectual Challenges* (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2003), 282.

⁹² Michael Syryotinski, *Deconstruction and the Postcolonial: At the Limits of Theory* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2007), 98.

⁹³ Alfred J. Lopez, *Posts and Pasts: A Theory of Post Colonialism* (New York: State of University of New York Press, 2001), 122.

of mutual recognition from the Master.⁹⁴ Importantly, Wiredu describes it as a productive admission of the burden that comes with Western concepts, especially racism, because some of these are useful to the African's understanding of his life world. This is all the more so considering that besides European contact, Africa's evolution entails what Ali Mazrui termed as a "Triple Heritage", involving complex intersections between politico-cultural factors of Islam, African traditions and Western industrialisation.⁹⁵ Given this, as Masolo points out, contemporary African scholars and scholarship would in fact weaken their cause by pursuing strict methodological separatism. Such separatism is based on thin notions of a scholar's imagined unaffected subjectivity, paying little regard to the reality that no conceptual or value system is devoid of some influences from the social and historical environment it encounters.⁹⁶ For this reason, such isolationist scholarship will struggle to come to grips with complex historical realities, both African and global, to which it purportedly responds. Consequently, it will struggle to retain disciplinary unity within the broader discourse by undermining its legitimacy as an equal source of knowledge production.

Second, paradox though is not impossibility.⁹⁷ Nyamnjoh's idea of entangling with "chaos", gives greater incentive to explore one's own modes of understanding complex transformations, related to practical African solutions. This relates to the question of how Africanity is conceived in a changing world. For instance, more ought to be said about the possibilities unlocked by the dynamics of consensus, contradictions and divergence during breakthrough moments of Africa's quest for political independence among diverse liberation movements. As will be seen in Chapter 2 in the discussion on the three moments of Africa's rebirth, clashes of ideology and

⁹⁴ Ibid., 124.

⁹⁵ Ali Mazrui, *The Africans: A Triple Heritage* (New York: Little Brown & Co, 1986).

⁹⁶ Masolo, quoting Foucault in "Some Misleading Abstractions About Identity", 288.

⁹⁷ Souleymane B. Diagne, Amina Mama, Henning Melber and Francis B. Nyamnjoh, *Identity and Beyond: Rethinking Africanity* (Uppsala, Sweden: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 2001), 19-24. This statement comes from Diagne's rejoinder to Sartre's argument on the paradox that Africanity often finds powerful affirmation through appropriations of colonialist languages and modes of writing.

political strategy disclosed several solutions to a common problem, and not paralysis. At a more cultural angle, Diagne, Wiredu and Irele show that the question of Africanity remains an open one, as diverse conceptualisations of African by prominent Africans writing to their people begin with self-exploration, often working inside epistemological conditions of the West. From the writings of Senghor to Ngugi wa Thiong'o, ordinary Africans will encounter their world in diverse and paradoxical ways, despite what is written and interpreted, or clarified as truths in their own indigenous languages. Quayson describes it as an impulse of restless transaction manifested in lived postcolonial reality, where every day, the African subject mediates between strangeness of terminology of the formal European academic political register and concepts on knowing self, found in the richness of shared African languages. Yet a deeply seductive pull remains to confine diverse expressions of Africanity to prescribed univocal references, of a unanimous classification called 'to be African'.

And since Zeleza and Mbembe among others, prove that African scholarship can still reimagine itself while engulfed by imposing universalised epistemologies and internal struggles, the transversal method adopted for this study allows me to "transgress" like Zeleza's proposed Pan-African intellectual. It allows me to resist fixation with moments of divergence on certain issues among leading African thinkers. Instead, I assert: (1) that what their thought brings into apprehending Africa, expresses sincere commitments to getting Africa right; and (2) that their thought, used alongside other resonant concepts, unveils many ways to grasping a problem; thus I focus on what their ideas can do in my time to enhance capacity to think African solutions in a complex world. That is why I embrace this anxiety inseparable from a both/and approach, by re-thinking with and against them.

In view of the above discussion, it is evident that current popular interpretations of Africa's 'dysfunctions' remain attached to prevailing but inadequate accounts of the legacies of cultural,

intellectual and political collisions. However, thinking African solutions demands conscientious effort to uncover extra layers of ideas and approaches to Africa's difficult situations, derived from those legacies. Such an approach involves no less than an act of encountering Africa again, through creative application of Deleuzian concepts of difference and repetition, alongside Mbembe's discourse on the African contemporary postcolony.

Conceptual framework and technique of analysis

In Deleuze's ontology of *difference*, thinking needs to retain its power to continually transform life by opening possibilities to *become* something different. In the seminal text *Difference and Repetition*, the work of liberating the concept of difference from the "maledictory state"⁹⁸ sustained by leading philosophical traditions, begins by rejecting the supremacy of the representational model of thought. In this model, thinking has a dominant, generic form – the abhorrent image of thought – based on general assumptions about what the activity of thinking is. As described by Deleuze, this dominant *image* of thought discloses itself in the implicit presupposition of:

Everybody knows what it means to think and to be. As a result, when the philosopher says 'I think therefore I am', he can assume that the universality of his premises — namely, what it means to be and to think — will be implicitly understood, and that no one can deny that to doubt is to think, and to think is to be. "Everybody knows...no one can deny" is the form of representation and the discourse of the representative.⁹⁹

⁹⁸ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 29. As also discussed in Chapter 3, Deleuze's difference constitutes a break from classic realism in the mould of Aristotle's universal system of classification into functional categories of genera and species, by introducing concepts of differential calculus to calibrate a more abstract individuating model. See in particular, Manuel Delanda, "Deleuze, Mathematics and Realist Ontology", in *Cambridge Companion to Deleuze*, ed. Daniel W. Smith and Henry Somers-Hall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 220.

⁹⁹ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 129-130.

Furthermore, the notion “everybody knows” as Williams observes, rests on two moral feelings about thought: one, thinkers seek out what everybody knows, and two, in principle, what everybody knows ought to be accessible to everyone, it can be distributed.¹⁰⁰ And so thinking is construed as a *common* naturally-occurring human capacity or *sense* of deductive logic, of dialectical comparison and elimination, as inherently good, and thus disposed to goodwill. These related assumptions develop from habitual conformity to accepted truths, *common opinions*, of reality which are mimicked since childhood. In academic pursuits, these assumptions buttress notions of original or fixed meanings/truths, and laws pertaining to the reality of being, including notions of neutral experience of life’s situations, all captured in language symbols. Deleuze dismisses this goodwill in *common sense*, as “shorthand” for decaying thought, stuck in habitual application of established concepts, without connecting them to their actual/virtual conditions or problems. Invariably, it produces simple solutions which constrict differences to pre-determined core identities, in conformance with, or in contrast to, set conventions. Correspondingly, in “On Time In the State of Becoming”, Mbembe notes grave difficulty in some African scholarship with thinking about Africa itself, precisely due to extensive dependence on universal foundational – *originnaire* – reason.¹⁰¹ In such scholarship, attempts to reject fictional representations of Africa only using binary understandings, stubbornly confine Africa to negative interpretations of incomplete nothingness. In a word, here thinking is obliged to suppress difference, to produce simple recognitions of Africa as what the West is not.

For Deleuze, life or being, is not a pre-existing, unquestionably known transferable thing. Rather, being entails multiple processes of individual and individuating experience, and importantly, singularities, in continual articulation of difference.¹⁰² Thus, a “pure” activity of

¹⁰⁰ Williams, *Gilles Deleuze’s Difference and Repetition*, 115.

¹⁰¹ Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, 3-4.

¹⁰² Mbembe, “On the Postcolony”, 148.

thinking ought to persistently seek *degrees of expansion*, or, unique possibilities for alternatives in each *encounter* within these processes, inside what Mbembe calls “sites and moments of “imbuing with meaning”.¹⁰³ That is, actual places where thought intersects with diverse physical objects, ideas and actions, in both familiar and new situations, to enable deeper observation of contradictions and possible alternatives. As philosopher Henri Bergson advances, “different things, differences in nature turn out, in the end, to be merely the modes of expansion or actualization of internal difference”.¹⁰⁴ Bergson here captures difference as it is understood and adopted in related key concepts of this study, e.g. *time/durées*, *repetition*, frameworks of *assemblages* and *mediatisation*, and in the analytic technique of *mapping*.

Bergson’s statement allows me to briefly clarify the concept of thinking difference in itself, as well as those related concepts adopted for this study as introduced the previous sentence. “Different things” comprise individuals as multi-faceted selves, and as parts of the contexts where processes of life happen, involving both humans and non-humans. As counterintuitive as it may seem when compared to most definitions of a social being within community, Bergson’s argument is that, beyond the illusion of a causal series of observable events, each being and community “is multiple and different”;¹⁰⁵ it is always inscribed with uniqueness because it contains multiple ongoing processes, involving interconnections and collisions between physical bodies (the *actual* plane) and unseen (*virtual* plane) – layers of flowing ideas, memories and senses. And yet, each specific moment, or event of encounter, among these parts produces a degree of transformation on whole context while each part registers its own unique experience and change which might not be accorded a similar degree of recognition as the overall major incident. Put differently, a familiar incident experienced or observed openly at a particular moment might be immediately attributed to a few recognisable *actual* causes; yet

¹⁰³ Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, 7.

¹⁰⁴ Elizabeth Grosz, “Bergson, Deleuze and the Unbecoming of Unbecoming”, *Parallax* 11 no. 2 (2005): 4-6.

¹⁰⁵ Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, trans. Mark Lester and Charles Stivale, ed. Constantin V. Boundas (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 179.

its manifestation involved several, vital, unobvious *virtual* processes, recording their own realities, which may also involve necessary evolution provoked by developments to non-human objects like technology. So, within one historical event, individuals and organisations also transform distinctively due to multiple meanings inscribed in each moment of encounter with diverse discourses, technologies, emotions and actions. Importantly, locating the degree of unique change in the overall event, denotes *repetition*. That is, for difference to be registered, it requires that those unobvious individuating and singular processes to be affirmed each time, and to the greatest extent possible, alongside the major event of which they partake.

This conceptualisation of difference not only enfolds this study's overall approach to re-opening multiple layers to situations and realities commonly treated as Africa's dysfunctions. It also guides the idea of an Africa-purposed knowledge, as one which opens up to other modes of knowing even without pre-existing concepts, and the use of other languages, that can clarify closer truths about such situations and their processes in their particular moments. On the more technical aspects, it animates all related philosophical and theoretical concepts which frame the key sections of this thesis. These include the concept of time; whereby change is expressed in the nonlinear movement of events among intersecting parts inside of media assemblages in processes of mediatisation. By using the analytic technique of mapping the plateau, one is able to show how those movements can lead to better understandings of certain events related to overall change, which are deemed 'dysfunctional' at certain points of history.

Cryonics of African ideas?¹⁰⁶

This study draws on James Williams's observation in relation to Deleuze's philosophy of time, that, "the return of difference is only given to those processes avoiding the fixity of an identity".¹⁰⁷ This statement lays ground for two defining aspects of time and change for this study. First, repetition: this re-entry to African scholarship and practice of media through familiar expressions of Africa's reawakening, is by definition an act of difference in itself. It deliberately enlists an alternative mode of grappling with knowledges and meanings which evolved from the past, to influence both present and future thought on African solutions. This follows in the tracks of Williams's contention that *pure difference* is found when the method unveils minor changes in numbers between two things, and it remains insufficient until it is connected to an earlier moment in the contemplating mind.¹⁰⁸

Second, to advance African scholarship, the study restates the import of rethinking the concept of time in mediatised readings of change in Africa. For example, it cannot be ignored that Ankomah's spirited commentary "Who Controls the Past?" launched a multi-year theme on recovering dignity, pervaded with a sense of difficulty of "moving forward" without first looking back at the damage of slavery and colonialism. His commentary constituted an affronted retort against a fellow African accusing him of "quarrelling with the past",¹⁰⁹ instead of focusing on future solutions to self-inflicted problems including corruption, 'extrajudicial' killing of citizens and economic mismanagement. The ensuing exchange speaks to many in popular registers of decolonisation and Africa-centeredness, which infer a preserved "temporal

¹⁰⁶ In physics this refers to low temperature preservation, or cryopreservation, of people and other living tissues threatened by/susceptible to damage due to present conditions, and that cannot be sustained through current scientific technology. They are frozen in cryotubes prior to complete damage in the hope of full resuscitation in the future. See David E. Pegg, "Principles of Cryopreservation", in *Cryopreservation and Freeze-Drying Protocols*, rev. ed., ed. John G. Day and Glyn N. Stacey (Totowa: Humana Press Inc, 2007), 39-57.

¹⁰⁷ James Williams, *Gilles Deleuze's Philosophy of Time: A Critical Introduction and Guide* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), 123.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 22-23.

¹⁰⁹ J. H. Macharia wa Gathaara, "Lessons for African Leaders", *New African* no. 382 (February 2000): 6.

location” which Haitian anthropologist Michel-Rolph Trouillot terms a “savage slot”,¹¹⁰ of pre- and post-conquest life. As Lewis Gordon points out, conceptualisation of such a slot requires indigenous people to freeze (or put in cryotubes), all *thinking* and critical engagement with the world around them, focusing on either the exact moment, or just before the encounter with the West.¹¹¹ Both Ankomah’s and Gathaara’s notions of emancipation seem to suggest focus on such strictly severed moments, exceptional to the present. And so, ideas and meanings can either be hauled through time and thawed for application, or totally discarded with little to no acknowledgement of entanglement and complexity, including indigenous complicity/agency in the conditions of the present.

Since difference holds that change in each situation always consists of multiple processes acting in their temporary moments, leading to change over time (or becoming), it is crucial to grasp how past and future are part of the present. On time, Williams notes there is no present that is not accompanied by a dynamic change in relations in the past which it has no control over. Each present is only founded as passing, (i.e. it immediately becomes past). Thus, the relation between present and the future is founded on the impossibility of a return of any present, and so the future remains open because each passing present involves encountering and changing pasts in different ways.¹¹² For Mbembe, in order to appropriately reencounter the complex postcolony, it is necessary to adopt the above-described concept of time. This is because the “hoary” notions of Africa before and after colonisation suppress an indispensable historical practicality: that each African subject has always encountered, and still encounters, their world differently. Accordingly, Mbembe invented the interlinked concepts *age*: not a fixed period, but a set of multiple relationships consisting of distinctive present events, formed out of

¹¹⁰ Michel Rolph-Truillot, “Anthropology and the Savage Slot: The Poetics and Politics of Otherness”, in *Global Transformations: Anthropology and the Modern World* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 7-28.

¹¹¹ Lewis R. Gordon, “Justice Otherwise: Thoughts on Ubuntu”, in *Ubuntu: Curating the Archive* ed. Leonhard Praeg and Siphokazi Magadla (Pietermaritzburg: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2014), 10.

¹¹² Williams, *Gilles Deleuze’s Philosophy of Time*, 102.

enveloping times and their happenings: (and) that is *durée* – entanglements or overlapping temporary moments made up of discontinuities and contradictions in the transformation of *age*.¹¹³ Together, these correspond to Williams’s and Diagne’s observations concerning a subject’s experience of past and present, where practices, imaginations, and fictions, interlock in temporary moments, which in due course lead to irreversible change and anticipation for the future. Mbembe calls these interlocking moments, time of existence, time of experience, and time of entanglement. These elements of examining change in time will be enlisted in this study to clarify ‘dysfunctions’ and contradictions around Africa’s solutions for the future, as manifested in the current inadequacies of mediatized enunciations, in both individual and institutional commentary on African solutions – especially where the past is seen to collide irreconcilably with the present, so predictably ‘damning’ the future.

Media function of inventing: Overview of rationale for re-opening space

Against this backdrop of difference theory, this study approaches mediatized discourse using a Deleuzo-Guattarian framework of *assemblages* and the associated analytic technique of “*mapping a plateau*”.¹¹⁴ Such an approach signals a major shift from predominantly representational, functionalist and institutionalist assumptions about the nature of media as simply tools.¹¹⁵ These assumptions entail ideas belonging to traditional thought of political economy pertaining to the role of media, in terms of which initially, media were systems intended to serve a macro-level function of manufacturing socio-political totalities called nation states. That is, media were meant to be used to generate shared political meanings and identities. Such approaches developed from systems theory, as social sciences sought to explain the complex formation of society along the lines of the positivist ethos of the time. Accordingly,

¹¹³ Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, 14-15.

¹¹⁴ This is founded on Deleuze and Guattari’s “principle of cartography and decalcomania”, which entails reading the movements of a rhizome in a plateau/field/assemblage; see their *A Thousand Plateaus*, 5-15.

¹¹⁵ Jonathan Hardy, *Western Media Systems* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 1-7. He explains the basis for normative theories of Western media systems as built on Durkheim’s functionalism enhanced by Talcott Parsons.

since Parsonian functionalism proposed society as comprised of complex interdependent parts each working for success of the whole, media theorists pursued measurable *cause and effect*, as media could perform a function, as tools for shaping society both for, and against, established *ideas* and norms of citizen behaviour. Even though such ideas were later discredited as reductive deterministic conceptions of unavoidably complex relations, common thought on media and politics retained notions of objective representation or framing of reality, and the possibility to determine macro-level national politics, through media as tools of manipulation. Notable examples in the South African context – and in the current United States of America – include claims that the media is the “main opposition” to the African National Congress (ANC), first uttered by the former ANC General Secretary Gwede Mantashe in 2011.¹¹⁶ Similar sentiments were echoed seven years later by the Economic Freedom Fighters’ (EFF) Commander in Chief, Julius Malema, who accused the eNews Channel Africa (eNCA) of promoting white supremacy to stifle transformation in South Africa.¹¹⁷ Correlatively incumbent US President Donald Trump has even called the media “enemy of the people” in response to what he sees as damaging representations of his work.¹¹⁸

Moreover, despite new cultural studies theories arguing that meaning creation and consumption involve subjective processes of individual use of language and exchange of values (*articulation*),¹¹⁹ inadequacies of institutionalist functionalist thought remained. Overall, whereas political economy approaches struggled to apprehend complexities and contradictions of accidental micro-events like political insurrections, cultural studies struggled to shake off the premium placed on the representational power of media language in cultural evolution. This

¹¹⁶ “Media is ANC’s Main Opposition” *City Press*, April 4, 2011. Available at

<https://www.news24.com/Archives/City-Press/Media-is-ANCs-main-opposition-20150430>

¹¹⁷ Julius Malema, Twitter posted March 18, 2018, 2:20 a.m. Available at

https://twitter.com/julius_s_malema/status/975300888054124544?lang=en

¹¹⁸ Donald Trump, Twitter post February 17, 2017, 1:48 a.m. Available at

<https://twitter.com/realdonaldtrump/status/832708293516632065?lang=en>

¹¹⁹ Robert E. Babe, *Cultural Studies and Political Economy: Toward a New Integration* (Plymouth: Lexington Books, 2009), 5-7.

explains the persistence of normative representational institutionalist frameworks, which new research in African media and practice seeks to reformulate. Mostly, and even inadvertently, functionalist representational thought rears its head in two interrelated ways. First, media discourse after Africa's independence tends to focus on exigencies of democracy and development,¹²⁰ largely retaining the term nation-building in which media serve the function of educating and uniting disparate groups for the sake of national identity and development, or propaganda as Nkrumah put it. This impulse is often articulated within the four normative theories of the press/media – authoritarian, libertarian/free corporate, soviet, and developmental/social responsibility.¹²¹ In popular mainstream-speak, these are often employed, albeit poorly, alongside Jürgen Habermas's associational life, whereby the "Public Sphere", is read as a 'separate' locale where societies can exercise and debate their issues, against *system* (i.e. state and private/market control of media) functioning in normative modes to shape those publics.

However, such a reading ignores Habermas's caution against thinking that seeks to detach the "public sphere" from the complex entwinement between what he conceives as *lifeworld* – that is, the life of the individual subject – from *system*, the inexorable structures and discourses that impinge on socio-political processes – *in* negotiations of power in everyday public life.¹²² Secondly, it is on the basis of such inadequate readings that one can explain the rise to prominence of the notion of cultural imperialism in media discourses around globalisation. One of such is a popular ideological expression that draws on Chinweizu's ideas, where the concept

¹²⁰ As discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, this emerges in a sample of key studies on African media, e.g. *Media and Democracy in Africa* (Hyden et al. 2002), *50 Years of Journalism: African Media Since Ghana's Independence* (ed. Elizabeth Barrat and Guy Berger, 2007), and *Popular Media, Democracy and Development in Africa* (ed. Herman Wasserman, 2011).

¹²¹ These theories were introduced in 1956 by Fred Siebert, Theodore Peterson and Wilbur Schramm, in relation to how media can be used to serve the ends of government.

¹²² Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burger and Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991), 178-185, 206, 245, 274-275.

is understood as referring to the process of coercing Western cultural consumption and mores among unwitting reluctant subjects, through the constructive power of Western media.¹²³ The academic articulation of this concept is influenced by the Marxist dependency theories of Immanuel Wallerstein, on powerful centres and feeder peripheries,¹²⁴ and on Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky's thesis of "Manufacturing Consent", which refers to the power of global media empires to advance capitalist hegemony.

Practically speaking, as Habermas would show, political economy approaches still persist because the media necessarily perform the awkward tasks of government given that few alternatives exist to current liberal democratic politics and the global neoliberal system. As such, the media function of perception management remains as notions of investor and population confidence, democratic nation-building and development are deemed crucial to African polities' organising for the convergence of their interests within the global neoliberal order. However, considering the increasing intertwinement between complex socio-cultural and economic dynamics which impinge on formal political activity 60 years after independence, unchecked inadequacies in representational functionalist thinking will strangle efforts to deepen ideas on Africa confronting itself. Quietly, questions like "Who shall define Africa?" are interpreted as being analogous to the colonial expression "who shall keep the peace?" – thus fuelling popular dualistic opinions and relatedly, false dichotomies that detract from Africa's complex realities. They often invigorate paralysing notions of cultural imperialism, so instigating poorly-conceived proposals for complete divorce from renowned media bodies like

¹²³ Notably, the most popular charge against cultural imperialism in Africa carries a terse anti-Western sentiment, as articulated in the work of Chinweizu: "Towards the African Renaissance Media", in *African Renaissance*, ed. Malegapuru William Makgoba (Johannesburg: Mafube Publishing, 1999), 364-375. Similar sentiments are echoed in Allen N. Adum, Emmanuel M. Ngozi and Ojinime E. Ojiakor, "Towards Media of Africa by Africans and For Africans", *Mgbakoigba, Journal of African Studies* 5 no. 1 (2015): 1-9.

¹²⁴ Hardy, *Western Media Systems*, 79-90, P. Eric Louw, "Revisiting Cultural Imperialism", in *Popular Media, Democracy and Development in Africa*, ed. Herman Wasserman (London: Routledge 2011), 32-45, and Joel Netshitenzhe, "The Media in the African Renaissance", in *African Renaissance*, ed. Malegapuru William Makgoba (Johannesburg: Mafube Publishing, 1999), 376-384.

Reuters and Agence France-Presse (AFP), in favour of dedicated African entities such as the emergent *Africa Check*. However, on the one hand, one risks conceptual paucity if one fails to sufficiently defend the merits of a complete divorce, backed by a convincing argument for the legitimate difference in African representations, brought solely by African institutions or racially ‘dark-skinned’ practitioners. This is because the complex realities and experiences that both external and African agents encounter are not simply media fabrications or representations, although as already seen, existential experience is symbolically structured by language or images. Moreover, paradoxically, *Africa Check* subsists largely due to funding offered by global partners including AFP, which are supposed to be the ‘enemy’.

At another level, the idea of decolonising approaches to media by proposing empirical contextualisation of African audience participation in popular media as the alternative, seem to struggle with re-opening the universal foundations of functionalist and representational thinking with regard to in-depth complex issues at the core of African “normative life”. An example is seen in the recently-developed rebuttals to such mainstream state-related media, compiled by Wendy Willems and Winston Mano.¹²⁵ The general insufficiency in the arguments collated for this decolonial counter “provincialisation” exercise appear to approximate what Gordon terms as “epistemic decolonisation”¹²⁶ of universalised media studies. Overall, most the analyses do not show how those specific contexts cited for this decolonial project engage in a “metacritique of reason”¹²⁷ or thought about mediatised social production in an entangled world, if one takes into account that such complex entwinements have become a distinctive expression of life in the contemporary African postcolony. In summary, by pursuing a diversification of mediatised expressions in contemporary African life, those often ignored by dominant media frameworks, some of the topics covered suggest an insufficient exercise in

¹²⁵ *Everyday Media Culture in Africa: Audiences and Users*, ed. Wendy Willems and Winston Mano (New York: Routledge, 2017).

¹²⁶ Gordon, “Justice Otherwise”, 21.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

counter-translation, without formulation. For instance, topics such as “audience perceptions of radios stations”, “Our own Wikileaks” or “Twitter use by FM Radio”, present localised uses of universal media technologies for counter-reporting and -organising in relation to hegemonic patronage. The discussions remain descriptive, explanatory and not *prospective*, as they largely fail to push their arguments to capture multiple layers of different complex coevolution that can be created between practitioners and audiences entangled in domestic and global politics and socio-economic development, to perform their Africanness differently using those technologies.

Different thinking around these normative frameworks begins by discarding the presumption that at any moment, the media provide sufficient reference points to understanding the world, especially because they are conceived as operating at a measurable distance from multiple layers of the empirical realities they engage.¹²⁸ Theoretically speaking, such presumptions suggest a neat distinction between static forms, which in Deleuze’s terms are experience and the experiencer, whereby the experiencer studies and experiences the ‘outside’ world sufficiently, from a neutral distance.¹²⁹ However, the nature of connections experienced by humans in the dynamic between the actual and the virtual, means that beings must remain connected to increases and decreases of flows, which things may undergo. Accordingly, Mbembe asserts that the “African subject does not exist apart from the acts that produce social reality, or apart from the process by which those practices are, so to speak, imbued with meaning”.¹³⁰ This study, in just this spirit, approaches the media, and mediation (modes of conveying information), as processes of continuous interrelation, of creating multiple *events*, (that is multiple indeterminable possibilities), involving individuals – or media practitioner selves – technology, practices, and ideas, that are associated with particular institutions within specific geographical locales, entwined in exchanges with one another and society. However,

¹²⁸ As philosopher of art Susan Langer (1953) argues further, the power of interactivity, the multiple events provoked by processes of mediation with art or film, extend beyond the immediate representation.

¹²⁹ Williams, *Gilles Deleuze’s Difference and Repetition*, 76.

¹³⁰ Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, 6.

possibilities remain that with those processes, there is capacity to account for, or to erase/destroy, new unique experiences in actuality, senses and memory – the multiple events – encountered in each situation. This describes the workings or processes of *assemblages* and *mediatisation*.

This study holds that it is in entanglement with multiple layers of socio-political and cultural processes, that an African analyst or documentary commentator can get expanded degrees of complex layers of everyday life, in their selves as individual ethnic subjects, linked to a specific organisation or assemblage of *Africanise*. This individual is always engaged in performative practices of connecting and/or colliding within the institution, with productions, discourses of the institution and scholarly, popular, and technological modes of delivery, all the while intersecting with ordinary African audiences. And together – practitioner, institution and audiences – experience and manufacture a variety of meanings and forms of Africanity, both productive and destructive which ought to be located.

This is articulated in recent media scholarship where the concept of mediatisation infers critical analysis of such interrelations between changes in media and mediation processes, and changes in culture with which the media itself are entwined and with which they co-emerge over time.¹³¹ Sociologist Bruno Latour's Actor Network Theory (ANT)¹³² best describes such mediatisation of contemporary social assemblages. For Latour, a glance at a newspaper reveals incredibly complex interactions between the human world and non-human things all in one page or rather, in the same space. Mediatisation processes are entwined with the coevolution of diverse beings,

¹³¹ Couldry and Hepp, "Conceptualizing Mediatization", and Adrian Hepp, S. Hjavard, and K. Lundby, "Mediatization: Theorizing the Interplay between Media, Culture and Society", *Media, Culture and Society* 18 (2015): 1-11.

¹³² Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor Network Theory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005). As seen in Chapter 3, although Latour's theorisation of social networks bears a close resemblance to the Deleuzo-Guattarian assemblage, debates remain around their view of nature of relations and impact on the parts – that is, whether parts retain independence or whether their being is dependent on the network (interiority versus exteriority).

things and ideas; whereby culture and nature are *obliged* by unanticipated nonlinear occurrences to interconnect or to block each other's expressions within this same context of conjunction. Above all, for mediatisation from an ANT standpoint, a full account of reality must situate itself in a network of other things, including intensities of unique senses, imagination, and objects. This is because networks are not exclusively stimulated by human actions and language, but also by non-human things with which they ceaselessly connect. Additionally, drawing on Brian Massumi's view of interactions with visual media, mediatisation implies that the pervasive increasingly intimate media technologies – cell phones/social media/etc. – signal a new degree of human-non-human interactivity whose implications on experience are infinite; here interaction is two-way, it is participatory, and these media and technology evoke behaviour rather than simply displaying forms.¹³³ To sum up, in mediatisation, any account of events mediated by the media is simultaneously an account of the unique history of a media institution, its practices, the evolving technologies and specific experiences and memories of practitioners, entwined with specific political, cultural, philosophical, and economic discourses of the time.

Concluding reflections on mapping

Drawing on the characteristics of difference as described above, *mapping* entails thinking with the aim of releasing new movement to explore any possible paths, along which to expand space to new alternatives within that situation. It is *differenciation*¹³⁴ – opening difference to more difference, to avoid *tracing*. For Deleuze, it requires “forgetting and connecting”; that is,

¹³³ Brian Massumi, *Semblance and Event: Activist Philosophy and Occurrent Arts* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2011), 40.

¹³⁴ See Chapter 3, for the definition by Adrian Parr and Manuel Delanda of Deleuze's conception of *differenciation*. It draws on the mathematical concept of differentiation – where through differential calculus, one can show alternative trajectories, or possible states in which something can exist and even transform. This requires one to begin by recording/setting parameters in which possibilities will proceed, and incrementally introducing very tiny factors, which can cause different states of change up to the pre-set limit. However, for Deleuze's *differenciation*, his projection does not set limits to how a thing can be; there is no pre-determined correct answer as a calculation would instead focus on possibilities.

opening ideas by simultaneously disregarding habit (common sense) which impels thought to *trace* along existing lines (i.e. familiar references). And so, mapping is a process of “creative experimentation”¹³⁵ in which the cartographer thinks rigorously in-between the lines¹³⁶ of intersecting ideas, discourses, and behaviours within the assemblage. It involves experimentation with new concepts to locate multiple mobile connections; degrees of freedom to the greatest extent possible (i.e. to the *n*th power). The cartographer’s thinking coevolves in this process as well as generating new possibilities for this assemblage to interconnect with other assemblages of resonant enunciation, as is the case with the interconnections of *Africarise*, within current efforts to think African solutions.

This study employs Manuel Delanda’s reading of Deleuzo-Guattarian mapping of *rhizomatic* movements in an assemblage – intersecting with concepts in differential calculus and geography – primarily because his formulation of multi-scaled assemblages and assemblages of enunciation are suitable for this task.¹³⁷ To explain, since *Africarise* describes a multi-scaled assemblage of enunciation – individual assemblages cohering to produce a larger expression – this analysis employs Delanda’s “Associative Model”. This model combines the key operators used in the analysis of traditional types of assemblages (e.g. factories, business organisations), with those of enunciation (i.e. language, texts, images, and actions during production). This means combining the customary material/physical and expressive dimensions (discursive and non-discursive), with specific language and text production operators. The latter refers to specific thematic trajectories in content and related jargon, as articulated in spoken and written language, visuals and sound. It also entails modes of content selection and editing. These

¹³⁵ Williams, *Gilles Deleuze’s Difference and Repetition*, 76, and Bruce Baugh, “Experimentation”, in *Deleuze Dictionary*, ed. Adrian Parr (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005), 91-93.

¹³⁶ These concepts of lines, territories, and lines of segmentarity (molar, molecular and of deterritorialisation), were developed in Deleuze and Guattari’s discussion of the rhizome in a *Thousand Plateaus* and *Desert Islands and other Texts* (2001).

¹³⁷ Manuel Delanda, *A New Philosophy of Society: Assemblage Theory and Social Complexity* (London: Continuum, 2006), 8-12, 26-31, 42-50.

production operators emerge through certain political and cultural sensibilities (i.e. non-linguistic convictions/affect), that relate to the material circumstances of the time, which bequeath specific founding motivations or assumptions to act, by individuals and organisations. These are developed in the discourses generated in that era in question, to clarify the actual causes of action pursued. And so as a precondition for commencing with a mapping analysis in the associative model, one needs to account for these *prior-to* language, or affective expressions that correspond to certain verbalised/written grammars, as the starting point of evolutionary processes that help generate that assemblage.

In the case of the *Africarise* assemblage, it is the historical actions and related utterances that produce these media's enunciations of Africa's rebirth. Looked at this way, the multi-scaled nature of the assemblage is disclosed in its conjunction between diverse connecting lines, trajectories of individual, and group, passion, ideology, theories and discourses of practice, which together activate a new course, uniquely in encounters with conditions, and events in a specific historical moment and geographical location. Such would include triggers from past experience, including slavery and colonialism, as communities, political associations, and political leaders all express a desire to be free. This study treats the evolution of the assemblage with specific focus falling on two micro-assemblages: the *New African* which was formed in London in 1966, and the CNNMultichoice Awards which began in 1995. For the *New African*, special analysis will be carried out in relation to the period 1999 to 2000, taking into account institutional actions by owners and editorial processes, which forcefully contributed in growing the assemblage to its current Africa-centred form. Correlatively, for CNNMultichoice Awards, special analysis is conducted on the work of Anas and Mwangi in relation to the period between 2007 and 2016, taking into account the actions and ideas put forward by the founding team, particularly Mohammed Amin.

This is followed by analysis of “space of possibility” or degree of constraint within the assemblage. It entails examining “routinisation’ and/or “deterritorialisation” actions and expressions that influence negatively or positively, the potential to emerge and evolve. This requires examining key distinct themes in *Africarise*, articulated in the enunciation of the specific media. The assemblage’s possibility to change would entail routinisation; unspoken rules or “verdicts” regulating distinctiveness of enunciation, imprinting a ‘genetic’ code on an assemblage. In short, routinisation consists of recurring discourses of practice and how these are affected by the geographical location of the institution, and the approaches in implementation of technology, ideas and language, that over time tend to impede new trajectories – particularly if institutions and practitioners adhere to, or refuse to stretch, the code. Deterritorialisation or de-coding on the other hand, signals an assemblage’s possibility to change. It entails non-spatial processes (i.e. behaviours and activities) that destabilise the perceived distinctiveness of the assemblage. These break its code to recurrently open temporary shocks or lines of flight, which may lead to new dynamic, reflexive thinking and responsive action. As will be seen in Chapter 2, the analysis of salient themes in *Africarise* requires unorthodox mapping of Africa’s history, disclosing dynamics of advance and retreat – insight into which affords space of possibility to think Africa differently.

Fr. Foster to Peter: "Tell me Peter, are those birds up there vultures?"

A long pause while Peter squints out of the window. Then he answers decisively, "The birds I am thinking of are not those".

Fr. Foster: This is an African answer, conclusive in its tone and quite inapposite in its substance...The off-centre logic crops up everywhere...When one lives among Africans, it is necessary to develop a patient receptiveness of this sort of thing...it is because of the African personality of power that results from a deep unjustified sense of self-satisfaction, of exuberant humanity, unjustified self-assured-personality, and harmony...and for the pallid European, one can begin to understand the charm and exasperation of a world sixteen hours' flight-time away from London, but a million years from the orderly conventionality of Wimbledon...

(Paul Foster, White to Move, 1961)

Chapter 2: *Africarise*: Responding to Afropessimism

Attempts to explain, or assign the true meanings and solutions to, post-independence Africa in the belief that one 'knows it', often trigger intractable frustrations. Certainly, facing complex situations, both popular and scholarly journaling of Africa's pursuit for self-definition, self-determination and economic sufficiency are still stalked by deep contradictions which they struggle to engage and so activate alternatives with their processes, inside the difficult situations they meet. As Deleuze oppositely shows, "truth is a matter of irresolvable problems...the greatest truths are those expressing problems in all their aspects and applications, avoiding dangerous illusions of simple solutions".¹³⁸ For Africa, it is a difficulty that meets both externalist (what Ghanaian investigative film-maker Anas describes as "parachute") commentary, and indigenous/postcolonial voices – both often accused of excluding the material experiences of ordinary Africans. This chapter lays out the context of the conceptual development of *Africarise*, within a historical scene of political and philosophical ideas of a reawakening. It begins by connecting specific episodic observations of Africa since the 1960s,

¹³⁸ Williams, *Gilles Deleuze's Difference and Repetition*, 2.

as reflected in the polemical debates on the “hopeless continent” presented in the *New African* and implied in the award-winning audio-visual commentaries of Anas and Kenyan photo-activist Mwangi. These are in turn, located within three major historical moments which define the idea of African renaissance, rebirth or reawakening. Emphasis is placed on the historical conjunctions and recurring problems, which replay in *Africarise*’s expressions on ‘getting Africa right’.

For a start, the difficulty around knowing ‘true Africa’ is illustrated by juxtaposing the 1960s’ observations of British Christian Missionary Father Paul Foster, with those of South African writer Helen Nontando (Noni) Jabavu.¹³⁹ Foster and Jabavu were expatriates visiting Uganda during the same pre-independence period. Although their writings disclose very dissimilar social, cultural, racial and scholarly backgrounds and intents, their accounts of the socio-cultural and political events they encountered in Uganda provoked the ire of their hosts in the same way, and for the same reasons. As observed by American literary critique Sheldon Weeks¹⁴⁰ who went to Uganda in 1962 for research, people often met him with the comment: “I hope you are not going to write a book like Noni Jabavu or Paul Foster...we opened to them, accepted them and they turned around and stabbed us in the back with anti-African books”. Foster’s endeavour was based on the idea of offering a well-meaning European contribution for preparing Africans for the modernizing world. This is evidenced in his assertion that “ignorance does not build empires”¹⁴¹. Yet, this claim betrays a paradox between his noble intent, and an ignorance propped by violent “despotic irrationality” of Eurocentric provincialism “acting in

¹³⁹ Noni Jabavu is celebrated as a pioneering journalist, poet and commentator on Africa during the difficult periods of colonisation and apartheid.

¹⁴⁰ Sheldon Weeks, “Review: Six Americans in Search of Africa”, *Transitions* 37 (1968): 54-58. Indiana University Press on behalf of the Hutchins Centre for African and African American Research at Harvard University. Available at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2934301>. Accessed November 8, 2017.

¹⁴¹ Foster, *White to Move*, 2.

the name of reason".¹⁴² For instance, as seen in the above-quoted introductory exchange with Peter, a Ugandan student, Foster at once exudes the typical "Western self-consciousness" imposing itself on the "absolute" stupid other".¹⁴³

Without acknowledging Peter's struggle with translation as English is a forced language, Foster insists on referencing Peter to frame the general nature of the African 'non-answer'. To Foster, an African answer only amounts to a simple act of reply, as opposed to a logically intuitive response. At that moment, Foster's superior attitude finds resonance with that of another well-meaning settler Karen Blixen, who said, "until you knew a Native well, it was impossible to get a straight answer from him. If we pressed or pursued them, to get an explanation of their behaviour out of them, they receded as long as they possibly could, and then they used a grotesque humorous fantasy to lead us on the wrong track".¹⁴⁴ This description displays a dogmatism which venerates old raciological concepts of Kant and Hegel in the manner that it, first, accords with rationalisms that conceived an inferior thing called 'African mind'. And two, how it devalues the African person as one driven by "power" and as possessing "patently admirable physicality". Bizarrely, without a hint of self-reflection, Foster simultaneously derides European metropolitan colonial expatriates as a "tedious people" who "carried their insularity everywhere", and marvels at the "evolution" of the East African from skins to Bachelor degrees, order, security and infrastructure in less than 50 years. This "successful development" Foster insists, "was enabled by Colonial administration...a truly imperial process that illustrates Hegel's theory of thesis and antithesis".¹⁴⁵

¹⁴² Mbembe, "On the Postcolony", 144, and Claire Colebrook, "Nomadicism", in *Deleuze Dictionary*, ed. Adrian Parr (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005), 180-181. Here Colebrook gives a critique of Kant's idea that reason should act according to certain principles of good and common sense within its proper domains.

¹⁴³ Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, 2.

¹⁴⁴ Karen Blixen, *Out of Africa* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1954), 25.

¹⁴⁵ Foster, *White to Move*, 21-24.

In her turn, Jabavu in her first book *Drawn in Color*, disclosed a major disconnect from her African hosts. Her accounts which Weeks calls “warped perceptions” riddled with intense value-conflicts deriving from Jabavu’s “proud Xhosa roots”, seem to unveil a complex struggle on her part with encountering Africa. For instance, Jabavu voices preference for maize-eating over Matoke-consuming people, as well as the view of the Veldt over the hilly terrain of Banana plantations. She also thought cattle cultures to be superior to banana cultures and expressed ambivalence towards black or darker Africans or “natives”. With these contrasts, she clearly preferred South Africa. This is unsurprising as Jabavu’s writing constituted as a deep reflection on her life, forced as she was to live in England since 1933, from a young age. In the preface to her second book *Ochre People*, she states: “my loss and sorrow have been very great”.¹⁴⁶ She particularly expresses grief over and yearning to connect with the political struggles of her contemporaries, especially after having missed the events of 1956 (the women’s march against pass-laws) and the 1976 Soweto Uprising. Consequently, she decided to travel in Africa and South Africa. Yet her grief-motivated writings provoked intense reactions from her hosts in Uganda. Mostly, they detested what they regarded as “a parochialism” in her that equalled Foster’s. To the hosts, the vocabulary used by both these visitors indicated they were not writing for them, but rather ‘of’ them.

By the 2000s, commentary on Africa can be summed up in Roger Southall’s observation that Africa was often projected as “a cross between a wayward child and tragic victim of history” that can only be helped from outside to pull up its own bootstraps. This was part of a stealthy push by dominant organs of Western media, to appropriate and legitimate a discourse of imperial-like relations clothed as benevolence: if Africa is hopeless, give it hope, it needs saving.¹⁴⁷ This also describes the work of then Africa Editor for *The Economist*, Robert Guest,

¹⁴⁶ Noni Jabavu, *The Ochre People*, rev. ed. (Randburg: Ravan Press, 1995), 1.

¹⁴⁷ Roger Southall, “Scrambling for Africa?: Continuities and Discontinuities with Formal Imperialism”, in *A New Scramble for Africa?: Imperialism, Investment and Development*, ed. Roger Southall and Henning Melber (Pietermaritzburg: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2009), 21.

in his text *The Shackled Continent: Africa's Past, Present and Future*. His book was closely followed by *Africa: Altered States, Ordinary Miracles*, a considerably different take on “African South of the Sahara”¹⁴⁸ (Africa excluding the Arab-speaking/Islamic states in the North), by Richard Dowden, an editor at *The Economist* during the same period. At the time, nationalist and postcolonial critique on how not to speak Africa was already known. Both commentators thus strived to face up to the charge of writing Africa from outside by traveling and residing in the continent for the period of putting together their texts. Guest begins by expressing exasperation with what he describes as the worst of human-made catastrophes. Although he rejects that his ideas infer the need for outside assistance, his prescriptive demands that Africans deemphasise the past, and take charge of their future, suggest otherwise. This is illustrated in an argument presented as progressive advice, in which he reprimands Africans for continually blaming colonialism and the unique content of Africa's experiences of colonialism, because such experiences are not exceptional to Africa. “We have all suffered pain”, he says. Accordingly, he proceeds to show how Europe emerged from feudalism and World War II, and how the economically powerful South Korea emerged from Japanese oppression. Moreover, for Guest, blame becomes an excuse for despair. He adds, “Colonists left deep scars. But they also left behind some useful things like clinics roads, and laws...if colonialism is what held the continent back, you would expect the continent to have boomed once they left. It didn't”.¹⁴⁹

Guest goes on to say that history like geography cannot be changed and that blaming colonialism is futile, as current Westerners carry no guilt for what they did not do. On the contrary, he argues “Africans are not yet free”¹⁵⁰ because of what he describes as the “vampire state” and the “under competent” handling of economies by a cohort of educated leaders backed by “tribal hucksters”. He then advises that countries that prosper tend to do so by their own

¹⁴⁸ Richard Dowden, *Africa: Altered States, Ordinary Miracles* (London: Portobello Books, 2008), 9.

¹⁴⁹ Guest, *The Shackled Continent*, 9.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 28.

efforts. Perhaps, as a way of showing sincerity, Guest repeatedly attempts to deploy an Africanesque idiomatic register, with subtitles like “the toad tries to swallow an elephant” as he catalogues major infractions that hold Africa back. He cites examples of such ‘African misdeeds’, ranging from the “curiously popular” but “disastrous” Mugabe ideology of land redistribution; affirmative action in South Africa; conflict and pillaging in the great lakes region due to the (dis)advantages of mineral wealth; dysfunctional legal systems; rigged elections; perils of tribalism; and corruption and the Aids pandemic, all of which cause donor fatigue. Guest summarily prescribes that Africa needs a “second genuine liberation”. And so in sweeping comparisons with Western neoliberal market systems, he proposes that Africans separate tribe from state, adopt and adapt new technologies and then produce what people want to buy, give land ownership to the poor and open up to free trade.

Dowden on the other hand, enters the discourse in the tradition set by Polish journalist Ryszard Kapuściński, who travelled in Africa since 1957 and calls his observations “my African life”.¹⁵¹ Kapuściński stressed that his accounts were *not about Africa*, but about some people he meets there. Indeed, only with greatest simplification for the sake of convenience can one speak of Africa, since it “does not exist” outside ones comprehension of it as “a geographical appellation”.¹⁵² So, he travels in Africa, deliberately meeting ordinary people in everyday places, while avoiding official structures and functionaries. For Kapuściński this was a decisive commitment provoked by insights gathered from extensive travels across the world. These insights led him to understand that unique life-changing possibilities, which sprout from difficult everyday experiences, inherent with their own contradictions and aspirations, were often degraded in similar ways by war, colonisation and post-independence jostling for political power. And so the Africa he encountered, with its smells and struggling economies

¹⁵¹ Ryszard Kapuściński, *Shadow of the Sun: My African Life*, trans. Klara Glowczewska, rev. ed. (London: Penguin Books, 2001).

¹⁵² *Ibid.*

exuded great promise contained in the lives a profound people, contrary to what was presented in popular versions. Dowden – whose book was endorsed by Chinua Achebe – sought to capture such complexity, and the comprehensible, yet puzzling, explanations for what seems like the ‘chaotic’ substrate of Africa. Most importantly to Dowden, Africa is a place that offers the rest of the world the prize of humanity. In the wake of his travels across the continent, he first notes somewhat negatively:

Beneath the surface of weak nation states, lie old cultures, old societies and communities and a deep sense of spiritual power. This is not a residual superstition...nor is it neurosis induced by insecurity or poverty. The spirit world, Muslim, Christian or traditional lies at the heart of many African societies, a core belief in the power of spirits that can be harnessed by mediums. This belief partly explains Africa’s lack of political and social agency. It can undermine personal responsibility and weaken communal solidarity. At worst, it can inspire the most horrific brutalities – though not on the scale of mass murder inspired by fascism, communism and nationalism in 20th century Europe.¹⁵³

However, despite the fundamental weaknesses in this attempt at reading Africa, he favourably adds,

But such beliefs also provide immensely powerful defences against despair and hopelessness. Amid wars and man-made famines and plagues, I have found people getting on with life, rising gloriously above conditions that would break most of us...Even in the worst of times, you do not hear tones of doom and despair that characterize some western media reports of the state of Africa. Africa always has hope. I find more despair in Highbury where I live...than in the whole of Africa.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵³ Dowden, *Africa*, 3.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 3-4.

With over 30 years of journalistic practice, Dowden's slightly nuanced argument on covering Africa rests on the understanding that "Africa has many realities".¹⁵⁵ Also, having taken seriously the accusation that Western media insist on finding chaos in Africa, he opted in the 1980s to cover Africa by seeking rational explanations for events just as he would in any other place in the world. For Dowden, given immense Western interest in narratives of Africa, both on the part of the media and among NGOs in the Aid industries, telling the African stories accurately requires effort as one needs to explore ordinary lives and situations to achieve deeper understanding. Overall, he asserts that only Africans can develop Africa. Dowden though found himself under attack in "The Heart of the Matter"¹⁵⁶ which appeared in the *New African* in August 2000, receiving harsh criticism for ostensibly being part of the anti-African media league. This article was published after the *New African* curiously offered Dowden 'right of reply', at the height of the fallout caused by *The Economist's* "Hopeless Continent". However, in a gesture intended to show their indifference, Dowden's article was assigned the unflattering headline "the Economist man speaks". This article was deemed a strained apology that characterised the unchanging attitudes within Western media. This is probably because "The Heart of the Matter" began with the preamble, "many read this with the taste of the cover-head (that is, the topic line Reporting Africa) in their mouths", as well as the disclaimer, "I am not an Afro-pessimist", and thereafter a defence of the principle of journalistic duty to reflect reality. Moreover, his argument went largely unappreciated despite his incisively critical conclusion which read as follows:

Is it a coincidence that Africa has a crop of bad leaders?...unless Africa finds in itself to regain confidence and develops institutions it believes in, including those inherited from colonial

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 6.

¹⁵⁶ *New African* no. 387 (Jul/Aug 2000): 31.

legacy, it will remain weak; this is the African renaissance. It will happen though I admit I don't know when and how.

Yet, among the most impassioned expressions of exasperation over Africa's situation and the impact of the discourse of African studies in this same period, was one offered by long-standing Australian Africanist scholar Gavin Kitching. This came around the announcement of his departure from African studies in 2000. In a strongly-worded article, "Why I Gave Up African Studies?",¹⁵⁷ Kitching admitted to being "depressed" due to confusion and incoherence over the appalling condition facing the African people. He experienced a sense of defeat, one caused by difficulty of trying to respond to these questions:

Why are some governing elites economically progressive and others not? Why are some ruling classes exploitative, selfish and corrupt but also genuine agents for national economic and social improvement, while others are just exploitative, selfish and corrupt? Why are some states 'developmental' and others not?¹⁵⁸

In conclusion, Kitching declares:

I see no significant progress made in answering the question why Imperialism fucked up the heads of so many people whom it touched - both colonialists and colonized (Frantz Fanon was absolutely and deeply right about that) and until that - ultimately depressing - legacy of its existence is finally killed, neither Africa nor African studies will be able to make real progress...¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁷ Gavin Kitching, "Why I gave up African Studies", *Mots Pluriels* no. 16 (2000). Available at <http://www.arts.uwa.edu.au/MotsPluriels/MP16OOgk.html>. Accessed March 25, 2008. This article was first published in *African Studies Review & Newsletter*, XXII, 1 (2000): 21-26.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 22.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

In response to such pessimism about Africa's lost decade of the 1990s, South African Deputy President Thabo Mbeki in 1996 attempted to rekindle hope for Africa through the proclamation, "I am an African", and statements like "We are our own liberators", and "whatever the sacrifice we have to make...Africa must be free!" However, nothing seemed to be able to lift doubts both inside and outside Africa over the state of the continent. This is noted in the hesitant reactions – what Zeleza calls "pouring cold water"¹⁶⁰ on Mbeki's moment – expressed by Western media, some African governments, and academics. In a series of speeches delivered between 1996 and 2002, Mbeki's message of a renaissance leading into the "African century" was formed as a counterpoint to some of these detractors, who in Mbeki's view, seemed to question: "how dare they speak of a renaissance?...those who advanced from cannibalism to a blood-dimmed-tide of savages, that still slaughter countless innocents with machetes...some who black as I, are grateful that their ancestors were slaves...how do we emulate great achievements of an earlier renaissance in Europe of the 15th and 16th centuries?"¹⁶¹ Significantly for Mbeki, the first step in responding to this question involved acknowledging contradictions continuing to haunt any proposition for an African rebirth, where tangible gains seemed to stumble due to painful reversals caused from by some of the very Africans leading the charge. And so, while the immediate requirement for renaissance is the recovery and affirmation of Africa's personhood by redressing the ideology of Africa's exceptionalism and strangeness from the rest of the world, Mbeki admitted that "the harbingers of death and the victims of their wrath...are as African as you and I". Mbeki's saw the need to confront the history of brutality meted out to Africans and the paradoxes it exposed as African political elites continued to brutalise their own, while some conflicted blacks sought to disavow their African heritage citing resentment over recurrent political violence, especially the type caused by ethno-lingual chauvinism.

¹⁶⁰ Zeleza, "What Happened to the African Renaissance?", 156.

¹⁶¹ Thabo Mbeki, "The African Renaissance, South Africa and the World". Lecture at United Nations University, 9 April 1996. Available at <http://archive.unu.edu/unupress/mbeki.html>. Accessed February 15, 2016.

Drawing inspiration from Pan-African forbearers like Wilmot Blyden, Pixeley ka Isaka Seme, Kwame Nkrumah and the generation of leaders that emerged from the 1945 Pan-African Conference in Manchester, Mbeki revived the call for self-affirmation, one that would be anchored in economic sufficiency. This imperative translated into the inception of the African Union (AU) in pursuit of the long-standing vision of a politically-united Africa, and the New Partnership for Economic Development (NEPAD) as the strategic program for economic renewal. The intention was a united Africa that would forge its own solutions in relation to democratisation and political accountability, peace and stability, alleviation of disease and poverty, and recovery of cultural creativity. However, as Ghanaian journalist and author Osei Kofi observes, it was “open season on Africa”,¹⁶² and the commentary generated ranged from *The Economist’s* “Hopeless Continent” to *It’s Our Turn to Eat* by British investigative journalist Michela Wrong.¹⁶³

However, Mbeki’s vision for United States of Africa received cheerful support from political heads like Libya’s Muammar Gadhaffi, who went ahead to campaign for a continental central government immediately. Then fissures emerged as a few countries, for example, Kenya and Nigeria, became suspicious of South Africa, which was viewed as harbouring ambitions of continental hegemonic dominance.¹⁶⁴ Uganda’s Yoweri Museveni’s words asserted “first things first” as he went ahead to dismiss the idea of a United States of Africa as a tall dream that could not be realised if domestic issues particular to each country had not been addressed.

¹⁶² Osei Kofi, *Hallo Africa, Tell Me How Are You Doing? A Noble Continent in Painful Renaissance*, (Hello Africa Publishing, 2005), 2.

¹⁶³ Michela Wrong’s text *It’s Our Turn To Eat* (2005) has come to serve as a reference point in relation to failures in contemporary post-independence Africa, by cataloguing crises of governance, elections, violence, and political patronage in Kenya.

¹⁶⁴ Zeleza, “What Happened to the African Renaissance?”, 158, and Tim Mureithi and Angela Ndinga-Muvumba, “Introduction: Building an African Union for the 21st Century”, in *The African Union and its Institutions*, ed. John Okpari, Angela Ndinga-Muvumba and Tim Mureithi (Johannesburg: Jacana Media and Centre for Conflict Resolutions, 2008), 1-5, 14.

NEPAD was also criticised for borrowing heavily from the very neo-classical economics of modernisation theories that had already failed most African countries in the period immediately after independence, as well as the World Bank's structural adjustment programs of the 1990s which amounted to "disciplining of African economies" through Afro-neoliberal capitalism.¹⁶⁵

Closer to home, a far-reaching critique emerged from the *Mail and Guardian's* Political Editor Howard Barrel. Ironically titled after an iconic film in which a character travels to the past with the view of altering the course of future events, Barrel's "Back to the Future: Renaissance and South African Domestic Policy"¹⁶⁶ critically assessed Mbeki's African renaissance as articulated in political and economic policy. He argues that "the big idea" (of African renaissance) has had an *indistinguished* career in sub-Saharan Africa following disingenuous deployments of the slogan ever since the start of decolonisation in the 1950s. Many Africans were still mired in poverty, and cultures lie unrecovered from their submersion through colonialism. Generally, Barrel's assessment raised suspicions that Mbeki's leaning on the slogan constituted a device to mobilise his own project. Referring to the work of French historian Jules Michelet who coined the term European renaissance in 1855, Barrel explains that the term describes processes which evolved independent of a program designed to deliver a new surge of economic, political and cultural life out of the 'middle ages'. Yet Mbeki, unlike his predecessors, suggested and pursued the idea that rebirth should and could be consciously induced in Africa, to move it beyond political weaknesses to economic sustainability.

In this regard, Barrel catalogues Mbeki's intents and program, beginning with pragmatic market-friendly economic reform targeting poverty and sustainable development;

¹⁶⁵ Vishwas Satgar, "Global Capitalism and Neo-Liberalisation of Africa", in *New Scramble for Africa? Imperialism, Investment and Development*, ed. Roger Southall and Henning Melber (Pietermaritzburg: University of Kwazulu-Natal Press, 2009), 40-41.

¹⁶⁶ Howard Barrel. "Back to the Future: Renaissance and South African Domestic Policy", in *African Security Review* 9 no 2. (2010): 82-91.

contemplating Africa-sensitive democracies; detaching Africa from the yoke of international debt; empowering women and successfully handling the Aids pandemic; rediscovering Africa's cultures and its creative past, in addition to accessing science and technology, and, achieving genuine independence of African countries to enhance their role in international fora. Mbeki's project experienced mixed fortunes. Positives included the emergence of a black middle class, reorientation of healthcare to Ward communities, and a realistic although scorned economic program by 2000. But the project failed to answer questions on moral renewal, racism, crime, intensifying corruption and a globally-publicised spectacle regarding Aids policy.¹⁶⁷ Most notably, questions emerged around reversals in earlier strides made by the black capitalist class, as the Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE) shed black companies in 1998-1999. This loss occurred due to debt that accumulated on the interests charged on the loans granted to these BEE (Black Economic Empowerment) companies, to finance their initial capital and buy-in into the stock market.

Contesting Africa's pathologies

As mentioned in Chapter 1, there was an outpouring of outraged responses in the *New African* 2000 and 2008 special editions themed "Reporting Africa". These constituted a reprimand against *The Economist's* editorial "Hopeless Continent", which was condemned for sensationalism that relied on old stereotypes and selective reporting that employed denigrating vocabulary. Yet the onslaught from Afropessimistic quarters did not abate. Within media productions there still remains a heightened preoccupation with political and economic developments across the continent, keeping front and centre the discourse of good governance,

¹⁶⁷ Mbeki's position on Aids, particularly his criticism of antiretroviral drugs discourse in both medical science and public health, caused a major controversy due to what many called Aids denialism. See Thabo Mbeki, "A Brief Commentary on the Question of HIV and AIDS", in *Mbeki Letters: Thought Leader Series*, Vol 9, March 7, 2016. Available at <http://cdn.bdlive.co.za/images/pdf/MbekiLetter.pdf>. Accessed June 9, 2016. See also Richard Poplak "Trainspotter: The Madness of King Mbeki, HIV/AIDS edition". Available at <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2016-03-07-trainspotter-the-madness-of-king-mbeki-hiv-aids-edition/#.WvVkNiCxXIU>. Accessed June 9, 2016.

which infers ‘African corruption’ as a fixed signifier. Such media convey what Gordon terms an “anthropology of problem people”.¹⁶⁸ Perhaps inadvertently, this appears to be the approach taken by the special series “Africa Investigates” on *Al Jazeera English*. As elaborated by Guest, Wrong and Kenyan economist and social critic David Ndii¹⁶⁹ whose media commentaries explicitly articulate Kenya’s post-independence failings, the media’s preoccupation with Africa pursues the identifying of political patronage enacted through alignments among powerful ethnic elites, and the control of electoral machinery. And often, in this view, electoral processes and outcomes manifest reluctance on the part of the incumbent elite to cede power.

It is the collision between such media discourses of Africa’s pathologisation, and Mbeki’s project of African renaissance that is captured in his commentary “Who Will Define Africa?” published in the June 2008 special edition themed “Reporting Africa”. Mbeki’s article drew on proceedings of a Media and Africa conference held in Nairobi, Kenya, where Mbeki and Rwanda’s President Paul Kagame had joined international panellists. Mbeki invoked Fanon’s argument on postcolonial subjects’ frustrated desire for recognition by the oppressor. Here, the free subject struggles with self-recognition and acceptance, because the structures and modes through which subjects can formulate themselves remain framed in the language and image of the oppressor.¹⁷⁰ He emphasised that the way stories about Africa are told to us, we become convinced by the negative images evoked, and we begin to act the part.¹⁷¹ Mbeki went ahead to reactivate the accusation that Western media are not interested in historical facts that shaped Africa such as colonialism. To prove his point, he presented a survey conducted in 2000 on two

¹⁶⁸ Gordon, “Justice Otherwise”, 12.

¹⁶⁹ David Ndii is a Kenyan economist whose provocative commentary on the correlations between ethnic-based politics, mediocrity in public office and post-independence trajectories, offers uncomfortable African solutions, including secession and the redrawing of colonial boundaries. He was forcibly stopped from publishing his commentary in February 2018. See “Kenya Is A Cruel Marriage, It’s Time We Talk Divorce”, Available at <https://www.nation.co.ke/oped/opinion/Kenya-is-a-cruel-marriage--it-s-time-we-talk-divorce/440808-3134132-154vra2/index.html>. Accessed August 16, 2016.

¹⁷⁰ Valentin-Yves Mudimbe brings an insightful discussion on this in his book *The Invention of Africa*.

¹⁷¹ Mbeki “Who Will Define Africa?”, 26.

esteemed American newspapers, namely *The New York Times* and the *New York Post*. For Mbeki, the survey exposed the consistent use of a negative frame for assessing Africa, one preoccupied with Aids, development failures, and conflict, as evidenced by recurrent stories on these themes.

In response, Western media practitioners at the conference defended their position as being honest rather than hostile. They maintained that they should not be expected to ignore realities, such as corruption, conflict and dictatorship as practiced by African political leaders and states. Kitching described this dynamic as revealing the greatest damage caused by colonialism and imperialism, that is “the psychological Siamese twins of endemic guilt on the European side and endemic psychological dependence on the African side, legacies which make truth telling hard and the adult taking of responsibility even harder”.¹⁷²

Curiously, during the same year as this conference, as well as the *New African* second special edition on reporting Africa, *The Economist* recanted their “Hopeless Continent” story published in 2000, with an article simply titled “There is Hope”.¹⁷³ This was the precursor to the more emphatic announcement of “Africa Rising” in December 2011, in an editorial titled “Africa’s Hopeful Economies: The Sun Shines Bright”. *Time Magazine* endorsed this viewpoint in an editorial “Africa Rising” in December 2012. Such ‘Africa rising’ was a stringently politico-economic proposition, one that painted an optimistic outlook on Africa, based on data drawn at the time from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. As observed by some, *The Economist’s* article which claimed that “the sun burns bright” appeared as a conscious counter to Nigerian activist and author Ken Saro Wiwa’s melancholic-satire *Africa*

¹⁷² Kitching, “Why I Gave Up African Studies”, 22.

¹⁷³ “Africa: There is Hope”, *The Economist*, October 9, 2008. Available at <http://www.economist.com/node/12381162>. Accessed August 25, 2015.

Kills Her Sun, the theme of which alluded to Africa killing its future by killing its sons.¹⁷⁴ *The Economist* held that despite the persistence of “Africa’s natural and man-made horrors”, including poor governance, disease, poverty and severe income disparities, there was still palpable economic growth at the margins of global neoliberal trends, demonstrated by an emergent middle class. This was regarded as an especially impressive feat, considering Africa’s declining reliance on primary commodities such as minerals and oil for revenue, against the backdrop of expansion of innovative telephonic technologies for domestic trading, and the gradual decrease in the number of failed states. What was expressed was optimism for the possible emergence of “lion economies” in Africa, similar to the “*Tiger economies*” of East Asia.¹⁷⁵

Africa rising! Similar to Mbeki’s proclamation of African renaissance in 2000, this slogan proceeded to grab considerable media attention, assuming the status of a new narrative anticipating for Africa’s future, and an ideological platform for staging ideas thought to be neo-developmental. However, excitement over it was countered through the likes of Adam Greene’s “Africa’s Rise a Myth? Bring on Authoritarian Capitalism Instead”,¹⁷⁶ and by scholar on African political economy Ian Taylor’s “Dependency Redux: Why Africa Is Not Rising”.¹⁷⁷ For one, Greene objected to what he considered flawed prescriptions based on an overestimation of the East Asian growth miracle which African economies were supposed to emulate to achieve manufacturing capacity. In this regard, he bought up the understated authoritarian undemocratic political systems that delivered this growth. For Greene, this factor

¹⁷⁴ Ken Saro Wiwa, *Africa Kills Her Sun* (1999). Available at: <https://acrazymindseye.files.wordpress.com/2013/05/africa-kills-her-sun.pdf>. This activist and journalist championed the rights of the Ogoni people in the oil-rich Niger Delta. Following repeated public confrontations with European and American multinational oil companies, he was arrested numerous times and eventually killed in 2003 with tacit approval from the Nigerian government.

¹⁷⁵ “Africa: There is Hope”, *The Economist*, October 9, 2009, and “Africa Rising: The Sun Burns Bright”, *The Economist*, December 2011.

¹⁷⁶ Adam Greene, “Africa’s Rise a Myth?”, 2013.

¹⁷⁷ Ian Taylor, “Dependency Redux: Why Africa Is Not Rising”, *Review of African Political Economy* 43 no. 147 (2016): 8-25.

runs against the resolute efforts made in the interest of Africa's development, viewed as achievable through the prerequisite of stable democracies. Furthermore, Greene and Taylor alike rejected this 'rising' as compromising superficial media eulogisations of Africa's improved manufacturing capacity, based on weak analyses which deliberately ignored: (a) Africa's continued role as dependent producer of raw material; (b) asymmetrical trade agreements in which Africa is then forced to provide these materials for low-cost production of manufactured goods through specially designed industrial development zones; and (c) the shipping-out of these manufactured products directly to industrialised countries with little to no tax obligations. Thus, they argued, Africa remains in the same relations of dependency insofar as its own manufacturing capacity for domestic goods remains negligible.

Theoretical and philosophical considerations regarding African solutions:

Three historical moments

When it comes down to it, the agglomerating issues of contention which have emerged since Foster's and Jabavu's writings, and the outrage witnessed in the *New African*, speak of the underemphasised items of the postcolonial moment which Mbeki's pronouncement sought to re-engage in a new path to self-creation, self-definition, self-determination and economic sustainability. It is a continual struggle to try to understand in simple terms – or rather, in everyday popular expression – the ambivalences and confusion that haunt the African person, particularly given the political and economic disqualification from dignified life of this person, due to dehumanisation by the legacies of slavery and colonialism. Perhaps more profound are the difficulties of shaking off, or explaining the paradoxical brutalities within, current post-independence. In other words, cultural, political and economic life delivered by Africans after they had seized systems of self-governance. Three historical phases, or moments of Africa's political reawakening have a bearing on these problems, and they may be foregrounded by way of these two questions: (1) Historically, how has the idea and discourse of Africa's renaissance

or rising, unfolded within political and mediated expressions? (2) In relation to the tensions and impasses encountered by *Africanise*, which factors have historically impinged on attempts to transcend contradictory expressions concerning Africa's current conditions?

In relation to the possibility of Africa's rising, the recovery of personhood or human dignity for the African has remained an unequivocal first condition across the three moments of reawakening. Consistently, it has been articulated as a collectively-shared imperative. To clarify, since the 19th century, the quest for personhood has been the rallying point for the anti-colonial and African Pan-Negro movements of Blyden and Martin Delaney, and it resonated in the 20th-century voices of Pan-African nationalists Seme and Marcus Garvey, as well as the Harlem renaissance literary movement of Langston Hughes.¹⁷⁸ Towards independence, the recovery of personhood was also described as the "return of the soil" by Aimé Césaire and Amílcar Cabral, and later on in 2000 Thabo Mbeki sought a "rediscovery of our soul".¹⁷⁹ For these thinkers and politicians, it was the necessary condition for the attainment of political self-determination and economic sufficiency, which in turn were considered inseparable. However, all throughout the struggles for political decolonisation, the struggle for reparations for crimes committed in the transatlantic slave trade after independence, as well as the present calls for decolonisation of knowledge, most debates have tended to provoke the need to defend the foundations and importance of the notions of recovery of dignity and self-determination. Political thinker Ali Mazrui and historian Basil Davidson offer an overview of the exchanges around the self-determining African, which often emerge in academic discourses and then pour into popular space as will be seen in Chapters 4 and 5.

¹⁷⁸ Bernard Makhosezwe Magubane, "The African Renaissance in Historical Perspective", in *African Renaissance*, ed. Malegapuru William Makgoba (Sandton: Mafube Publishing and Export House, 1999), 43-44, and Dismas Masolo, *African Philosophy in Search of Identity* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1994), 9.

¹⁷⁹ Amílcar Cabral, *Return to the Source: Selected Speeches by Amílcar Cabral*, ed. African Information Service (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1973), 9-12, and Mbeki, "The African Renaissance Statement of Deputy President, Thabo Mbeki".

Drawing on Davidson, the struggle for African personhood can be summarized as a continuing battle to “reinstall” Africa to “equalities of world consciousness”.¹⁸⁰ Mazrui’s observations made in 1967 during the first decade of independence pointed at an accepted trend in academic scholarship of politics, to rely on Western philosophical concepts. Additionally, and quietly, was a tacit requirement for Africans to show a unique formulation of the concept of self-determination or self-government. Such formulation was thought to be necessary to replace Western, so-called neo-Wilsonian thought on liberal individualism, adopted by post-independence scholars of African nationalist politics. And so the discreet contention revolved around whether it was fitting to accord Africans the same understanding on the notion of “self” as social or political fact, which, if linked to determination implies the attitude of one “entitled” to freedom of self-rule”. Taken this way, as Mazrui adds, such an argument amounted to a denial of a complex historical reality that Africans always possessed deep-seated appreciation of the idiom of self-determination; that is, a capacity to conceptualise and pursue one’s own ideas of the self and a capacity to govern one’s own affairs. In other words, “the ambition to be own policeman”, given that “the love of freedom already existed in the continent”.¹⁸¹ This is regardless of whether self-determination was understood in terms of self as individual, family, ethnic group, or kingdom. Both Mazrui and Davidson show how this was evident in Africa in some major resistances against colonial expansion by existing pre-colonial polities in the West African coast, Kingdom of Benin, Guinea, and by Tewodros II in Ethiopia. Davidson adds that Africa did not seem alien or completely Other to the early venturers into Africa. Evidence from AD 1500-1600 shows Europeans describing Africa as “different” but “equal”, following encounters with key political and economic systems which date back to the Iron Age, their accounts of Berber Caravans in the Sahara, and forays into Dahomey and Mombasa.¹⁸² Wilmot Blyden and Cheikh Anta Diop already show this in their work on Egypt conducted as early as

¹⁸⁰ Basil Davidson, *The Search for Africa: A History in the Making* (London: James Currey, 1994), 4.

¹⁸¹ Ali Al Amin Mazrui, *Towards a Pax Africana: A Study of Ideology and Ambition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), ix-xi, 3-6.

¹⁸² Davidson, *The Search for Africa*, 4, 11-14, 44-51.

1906 and 1948. However, the shift from different to inferior, evolved from a disposition in old Greek provincialism, one of constructing “deviance with distance”. This was then used to calibrate the native as permanently a child, with regard to capacity for rational thought. This disposition is reflected in trans-Atlantic slavery, a much later European construct which exhibited such provincialism as to utterly dehumanise the ‘native child’ by mastering it with brutal power for the purposes of wealth creation.

Key historical accounts of the dehumanisation of Africans through the brutalities of slavery, colonialism and apartheid, have been extensively covered both in formal academic fields of social science and in (non)fictional texts. This study, however, seeks to briefly recount such dehumanisation by highlighting particular events and narratives which draw attention in popular mediatised space; that is, those which ordinary audiences find to be thought-provoking as revealed in the themes covered in the *New African* special editions titled “Black History”, for over 15 years.

Generally, dehumanisation of Africans by Europeans is described as involving three interrelated processes. For the Europeans, it was a confluence of material needs fuelled by the crises that befell the end of what they called the Middle Ages in 14th/15th century, the racialised provincialism that sought to civilise and Christianise the ‘mentally inferior’ natives, as reflected in some professional academic work of the time, as well as Christianity and politico-economic expansionism. However, as audience exchanges in the *New African* reveal, questions still abound over a perceived downplaying of the equally brutal Arab Indian Ocean slavery. A modest response holds that the everyday realities of continued struggle for the African person are due to the enduring legacy of Euro-American hegemonic designs for mercantilist imperialism, and later, neocolonialism and globalised neoliberal capitalism, which consign

Africans to a lasting struggle to defend their humanity while in an inexorable position of quandary. This is certainly a feat which the legacy of Arab slavery did not achieve.

One of the most odd but enduring popular theories regarding African dehumanisations is Biblical, and Pan-Negro champion Blyden was already refuting it in the 1850s. It involves an interpretation of African Negroes as descendants of Noah's cursed son Ham.¹⁸³ Related theories are associated with the outcome of events that began with bitter unrest among the largely poor population in Europe's Middle Ages protesting inequalities caused by feudal modes of production, and failures by European Catholic governments to address the issue. One of the solutions offered was Christian-crusading ventures privately exploring other lands, without relying on state resources. The propaganda contained in the reports sent back home by these explorers intensified campaigns of fear against the 'lesser' beings, the unbelievers/infidels met by them. That signals the beginnings of a caustic discourse on Africa, which Mbembe describes as one of absence and lack, of nothing, non-being, not to be at all, so licencing European exploits and assuaging European guilt to destroy.¹⁸⁴ These processes and discourses resulted in the production of the 'European mind' preoccupied with understanding itself through the mirror of other races,¹⁸⁵ and provided justification for the capturing, slaughtering and plundering of Africans and African lands for the empire. Mbembe adds that at that stage of colonial expansion, all natives made up no more than what French Prime Minister Albert Sarraut called an "unformed clay of primitive multitudes" from which "the face of a new humanity" was to be shaped at the hands of the colonists.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸³ Blyden re-examined the original Hebrew Bible verses in Genesis to reject the theory of a divine curse on children of Ham, the Africans. Hollis R. Lynch, *Wilmot Blyden: Pan-Negro Patriot 1832-1912* (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), 17.

¹⁸⁴ Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, 4.

¹⁸⁵ Masolo, *African Philosophy in Search of Identity*, 6.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 4, 28.

Founding history: Master sciences and the *Idea of Africa*¹⁸⁷

Recently, popular media platforms have continued to close down their comments sections due to what they regard as cyclic ‘impoverished debate’ on African identity, dignity and equal humanity. It is important to highlight some of the possible bases for such recurrent tensions, especially when Fanon’s discourse is deployed as the stock counterpoint to Afropessimistic arguments that often raise Hegel. To disclose such bases, two recent examples of contention appearing in popular exchanges are worth noting. The first one involves readers’ commentary around South Africa’s land expropriation without compensation debate on *News24*, where one Jannie Rupersberg “challenges” blacks who think Africa will be better without whites to “name ten blacks who made history because of their intellect”. He goes on to list Einstein, Darwin, Dickens, Da Vinci, and Bach among other prime examples of seminal white intellectuals and innovators, and then closes with a provocative gesture, “your turn”.¹⁸⁸ An opposing standpoint to this can be seen in the second example involving an informally-constituted “Truth and Reconciliation” (TRC) student tribunal, convened by the Fees Must Fall movement at the University of Cape Town, to raise the issue of a decolonised science curriculum among other key concerns. Here, a panellist called for Africa to “scratch the whole thing – that is Western science – off...and begin afresh from an African perspective”.¹⁸⁹ In relation to such views, where world history always comes into question, the problematic highlighted is that which Fanon described as involving a “primary Manichaeism”, where the oppressor makes history, including that of the oppressed: “he is the absolute beginning” as well as guarantor of continued existence of that other¹⁹⁰ in a dialectical process of cultures abolishing and alienating others.¹⁹¹ It is *facticity*, what he says is truth that needs no further justification.¹⁹² What Fanon sheds light

¹⁸⁷ See Chapter 3 on Deleuze’s and Mbembe’s extensive discussions on European thought as ‘infallible’ ground for generating original truths about reality, particularly with regard to Plato’s *mythic circle* (Pg. 108-109).

¹⁸⁸ This refers to the now-discontinued *News24* comments section. Accessed August 2, 2013.

¹⁸⁹ “Science Must Fall?” Youtube Video, 04:14, Posted by “UCT Scientist”, October 13, 2015. Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C9SiRNibD14>.

¹⁹⁰ Frantz Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Richard Philcox (New York: Grove Press, 2004), 14-15.

¹⁹¹ Masolo, *African Philosophy in Search of Identity*, 9.

¹⁹² Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, 3.

on is the mental humiliation of the African, which drew on a few master discourses, such as those found in the Western classical anthropology of Lucien Levy-Bruhl. Levy-Bruhl is considered a pioneering anthropologist who described the African as possessing a “primitive mentality” incapable of achieving rational thought due to social conditions.¹⁹³ Discourses informed by such assumptions and Manichean positioning sought to explain human nature in history, using the dialectical methods produced by European renaissance thinkers (of metaphysics) in the mid-19th century, including Immanuel Kant, David Hume and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel.

Notably, those works by these thinkers that are identified as presenting such primary Manichaeism, are largely absent from the current academic canon. They are regarded as ‘unsuitable’ products belonging to a specific geographical and historical episode of European dominance, and to nascent academic careers. Yet they remain alive. The ground they set is actualised through some intractable concrete issues associated with belonging as seen in the illustrations above, in which sensibilities of race often emerge. Kant, for instance, in his attempts to explain the emergence of “national characteristics” based on race (in twin courses *Anthropology From a Pragmatic Point of View* and *Physical or Cultural Geography*), classified different races in the world and placed the lead species of humans as white or brown.¹⁹⁴ The black race was described as a product of geographical determinism, black skin colour permanently tanned by the climatic conditions of the regions they inhabited, and thus revealing that their general evolution was still wild, and that they thus have not properly attained human status. Regarding capacity for speculative thought, Kant’s sentiment, which bears consonance with Hume’s, is as follows:

¹⁹³ Lucien Levy-Bruhl, “How Natives Think”, in *African Philosophy: Selected Readings*, ed. Albert G Mosely (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1995), 41-86.

¹⁹⁴ Immanuel Kant, “On the Character of Nations”, in *Anthropology From a Pragmatic Point of View*, trans. Mary J. Gregor (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1974), 174-182, and Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze, “The Colour of Reason: The Idea of Race in Kant’s Anthropology”, in *Postcolonial African Philosophy: A Critical Reader*, ed. Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1997), 105-140.

Negro has no ego – [“I” self knowing]...They are full of passion, very lively, talkative and vain. They can be educated but only as Servants (slaves)...if they allow themselves to be trained. They have many motivating forces...they are sensitive, afraid of blows and do much out of a sense of honor.¹⁹⁵

Still, it is Hegel’s ideas on the object/subject dialectic that gained universal prominence, especially because of the foundational principles that most conceptualisations of master/slave relations draw upon. At this juncture, it is instructive to note that although such master/slave views as linked to Hegelian thought permeate a vast number of scholarly and popular commentaries around the ‘inferior’ status of the African, there is growing contention that the depth in Hegel’s reflections on the subject/object distinction is still underappreciated. As will be discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, it is the ‘inescapable’ significance of Hegel’s philosophy that incites both Deleuze’s and Mbembe’s pivotal work on difference. In critical responses to their respective audiences, Mbembe and Deleuze account for such superficial understandings on the basis of unsound reliance on common “Hegelianisms” that often miss the nuanced paradox of the underlying “Hegelian middle”.¹⁹⁶ The Hegelian middle disputes the common view that Hegel’s dialectic suggests that all contesting positions are spontaneously irreconcilable, and they resolve in completely neat logical form or formula. On the contrary, Hegel observes that there are always small traces which cannot fit the dual positions, and those always trigger contradictions, thus producing a new antithesis in a never-ending spiral of difference, rather than a logical conclusion being achieved. Even so, Hegel’s articulations on Africa and the African incite outrage for their utterly dismissive orientation which lacks the philosophical reflexivity that characterised his ideas on the object/subject dialectic; and so he somehow

¹⁹⁵ Eze, “The Colour of Reason”, 116. This is Eze’s own English translation of *Kant’s Philosophische Anthropologie* (1831).

¹⁹⁶ Robert Stern, *Hegel and the Phenomenology of Spirit* (New York, Routledge, 2002), xiii-xiv, and Lopez, *Posts and Pasts*, 125.

arrives at a final state of an inferior Africa. Hegel, who never travelled to Africa, relied on “missionary reports¹⁹⁷ to account for the Africans/Negroes in his *Philosophy of History*. In brief, history was a process of change realised through the power of reason/logic or spirit, moving in continuous dialectical progression. Therefore, man could change his reality, that is, create history or civilisation, if he possessed this infinite ability of logic. As such, reason was a historical reality which emerges from a self-conscious logic recognising itself in its own movement or process, and manifesting as culture. On history in relation to the African/Negro, Hegel said:

The peculiarly African character is difficult to comprehend, for the very reason that in reference to it, we must quite give up the principle which naturally accompanies all our ideas — the category of Universality...[T]he Negro, as already observed, exhibits the natural man in his completely wild and untamed state. We must lay aside all thought of reverence and morality — all that we call feeling — if we would rightly comprehend him; there is nothing harmonious with humanity to be found in this type of character...[A]t this point we leave Africa not to mention it again. For it is no historical part of the world, it has no movement or development to exhibit...[W]hat we properly understand about Africa is the unhistorical underdeveloped spirit...in the childhood of world's history.¹⁹⁸

And on the issue of slavery, he observed that:

Negroes are enslaved by Europeans and sold to America. Bad as this maybe, their lot in their own land is worse since there, slavery is quite absolute...for it is the essential principle of slavery that man has not yet attained self-consciousness of his freedom and consequently sinks down to a mere thing. An object with no value.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁷ Masolo, *African Philosophy in Search of Identity*, 6.

¹⁹⁸ G. W. F. Hegel, *Philosophy of History*, rev. ed., trans. J. Sibree (Ontario: Batoche Books, 2001), 110-111, 117.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 113.

It is on the back of sentiments like these that colonial control and arbitrary brutality could be justified and proceed unhindered. And due to the legacy of the atrocities perpetrated through colonialism, explanations of Africa's dysfunctionality often emphasise and leave matters at the injustices and victimisations produced by the colonial scramble for an Africa 'devoid of history', as epitomised in the Livingstonian motto of "commerce, Christianisation and civilisation".²⁰⁰ However, proper examination into layers of Africa's 'dysfunctions' requires a reflexive reading of this history, like the one produced by Nigerian political economist, Claude Ake. On colonial violence, Ake observes that this was specific to Africa, as rule derived from total control by state authority.²⁰¹ This mode of control characterised European imperialist expansion, as brutality was required for penetration into new territory, which began with the arbitrary carving out of protectorates/colonies as seen in the 1884-1885 Berlin conference. The coercive extraction of resources soon followed.

Further ahead, as improved technology escalated expansion into Africa in the late 19th to early 20th century, capitalist expropriation intensified in step. This demanded intensified political administrative control through military power, thus reviving old rivalries among European states which had all along competed for continental dominance. This time, however, they fixated on the control of mineral wealth in countries like the Belgian Congo. At the peak of these rivalries came World War II, where the already-brutalised African was forced to fight for their oppressor. This marked the breaking-point for dissenting African voices as growing demands for political self-determination ushered in the post-1945 wave of independence.

²⁰⁰ Thomas Pakenham, 1992, in Roger Southall, "Scrambling for Africa?: Continuities and Discontinuities with Formal Imperialism", in *A New Scramble for Africa?: Imperialism, Investment and Development*, ed. Roger Southall and Henning Melber (Pietermaritzburg: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2009), 2.

²⁰¹ Claude Ake, *Development and Democracy in Africa* (Washington D.C.: The Brookings Institute, 1996), 2.

It is well established that political independence brought baffling contradictions to the hitherto-revered notion of self-determination. The metaphor of “schizophrenia” has even been used to provocatively capture the dynamic of politico-cultural appropriation of the erstwhile oppressor’s discourses of societal order, and the deemed inevitability of such discourses in the path of making the new order, as exhibited by post-independence nationalist politics in Francophone West Africa.²⁰² The most notable contradiction being that the independent states seemed only to change the composition of managers, retaining the character of the erstwhile state machinery, complete with its capacity for brutality as the most pragmatic means for effecting the requisite developments. However, debates citing Fanon’s ghost have continued to raise questions regarding these dynamics, particularly concerning the deemed pre-determination – that the oppressed will repeat the oppressor’s violence as a sign of trauma when the struggle stops. On this issue, Ake provides deeply reflexive observations on the matrix of entanglements. At first, the new political class retained military control to extend their power in the face of a crumbling hero-status and thus loss of legitimacy. Most of these cases were aggravated by unravelling relations among comrade nationalists, who held insider knowledge that the political independence from which their legitimacy had accrued was largely transacted, having fallen short of decisive conquests of their oppressors. Indeed, the oppressors had accepted the inevitable and therefore stage-managed handover of power to preferred successors. Consequently, in most instances, the fallouts among the elites morphed into intense ethno-religious clashes as the increasingly isolated rulers sought loyalty. With examples including Nigeria’s insurrections against civilian rule in 1963 to 1965, and the overthrow of Nkrumah in 1968, this was an era characterised by *coup-d’états* and the rise of military regimes of the 1980s and 1990s, leaving enduring legacies of brutal oppression as reflected in the case of the present-day Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

²⁰² Victor T. Levine, “Political-Cultural Schizophrenia in Francophone Africa”, in *Africa and the West: Legacies of Empire*, ed. Isaac J. Mowoe and Richard Bjornson. (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986), 159-173.

While the 1960s to 1970s (referred to as the developmental decade) is deemed to have generated significant economic gains, it is also known for development policies that emphasised industrialisation over social welfare and agriculture. This describes a textbook case of extraversion, simple *translation* and little *formulation*, given that such development policies largely ignored specific conditions in the different African countries at the time. As Ake observes, a confluence of factors forced rapid decisions on development, including such matters as: African leaders struggling to match their development rhetoric and philosophies with any tangible change; pressures for political survival among the unpopular elites; and ideologically-driven calls for reparations in the form of donor assistance from the former colonists.²⁰³ This paved the way for ‘external’ thinking as Africa found itself compelled to adopt Western models of modernisation theory to achieve tangible, quick results to appease disgruntled populations. The most recognised of these was W. W. Rustow's *Stages of Economic Growth* (1960). Here, development replaces modernisation under the assumption that the state of underdevelopment, which is regarded as pre-industrial, can only be overcome through economic growth, using tools tried and tested in industrialised societies. Ultimately, modernity becomes industrialisation and mass consumption. Ake points out that the obvious problems exposed by this model had to do with the de-historisation of development, because Africans allowed these foreign donors and their thinkers to present these ideas as objective and desirable, not to mention inevitable. Moreover, the legitimacy of these ideas increased due to impressions that the Western languages in which they were presented, were languages of scientific knowledge. Predictably, most analyses for policy turned out to be grossly deficient, due to paradigms that were constructed for other purposes and from other socio-cultural and geographical experiences.

²⁰³ Ake, *Development and Democracy in Africa*, 8-13.

The foregoing describes the trajectory of key processes in the complex intertwinements of struggle for recovery of African dignity, unforeseen domestic tensions in the politics of self-determination, and ‘cordial’ coexistence with the West around economic interests. This can be traced since Europe’s scramble for Africa and the rise of three movements of Africa’s pursuit of its own rise, which have continued into the present global economy of the new world order of “Empire” – that is, an economy consisting of capitalist networks of multinational corporations that smother traditional political and economic processes.²⁰⁴

The Pan-Negro moment

From the pedigree of thinkers who inspired the idea of a reawakening in the mid-to-late 19th century, this study foregrounds Edward Wilmot Blyden, Pixely Ka Isaka Seme and Nnamdi Azikiwe primarily, and for the following reasons. Not only did they herald a course of expressions on Africa’s reawakening by political leaders, which animated Pan-Africanism since the London conferences of the 1900s, but they began an intellectual engagement with the rationality and ideology of imperialism, and pioneered practical thinking within mainstream politics as articulated in their campaigns in pre-independence Liberia, South Africa and Nigeria. Let us begin with Blyden. In his fierce Pan-Negro struggle for human dignity, which went as far as contemplating a “pure Negro black race” for Africa, Blyden developed some key concepts used in post-1900 Pan-African nationalism.²⁰⁵ As Masolo observes, Blyden was the first person to defend the use of the concept “African personality”.²⁰⁶ This concept presaged the philosophical idea of Négritude, which appealed to a cultural heritage/past²⁰⁷ as a source for African humanity, as conceived by Aimé Césaire and Léopold Sédar Senghor. It also instigated

²⁰⁴ Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), xi- xiii.

²⁰⁵ Lynch, *Wilmot Blyden*, 105-109.

²⁰⁶ Masolo, *African Philosophy in Search of Identity*, 12-13.

²⁰⁷ Irele, “Contemporary Thought in French Speaking Africa”, 124-125.

a wave of protest labelled Cultural Nationalism among educated African elites, which entailed the shunning of Western cultural standards and symbols including names and dress.²⁰⁸

Blyden's tenacity to vindicate the Negro was driven by what he saw as an extreme difficulty on the part of the black body to rid itself of the perception that it was the sole marker of slavery.²⁰⁹ Humiliating experiences such as being denied entry to theological seminaries because of his race, inspired Blyden's revolutionary writing on the African's capability. For instance, his research, which predates Diop's work on reconstructing African history, involved a trip to Egypt in 1866 in search of distinguished Negro achievements. Consequently, he wrote *The Negro in Ancient History*²¹⁰ to repudiate assertions on the inferiority of the 'African mind'. However, among Blyden's enduring ideas is that of Pan-Africanism. In it, he envisaged a basis upon which Africans could challenge all forms of racial prejudice and chauvinism, and upon which solidarity among all Africans could be built. From it, grew the rallying cry "Africa for Africans" among activisms that demanded a complete decolonisation.

As for Seme, he clearly exhibits an acute awareness of the kind of reaffirmations for which the black person and African yearned, as signalled in his 1906 award-winning speech titled "Regeneration of Africa". In words that echo Blyden's determination, and that would be revitalised by Mbeki a century later, Seme begins by proclaiming, "I am an African and I pride my race against hostile opinion". He goes on to declare:

The giant is awakening! From the four corners of the earth Africa's sons, who have been proved through fire and sword, are marching to the future's golden door bearing the records of deeds of valour done...Yes, the regeneration of Africa belongs to this new and powerful period! By this

²⁰⁸ R. L. Okonkwo, "Cultural Nationalism in the Colonial Period", in *Readings in African Humanities*, ed. Ogbu U. Kalu (Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers, 1978).

²⁰⁹ Lynch, *Wilmot Blyden*, 3.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 19, 186. This article by Blyden, published in the *Methodist Quarterly Review*, was the first article by a black man to be published in a quarterly literary review.

term regeneration I wish to be understood to mean the entrance into a new life, embracing the diverse phases of a higher, complex existence. The basic factor which assures their regeneration resides in the awakened race-consciousness...²¹¹

It can be argued with certainty that Seme's ideas have not received the recognition due to them, especially regarding their intellectual contribution to expressions of African solutions. They show remarkable foresight, as demonstrated by the nuanced defence of the non-exceptional/peculiar nature and equal abilities of the African. Against the racist dualisms of the time, which saw the African as either a set-apart grouping, or an inferior being, Seme rejected all binary representations, beginning with those that suggested the African was a unanimous racio-cultural category of inferior humans. He then proceeded to reject the opposing Africanist position which implied that the African was an undifferentiated mind, identity and culture. Instead, Seme argued that "each is self", and that particularity does not imply 'exceptional' intellectual ability. This is because in all races, mankind is composed of free and unique individuals; and besides, genius is a spark that may arise anywhere. Here, Seme sought to insist upon the uniqueness of African individual experience, which is equally human. For him, the individual is a carrier of a multiplicity of capacities or agencies, which could not be summed up as a complete unified entity that can be compared the European simply in terms of skin colour, or through a logic that relied on false history. And thus, for Africa, Seme added that "the ancestral greatness, the unimpaired genius, the recuperative power of the race, [and] its irrepressibility which assures its permanence, constitute the African's greatest source of inspiration".²¹²

In his turn, during a significantly transformed political milieu, Azikiwe developed his philosophical ideas on Africa's rebirth through a text titled *Renascent Africa* (1937). With these

²¹¹ Pixely Ka ISaka Seme, "The Regeneration of Africa".

²¹² Ibid.

ideas, which came to be known as “Zikism”, Azikiwe envisioned a reawakening that would emerge from the impatience of a youth aching for change. This reawakening was articulated based on these key pillars: (1) Spiritual balance, defined as a connection to traditional culture and gods as basis for human dignity; (2) mental emancipation, or self-generated intellectual tools and knowledge in response to colonial ideology; (3) political resurgence; and (4) economic sufficiency. For Azikiwe, new blood was needed to replace the post-independence elites, who, like the colonial-era administrators, colluded with the oppressor in the devastation of Africa.

To return to the role of media: the media are barely mentioned in this moment in relation to rebirth, but there are significant instances in which African media emerged to activate political risings. In this era, Africa was made known globally, first through Christian missionary reports and journaling by ordinary European adventurers in the mould of Foster. Thereafter, Africa was formally, and, rather commercially, reported by what Nigerian Africanist scholar Chinweizu calls “imperialist media writing back home”; these channels of mediation included European information services (newswire services), the Mirror Group and Thomson Newspapers.²¹³ However, it must be noted that although most initial journaling involved straight-forward observations in hard-news format, the information was not any less damaging than the so-called ‘subjective pieces’, as reporters selected stories which offered little explanation of the broader context – some of which in time became part of official history.

Returning to the forerunners, it is puzzling that scant regard has been accorded Seme and Azikiwe’s projects with newspapers. Seme established *Abantu-Batho* in 1912 with the vision of establishing a national newspaper or journal that would, above all, assist Africans in shifting consciousness from their local ethnic identities, to see themselves as Africans working towards

²¹³ Chinweizu, “Towards the African Renaissance Media”, 365.

political unity and economic sufficiency.²¹⁴ Of course, the paper's link to the African National Congress (ANC) has led some to view it as a 'mouthpiece' of this struggle movement. However, such analyses seem to rely on representational thought that yields narrow or single meanings, concerning what the papers could have achieved, and did achieve. Certainly, there are numerous if not interminable implications signalled by the entry of Seme's paper into the local scene in all the main African languages and English, to join the Xhosa publication *Imvo Zabantsundu*²¹⁵ (Black Opinion, opinion of the Native/People). This is especially in a context where official political discourses were promoting dehumanisation and material disenfranchisement of his people. Such implications would include the multiple trajectories in thought and action on the issue of self-determination and belonging as ANC discourse of emancipation was made clearer and widely acceptable with indigenous language. Azikiwe's entry into media in 1937 entailed vastly different conditions to Seme's. While Seme encountered an increasingly hostile political environment due to amplified violence by the apartheid regime, Azikiwe came into a newly-independent Nigeria. That is why he sought to promote the idea of a renascent Africa by "holding the light to show the way"²¹⁶ with a platform for broad public opinion. At the same time he wanted to revolutionise journalism in the country in order to jolt development-consciousness in the new Nigeria.

The Pan-Africanist nationalist moment

Between 1900 and 1945, the first moment's expression of rebirth, that is, of African recovery of personhood, evolved into demands for self-government, so ushering in the second moment of political Pan-Africanism. Steered by a few post-independence presidents, this second

²¹⁴ Chris Saunders, "Pixley Seme and Abantu-Batho", in *The People's Paper: A Centenary History and Anthology of Abantu-Batho*, ed. Peter Limb (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2012), 117-127.

²¹⁵ The first Black-owned newspaper in South Africa was established on 5 March 1912. It was published in the IsiXhosa language, and the editor was Prof. Tengo Jabavu – father to Noni Jabavu. Available at <http://www.sahistory.org.za/dated-event/first-black-owned-newspaper-published>.

²¹⁶ Azikiwe's motto for his newspaper *West Africa Pilot* borrowed from Dante Alighieri's "show the light and people will find the way". Nnamdi Azikiwe, *My Odyssey* (Westport: Praeger, 1970), 290.

moment has become known for deep nationalism. Among figures like Senghor, Nkrumah and Nyerere, along with Du Bois and Césaire, the formulations of a rebirth produced remain revered due to the single-mindedness in practical ideas, and discursive articulation of African nationalism. This is demonstrated in the uncompromising demand to end colonial rule in Africa, voiced during the final Pan-Africanist Conference in Manchester 1945. The demand read:

If the Western world is determined to rule mankind by force, then Africans, as a last resort may have to appeal force in the effort to achieve freedom, even if force destroys them and the world.²¹⁷

As the post-World War II events took a toll on European powers, political independence was granted to African countries, starting with Nkrumah's Ghana in 1957, followed by many more between 1960 and 1964. Two main themes seemed to occupy political speeches and texts. These were nationalist cultural renaissance and political economic nationalism. Nkrumah's ideas especially inspired many an imagination with proposals that reflected the uncompromising attitude of the time, such as "we prefer self-government with danger, to servitude in tranquility".²¹⁸ Other proposals included, "Africa must unite"; "seek ye first the political kingdom and all else shall be added unto you"; and "the twentieth century has become the century of colonial emancipation, the century of continuing revolution which must finally witness the total liberation".²¹⁹ While these statements served to intensify struggle for political liberation in the rest of the continent, questions emerged over the kind of freedom and independence displayed by Africans. Africa was viewed as lacking a genuine reawakening in

²¹⁷ Jean Suret-Canal and Adu Boahen, "West Africa 1945-1960", in *A General History of Africa*, ed. Ali A. Mazrui and C. Wondji (UNESCO, and New Hampshire: Heinemann, 1993), 165.

²¹⁸ Kwame Nkrumah, "Motion of Destiny", in *Axioms of Nkrumah* (London: Panaf Books, 1969), 63. This speech was delivered in the Ghanaian pre-independence parliament on 10 July 1953, in which Nkrumah demanded full self-government for Ghana.

²¹⁹ Kwame Nkrumah, "Africa Must Unite", *New African* no. 381 (January 2000): 18-25. He delivered this speech in Addis Ababa on 24 May 1963, on the eve of the founding of the Organization for African Unity (OAU).

relation to self-definition and meaningful economic sustainability, especially because of anxieties triggered by worsening brutality of the post-independence state.

It is against the backdrop of this context that Léopold Senghor – President of Senegal from 1960 to 1980 – developed the concept of Négritude. As Masolo observes, it derived from Césaire’s concept of “return” to the native land, a return which symbolised the deconstruction of lingering Western ideologies on the African’s supposed savage identity, underpinned by a common origin among African people.²²⁰ Drawing on prominent (largely Bergsonian) philosophical and critical theory concepts of the time,²²¹ Senghor conceptualised Négritude as an autonomous distinctive system of African thought. It infers an all-encompassing identity that derives from a distinctive, deeply felt African sense, which is revealed by commonly-shared cultural values across Africa. It is one which Western discursive logic could not examine, yet bestows to the African an original distinctive mode of humanism.

Although many acknowledged the historical necessity of Senghor’s views insofar as they incited political imagination to counter the “African problematic caused by colonial experience”,²²² a number of Africanist thinkers, for instance Albert Franklin and Marcien Towa,²²³ and politicians including Nkrumah, rejected Négritude. In short, Négritude was viewed as a theoretical celebration of the superiority of Western reason, that very thing that it had set out to refute. It was criticised for reinforcing the denigrations advanced in *Bantu Philosophy* by missionary Reverend Placide Tempels on African systems of thought, and Bruhl’s ideas of the African primitive mind; these held that the African concept of reality was primarily based on the emotional rather than the logical, on mystical causation, and connection

²²⁰ Masolo, *African Philosophy in Search of Identity*, 2.

²²¹ Critics of Négritude have always faulted the idea for drawing on the concept of sense as developed by French philosopher Henri Bergson, and by Father Placide Tempels in his *Bantu Philosophy*. See Irele, “Contemporary Thought in French Speaking Africa”, 127-148.

²²² *Ibid.*, 122

²²³ *Ibid.*

to gods and ancestors.²²⁴ For Hountondji, Négritude presented a fixed unanimous form called African thinking, anchored on specific, permanent, exceptional culture,²²⁵ whereas for Nkrumah it was merely a literary affectation that remained apologetic to Western ideology, while confining African genius to the senses.²²⁶

Politically, however, Négritude inspired a momentous discursive turn among the nationalists, characterised by competing ideologies around true African nationalism and authentic African consciousness. Some of the works included *Ujamaa: Essays on Socialism* (1971) by Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere, and Kenneth Kaunda's *A Humanist in Africa* (1966). However, it is Nkrumah's prolific writing that set the pace for this African nationalist discourse. For Nkrumah reawakening Africa required a strategy built on Consciencism, a theoretical map that would synthesise Africa's triple heritage towards productive action. It required bringing together cultural and intellectual influences within traditional African, Western and Islamic modes of thought to enable the African personality to realise its political and economic aspirations.²²⁷

But then came a most curious ideology on authentic African consciousness, one that is important to this study's discussion of Africanity as an open question. This was President Mobutu's *recours à l'authenticité* (recourse to authenticity) in the 1960s Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of Congo). This ideology – also known as *Zairianisation* – was devised to intersect African cultural heritage and modern Western sensibilities. Names of places including the country's itself were changed such that, for example, Congo Republic became *Zaire* – even though *Zaire* was a Portuguese mangling of the Kikongo word, *nzadi*, a vast river. Christian names had to be replaced with African names, including Mobutu's, which changed

²²⁴ Levy-Bruhl, "How Natives Think", 41-42.

²²⁵ Paulin Hountondji, *African Philosophy: Myth and Reality*, rev. ed., trans. Henri Evans and Jonathan Ree (Bloomington: Hutchinson and Co., 1996), 59.

²²⁶ Nkrumah, *Axioms of Nkrumah*, 5.

²²⁷ Kwame Nkrumah, *Consciencism: Philosophy and Ideology for De-Colonisation* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1970).

from Joseph Desiré to Mobutu Sese Seko Kuku wa Dabanga. Correspondingly, Western dress was prohibited and replaced. For women it was the *kitenge*, free-flowing multi-coloured gowns, and, for the men, it was the *abacost*, acronym for *à bas le costume* (down with the suit). The abacost was Mobutu's adaptation of the Chinese suit, but worn with a French cravat.²²⁸ Ironically though, Mobutu's African authenticity seems to have inspired a generation of a popular 'fashion-manic' subculture known as *La Sapeurs (Société des Ambicencers et Personnes d'Élégance* (The Society for the Advancement of Elegant People), which still continues in the DRC.²²⁹ *La Sapeurs* are unapologetic in their displays of exclusive, prohibitively expensive designer wear. Despite the movement's assertion that an African can still determine themselves across cultural interactions, it is criticised for what is regarded as a celebration of the excessive materialism associated with Mobutu's kleptocratic rule, which fed his indulgence in European luxury goods.

Despite the challenges in this moment, as Ake observes, all the nationalist leaders showed a strong commitment towards development. However, the spectre of the colonial state system, that is, Africa's continued attachment to the erstwhile coloniser's political and economic systems, and language, sharpened already-existing ideological differences during the Cold War. Thus tension was added to the rapidly fading legitimacy that had all along derived from struggle credentials, as well as the shared causes of Pan-Africanist nationalism.

This particularly concerned Nkrumah, who had consistently championed African socialism, as he regarded socialism and true African unity as "organic and complementary".²³⁰ He saw these as fundamental to the kind of unity that Africa required in order to redress the ills of a divided continent made of economically-unviable states. This adaption of socialist-economic

²²⁸ Rok Ajulu, "Thabo Mbeki's African Renaissance in a Globalising World Economy: The Struggle for the Soul of the Continent", *Review of African Political Economy* 28 no. 87 (2001): 27-42.

²²⁹ See Lucretia Stewart, "Zaire Chic", *New African Life Supplement* no. 23 (June 1995): 14-19.

²³⁰ Kwame Nkrumah, *Consciencism*, 73.

nationalism evolved into the most dominant expression for anti-imperial developmentalism, as states centralised control of development programs. This explains the emergence of Nyerere's *Ujamaa* African socialism philosophy of development, which Nyerere described as being dissimilar in spirit to the European Hegelian Marxist socialism that had downplayed the black experience of slavery. For Nyerere, *Ujamaa* was founded on a communal, humanist culture linked to a pre-colonial egalitarian humanist past,²³¹ which provided a distinctive development consciousness framework for Africa's own solutions from a grassroots level up.

Certainly, fellow founding presidents, Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya, Houphouët Boigny of the Ivory Coast, and Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia, among others, were less enthusiastic about ideologically-driven systems like African socialism and opted instead for conservative capitalist systems. They saw the former as untested and risky, considering the impatience for substantive gains from the newly-found independence that moved their people. It was an impatience which was exploited by Western powers, resulting in the overthrow of ideologically-inclined leaders. For instance, Patrick Lumumba was deposed in favour of Mobutu, and Thomas Sankara removed for Blaise Compaoré. Furthermore, national politics increasingly took an ethno-sectarian turn, which obliterated multiparty politics as an "enlightened authoritarianism"²³² of the single-party state set in. And so in countries like Kenya, Kenyatta, supported by the Agikuyu ethnic group and kin communities from the Mount Kenya region, suppressed the opposition consisting of former nationalists, such as those that hailed from the Luo group, while in Nigeria, the Ibo from the South East rallied around General Ojukwu in a bid to secede and form a new country called Biafra.

²³¹ Julius Nyerere, "Ujamaa - The Basis of African Socialism", in *Ujamaa: Essays on Socialism* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), 4-5.

²³² Kwame Karikari, "African Media Since Ghana's Independence: Overview", in *50 Years of Journalism*, ed. Elizabeth Barrat and Guy Berger (Johannesburg: The African Editors Forum, Highway Africa and Media Foundation for West Africa, 2007), 16.

Nkrumah's self-criticism

Although Nkrumah lives on as a visionary of Africa's future, his insightful critique of the complex and contradictory legacies of colonialism and nationalism upon which post-independence Africa advanced remain largely unacknowledged and unheeded. If at all, a majority of popular commentary tends to disregard these later critiques of his powerful early statements, as illogical musings due to the disillusionment caused by life in political wilderness. This is because the sharpest criticisms of Africa's post-independence state power came after Nkrumah's overthrow. Nonetheless, the contradictions which manifested during the periods of brutal elimination of opponents, including worsening sectarian violence, and the decline of Ghana's economy, led to a necessary reflexive moment. Hountondji points to three key issues in this respect. First, in retreat from his pre-independence pacifist ideas, Nkrumah sees a revolutionary armed struggle against imperialist neocolonialism advanced by global corporations, as the only way to secure Africa's future.²³³ Second, against the theory of Concienscism, he rejects the premise of a naturally-occurring communal ownership of wealth, which had informed his version African socialism. At the same time, he criticises Nyerere's African nationalism as fetishism which derived from ahistorical assumptions of an egalitarian, classless African society. Third, and most importantly, he criticises his ideas in *Africa Must Unite*. Against his extensively-quoted proposals which emphasised the urgency for African unity, Nkrumah sharply condemns the emergence of puppet regimes and their defence of neocolonial interests, and even suggests that they ought to be overthrown. As for the OAU, he described it as a premature organ because Africa lacked a real community of political views and choices. The alternative would be a broad collaboration between liberation movements fighting in the different regions of Africa, which would gradually build towards an African government.

²³³ Hountondji, *African Philosophy*, 130-137, and Nkrumah, *The Handbook of Revolutionary Warfare*, 36-41, 56-58.

Media and post-independence

Conjunctions between media and Africa in this second moment are contradictory. On the one hand, the proceedings and proclamations for self-government coming from the London Pan-African conferences of the 1900s went largely ignored, especially by the British media. Yet, it is the upheavals and difficulties around the management of government processes and the economy, often fuelled by sectarian and ideological disagreements within African nationalism, which came to define Africa among Euro-American media. This is largely because the idea of media during this period was calibrated in relation to Samuel Huntington's waves of democratisation,²³⁴ whereby socio-cultural, political and economic events were primarily explained in relation to the democracy of the day. This explains the emergence of the media – known as mass media – in the first wave of democracy during the 1960s and 1970s. The media were state-run, and cautiously upheld notions of freedom of expression. This is because the notion of unfettered freedom of expression was deemed as a threat to aspirations for national unity and development. Thus media-driven criticism of state was strongly discouraged. At the same time, state media became instruments of “commandment”; that is, tools for compelling society to “perform obligations” in a tone that suggested a right for the state to demand.²³⁵ Predictably, this impeded the growth of privately-owned media, while foreign-owned media were increasingly suppressed in most countries as the ruling elites protested what they deemed to be agents of a neocolonial agenda. Gradually, the discourse of reawakening receded as critical domestic media balked at the degree of violence meted out to dissidents.

At the height of this period – in 1986 – a ground-breaking media commentary about the state of Africa's transformation appeared. It was a nine-part series produced by Ali Mazrui for the BBC titled *The Africans: A Triple Heritage*. It entailed an analysis of the continent's history

²³⁴ Samuel Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late 20th Century* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991).

²³⁵ Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, 32.

across four centuries, touching on themes of slavery and self-determination which had concerned the first and second moments of renaissance. Crucially, Mazrui provided reflexive insights on the complexities and contradictions of these legacies including, nationalism. It remains doubtful that this series received any significant airplay within African countries at the time. This is probably because of the events of two years prior: in 1984, when the world's attention was gripped by images of starving people in Ethiopia. These images were produced by Mohammed Amin for another BBC documentary titled *Biblical Famine*, during the secretive communist reign of Mengistu Haile Mariam. And despite the massive uproar generated by a number of high-profile fundraising projects, including Bob Geldof's *Live Aid* and USA for Africa (*We are the World*), the OAU did little to intervene or to engage Mengistu's dictatorship. A decade later, a picture of a starving child being stalked by a vulture, taken by Pulitzer Prize-winning photographer Kevin Carter, appeared in the *New York Times*,²³⁶ adding to popular notions of a hopeless continent. It is against this historical context of attempts to find African solutions that Chapters 4 and 5 map mediatised enunciations for Africa's new rising which is a direct response to perceived reversals in, or even paralysis resulting from the previous attempts. But before doing so, it is necessary to elucidate the framework that will be used to make sense of these enunciations and of their importance in disclosing the complexity of what is termed Africa's dysfunctions.

²³⁶ Kevin Carter's image of this starving child was made popular globally by *Time Magazine*, after it was featured in the magazine's edition titled "100 Photos: The Most Influential Images of all Time". Available at <http://100photos.time.com/>.

Mtaka cha mvunguni sharti ainame

*'One who desires/seekers that which lies underneath must bend/hunker down'*²³⁷

(Kiswahili Proverb)

Dua a ananse adi awu no, Ntikuma nkotena ase nto nko

'Ntikuma does not sit and doze/play under the tree whose fruit Ananse (his father) ate and died'

(Akan Proverb)

You could not step twice into the same rivers; for other waters are ever flowing to you.

(Heraclitus, Greek philosopher of change and difference)²³⁸

Chapter 3: Methodological Reflections

This chapter seeks to expound on the ontological commitments upon which the conceptual framework of difference and becoming is based. At the same time, it connects the analytical method of mapping with this framework. This begins by locating the key concepts of *differentiation* in this study, as developed in Deleuze's text *Difference and Repetition*, followed by Mbembe's different yet related concepts developed in the chapter "On Time", from his text *On the Postcolony*.²³⁹ This move attempts to show how the dialogue between Mbembe's and Deleuze's ideas provokes novel ways of facilitating *restless* reencounters with Africa, Africanness and associated notions of dysfunctionality. It is instructive at this point to state that it is not an easy task delving into Deleuze's *Difference and Repetition*. As Williams observes, this book constituted an innovative task of "breaking with the beat" on the *Idea* of philosophy, seeking to reevaluate and extend ideas on life and structure of reality. Thus it committed to a

²³⁷ See discussion of these proverbs on page 100.

²³⁸ Heraclitus "Fragment XLI", *The Loeb Classical Library Hippocrates Vol. IV and Heraclitus: On the Universe*, trans. W. H. S. Jones. (London and Cambridge: William Heinemann Ltd. and Harvard University Press, 1959), 483.

²³⁹ At the time of writing this chapter, the text *On the Postcolony* had undergone a revision. The concepts employed here are drawn from the earlier 2001 edition.

specific revolutionary language, style and method which defy easy comprehension, almost seeming wilfully obstructive.²⁴⁰ Encouragingly, the growing body of Deleuzian scholarship allows me to enlist James Williams and Manuel Delanda for clarification, as their work makes more accessible the specific concepts of difference used in this study.

But first, one needs to ask: why Mbembe alongside Deleuze in this search for Africa-purposed thought and scholarship? The discussion around Nyamnjoh's directive for co-theorisation observed that their ideas, taken in conjunction, generate a fitting decolonial posture that says African ideas can face up to dominant universal concepts as co-equals, in tackling complex epistemological and material problems. That being the case, why not adopt other notable frameworks of decolonial thought, or "global scepticism"²⁴¹ from the abundance of ideas in the global South? For example, postcolonial theories on hybridity, orientalism, and concepts in literary theory founded on Marxist thought?

Firstly, despite their divergent socio-cultural, political and material backgrounds – which they interrogate rigorously – Mbembe's and Deleuze's ontological dispositions and methods remain analogous. This is demonstrated in their commitment to brutal scepticism over the allure of dominant and counter-dominant beliefs which present themselves as main truths on life. This includes conformist attitudes and representational vocabularies, which even if unintentionally, propel specific "normativity about all places and moments in the universe".²⁴² Stated otherwise, no concept that claims authority to organise the social, or "public culture",²⁴³ should go uncontested as it is always incomplete. The complex nature of reality requires one to affirm the

²⁴⁰ Williams, *Gilles Deleuze's Difference and Repetition*, 2.

²⁴¹ This is a phrase used by philosopher of science Jeremy Wisnewski in his discussion on realism as a phenomenological, active/dynamic ontological attitude towards one's immediate circumstances. Jeremy Wisnewski, "Heidegger, Arthur Fine, and the Natural Ontological Attitude", *Prolegomena* 12 no. 2 (2013): 443-458.

²⁴² Kwasi Konadu, "The Cultural Identity of Africa and the Global Tasks of Africana Studies", *African Studies Quarterly* 7 no. 4 (2004): 37.

²⁴³ Mbembe, "On the Postcolony", 144.

overall situation, along with its seemingly minor but necessary parts, in order to unveil and explain the alternatives which manifest themselves. And so, while Deleuze critically confronts his own European philosophic traditions for creating such hegemonic bases of universal reference, Mbembe reflects on dominant traditions of African ideas in a process that simultaneously confronts the dominance of those very European traditions which Deleuze criticises. In this way, Mbembe's reflections also indict Deleuzian criticism of such privilege, given that Deleuzian thought has increasingly emerged as a dominant point of reference in most critical discourse on European thought inside Europe, and for many a decolonial project.

That being so, secondly, both thinkers insist on methods which regard thinking as continuous *processes* of rigorous and incisive questioning of familiar and new problems. The prerequisite is that all interrogation must begin with one's own thought processes. As will be demonstrated in the upcoming sections, such rigour is enhanced by creative repurposing of existing concepts, as well as the creation of new ones, in order to expand thought, existing principles and the capacity to act, as new connections are entered into with life. Third, however, while thinking should always incline one towards seeking alternatives, it should remain "in contact with the real".²⁴⁴ That is to say, both Mbembe and Deleuze acknowledge that certain everyday things of society, for instance politico-economic systems and historical events, are undeniably 'real' or 'concrete' in a particular way. But right thinking resists temptations to escape these realities superficially by relying only on prevailing 'truths' existing outside one's mind. Again, thought ought to creatively apply concepts within the situation to disclose the many layers of ongoing processes.²⁴⁵

²⁴⁴ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 12.

²⁴⁵ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 62, and Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, 6-8.

Points of conjunction with African traditional and postcolonial ideas

On the basis of the foregoing, I do not discern any major disagreements between Mbembe's and Deleuze's ontological commitments in terms of scepticism in relation to privileged universal frameworks, and the ontological disposition expressed in traditional African thought on everyday life as illustrated in the idioms cited at the beginning of this chapter. Similarly, it is such a disposition which underpins the contemporary struggle for epistemological and political decoloniality in the global South, against a "closed universalism" of Euro-American intellectual and politico-economic order.²⁴⁶ On the latter, while Mbembe's and Deleuze's *differenciación* invents conceptual tools to guide new thought and action, decolonisation processes conceived by the formerly colonised disclose a corresponding attitude devoted to formulating an alternative modernity. These entail epistemological transgressions against the intellectual authority of a Euro-American hegemonic modernity, which promulgates ineffectual solutions and exhausted theories to the problems it helped to create.²⁴⁷

Of much interest and importance is that the time-honoured African proverbs mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, express remarkable consonance in ontological dispositions between African traditional thought, and Mbembe's and Deleuze's shared concept of difference. Regardless of claims that African idioms merely observe the obvious without much speculation, closer scrutiny however shows otherwise. For example, both the Kiswahili and Twi proverbs strongly suggest an ontological stance corresponding with that which grounds ancient Greek philosophy of difference and change, cultivated by Heraclitus, the founding thinker of *flux*, and advanced in prominent ideas on difference in Western philosophy. To explain: Heraclitus's observation that one does not cross the same river twice, describes processes of differentiation whereby each crossing involves new waters and a different experience of the river. For

²⁴⁶ Gordon, "Tragic Dimensions of Our Neocolonial 'Postcolonial' World", 242, and Gordon "Justice Otherwise", 21.

²⁴⁷Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni, "Decoloniality As the Future of Africa", *History Compass* 13 no. 10 (2015): 485.

philosopher of science Alfred North Whitehead and psychologist William James, that idiom defines “sense of life”, or, what it is to be alive, which consists of “unique content of experience” with life’s immediate processes.²⁴⁸ The African idioms express the same radical insights.

For instance, the Kiswahili proverb, “*Mtaka*” – one who seeks – describes a continually active state of being, or Diagne’s “prospective attitude”, by which the future guides a seeker’s actions inside present conditions.²⁴⁹ It also accords with Heidegger’s *Suchen* – seeking, as well as Nietzsche’s and Deleuze’s concept of “being” as an active process of seeking solutions within the problem. The second aspect to such seeking is expressed in the following phrase, *chamvunguni*²⁵⁰ – desiring that which is underneath or concealed. This correlates with Nietzsche’s and Deleuze’s view that each enquiry ought to be regarded as already in “the middle”, where “thinking should begin”.²⁵¹ Similarly, *sharti ainame* – must hunker down, expresses a commitment to seeking, like Heidegger’s “*Dasein*”: an active state of being-in-the-world, since the world is best understood by encountering it. As for the Akan proverb, the terms *Ntikuma* and *Ananse*, do not refer to particular persons. Rather, they describe a concept of how to think and act prospectively as a member of that community. It is the attitude of development,²⁵² commitment to prepare for the future now, which compels *Ntikuma* to think and act differently to the departed predecessors; he avoids eating fruits of the same tree that killed *Ananse*, his father, to avoid annihilation. In sum, these proverbs are always fit for purpose because ontologically, their advice comes from reflection within the community’s everyday situations, which are then packaged in the form of witty, insightful and concise phrases.

²⁴⁸ A. L. Whitehead, *Modes of Thought* (New York: The Free Press, 1966), 145-146, and William James, *Essays in Radical Empiricism* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), 161.

²⁴⁹ This is discussed in Chapter 1; see also Diagne, “On Prospective Development and a Political Culture of Time”, 58.

²⁵⁰ The term *mvungu* in *mvunguni* is a locative adverb for underneath, or under a cover.

²⁵¹ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 21-23, 293.

²⁵² Diagne, “On Prospective Development and a Political Culture”, 58.

Points of divergence: Methodological and conceptual insufficiencies

Despite this consonance in ontological disposition, there arises a question of cognition of conceptual and methodological frameworks. As observed by Gordon, while decolonisation remains necessary, the decolonial project however unveils insufficiencies, as it is largely designed in epistemic terms, and so it struggles to get to “the core of normative life”.²⁵³ This difficulty is aggravated by complex entanglements between African contemporary life, and a still-formidable global politico-economic hegemony. Thus, proposals for epistemological break-away are rendered shaky if not insubstantial. For Mbembe, it is a conundrum which exposes gross insufficiencies in emancipatory scholarship pursuing a ruthless African counter-position. Such forms of scholarships tend to cast the struggle as primarily a matter of discourse and representation, forgetting that representations have materiality.²⁵⁴ Therefore, a fitting evaluative process ought to be premised on fundamental intersections within processes of ordinary life. That comprises symbiotic relationships, questions of identity and freedom, and overall metacritiques of reason.²⁵⁵ This correlates with Mbembe’s and Deleuze’s method which intersects diverse cultural, scholarly and artistic concepts, as necessary resources for understanding the multiple layers of a complex world. These concepts bequeath creative tools for transforming life continually, working against existing canons, and against other dogmatic ideas seeking to replace them.²⁵⁶

That being so, I am obliged to declare this caveat before I proceed: Deleuze’s task of laying bare and reconfiguring major concepts within Western philosophy, constitutes a colossal effort which produced an extensive oeuvre. As such, this study offers only a truncated exploration of

²⁵³ Gordon, “Justice Otherwise”, 21.

²⁵⁴ Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, 6.

²⁵⁵ Gordon, “Justice Otherwise”, 21.

²⁵⁶ Gilles Deleuze, “On the New Philosophers, Plus a More General Problem”, in *Two Regimes of Madness: Texts and Interviews 1975-1995*, rev. ed., trans. Ames Hodges and Mike Taormina, ed. David Lapoujade (New York: Columbia University, 2007), 146.

specific Deleuzian concepts linked to the ontology of difference and becoming, and of a method that enables the opening of alternative thinking for Africa-purposed scholarship.

Deleuze: Philosophy of difference and becomings

Deleuzian difference in itself, urges one to pay close *attention to the variety of processes* involved in all things of life. Massumi captures this aptly: “there’s happening doing...something’s happening, and we find ourselves in the midst of it, try as we might for observers remove”.²⁵⁷ Described briefly, difference in itself is an individuating principle that apprehends life as processes where things – that is, objects, people, ideas, animals, senses – are compelled to connect in response to specific situations within physical spaces, without exact prediction as to how they will transform. In other words, life as everyday situations, being human, as well as human beings connecting with physical things, all constitute multiple processes of activities. Things involved in such processes will move, break, lie still and come into contact with others to express unique experiences. This describes Deleuze’s key idea of *Individuals*,²⁵⁸ as elaborated in his “principle of multiplicity”.²⁵⁹ An individual, or being, is not simply human consciousness acting on the world. Rather it describes a whole reality as a series of processes which interconnect thought and senses, with expressions of objects like trees, rocks, or artwork in a room. The falling of leaves, or rocks breaking into small bits, or a repositioned art piece, register at a fundamental level, unique ways of how to be in the world, and thus explain what constitutes overall change of that reality. Yet, for various reasons, conscious thought may elect to overlook all these unique processes and resulting changes, and compress them, thereby reducing them to be ‘identified’ as a single thing.

²⁵⁷ Massumi, *Semblance and Event*, 1.

²⁵⁸ Williams, *Gilles Deleuze’s Difference and Repetition*, 6.

²⁵⁹ In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari’s discussion of the *rhizome* brings together key ideas on diverse processes and activities of experiencing life, including arts, cinema, politics, botany, linguistics, nomadic practices and others, which always propose possibilities of alternative changes or different forms of existence.

Against this, Deleuze invents with a method that grasps thinking as a capacity to transform life.²⁶⁰ In the text *Difference and Repetition*, this process begins by questioning what it means to think, or “True thinking”. Here Deleuze problematises the universally-dominant *image of thought*,²⁶¹ or agreed-upon ideas about what thinking is. This image considers thinking as a commonly-shared capacity among humans – *common sense*, which always inclines one to doing good. And, if applied correctly, there can be universal consensus or *doxa* (common opinion).²⁶² As Kant proposed, proper thinking can be achieved with the proper principles of reason,²⁶³ meaning, if it satisfies “logical validity and coherence”.²⁶⁴ For Deleuze, such thinking is problematic because it inclines society to seek simple and expedient explanations for things, based on notions of ‘proper roots’, or an essential nature, rather than differences. Such thinking proffers ‘real identity’ as opposed to possible changes. Consequently, it reinforces belief that the purpose and/or meaning of something is a pre-determined, or already-existing, fact of life. Thus, unique encounters with things are disregarded; and if they prove impossible to ignore, they are forced back to their ‘proper’ place. For Deleuze, this occurs due to trained habit, since we are taught from childhood to act according to specified identity/nature. In the end, thinking stagnates.

In an interview in *Two Regimes of Madness*, Deleuze says that he invented “extremely differentiated concepts”, to creatively “escape gross dualisms”²⁶⁵ presented in the prevailing philosophies of identity. This required creative interconnection with various lines of research in other domains, and simultaneously sensitivity regarding detaching ideas from authority

²⁶⁰ John Marks, *Gilles Deleuze: Vitalism and Multiplicity* (London: Pluto Press, 1998), 129.

²⁶¹ The *Image of thought* is the focus of the third chapter of *Difference and Repetition* (1994).

²⁶² Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 133-134.

²⁶³ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 99.

²⁶⁴ Williams, *Gilles Deleuze's Difference and Repetition*, 2.

²⁶⁵ In this set of interviews, Deleuze explains how invention of concepts involved collaborations with psychologist and co-author Félix Guattari, especially in the writing of the well-known text *A Thousand Plateaus*.

figures, including Greek philosophers. As Williams put it, “true thinking responds to problems in new ways to reinvigorate life to the problems that give rise to them”.²⁶⁶

Difference in itself: Critique of philosophers of difference

The main challenge to locating “difference in itself” – or *pure difference* – is how to determine difference, without defining it in terms of identity or representation. That is to say, difference is neither a negation, or variance based external dis-similarity between things considered to be of the same category, according to metrics which approximate nearness or distance from an ideal type. Take the example of things bearing close external features/qualities: guard dogs, a doctor, or a smart cell phone. Pure differences are not simply determined because a guard dog is of a different breed, based on classifications of presumed ferocity; or a doctor is racially black not white, a man and not a woman, nor bearing the certification of a specialist; and the smartphone is not the same brand, or the most purchased. In short “not this thing” entirely, that is, another phone but of similar model, or a very close replica. Nor is difference determined based on very minor variations to a thing which is already established. For instance tiny breakages, or scratches, a limp, or a doctor not qualified in a most-recognised institution. Locating pure difference required Deleuze to detach the idea of difference from “four key moments in the history of Philosophy”. For this, he reengages the works of Aristotle, Hegel, Leibniz and Plato.²⁶⁷

In Aristotle’s philosophy, difference is a concept which defines classification of identity along set categories of natural identity, or essence. These are *genus*, *species* and *individual*. It needs “logically necessary subdivisions”²⁶⁸ linked to certain observable traits, considered to be

²⁶⁶ Williams, *Gilles Deleuze’s Difference and Repetition*, 2.

²⁶⁷ Ibid., 55; also articulated by Elizabeth Grosz in “Bergson, Deleuze and the Unbecoming of Unbecoming”, 4-6, and in François Dosse’s *Gilles Deleuze & Félix Guattari: Intersecting Lives* (New York: Columbia University Press 2010), 129-169.

²⁶⁸ Manuel Delanda, “Deleuze, Mathematics and Realist Ontology, 220.

naturally permanent. For instance, genus, as difference between plants and animals; species animal, as difference between apes and humans; and species humans, as women or men. However, the individual is considered as contingent/accidental and thus is discarded; that is, to be white- or black-skinned, or for mammals to be missing a hoof.²⁶⁹ This founds the dominant idea of difference in practical realism. It is also the most ubiquitous mode of differentiation in everyday interactions.

Deleuze criticises it for “lacking” sufficient “reason” for determining where something falls in the divisions.²⁷⁰ That is because difference is not only deliberated in relation to fixed or established procedures; it also implies that all things fit into already-existing categories. Inevitably, it restricts possibility for change. Thus, a woman or child is differentiated on dissimilarity of physical traits from all humans in their category, despite unique life experiences. Taking a closer view, genus *civilisation* is generally fixed to certain practices of establishing cultures in geographical locales. On Africa, such practices – in both inventing and apologist discourses – involve arche-narratives of first nomination, which locate a complete first entity against which Africa’s absolute otherness is determined.²⁷¹ Thus the most privileged civilisation is Western. And the *species* subdivision *modernity*, is determined through specific processes termed as *progress* or *backwardness*, based on ‘enlightened’ education, music, art, technology. This way, Africa is always in a wrong modernity even if its civilisation is admissible. This explains why Father Foster describes Peter’s response to his question as “an African answer”.²⁷² Forster differentiates through existing hierarchical categories of race, linked to geographical distribution, and so a single African Peter represents all Africans and their ‘poor’ mental capacities. This is analogous to the notion of African dysfunctions.

²⁶⁹ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 30.

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 31.

²⁷¹ Mbembe “On the Postcolony”, 147.

²⁷² See the dialogue excerpt at the top of Chapter 2, drawn from Foster’s *White to Move* (1961).

On Hegel and Leibniz, Deleuze foregrounds how they attempt to conceive difference in relation to the infinite. In summary, Hegel and Leibniz argue that any supposed limits to identity are flawed because by nature such limit cannot be apprehended.²⁷³ For Hegel, difference is the limit that consumes all identities and their anti-thesis. It describes an ever-expanding process of contradictions, where each encounter produces a synthesis in an infinite spiral of difference.²⁷⁴ Invariably, a limit of identity can never be reached as contradictions recur. For Deleuze, however, Hegel's difference suffers the problem of assigning a fixed identity to that infinite spiral of contradictions and syntheses. This was highlighted in the foregoing Chapter 2, regarding Hegel's self-negating ideas on world history, where, although his process produces difference and contradictions with each synthesis, Hegel somehow arrives at a final dehumanising state of an African without "spirit".

For Leibniz difference is determined when infinitely small variations are considered in unbundling limits of identity. As Williams notes, whenever one arrives at a well-defined nature of a thing, one finds it in the smallest traces; the tiny significant variations which *representations* of identity are pushed to exclude. This implies that the initial well-defined representation was flawed.²⁷⁵ However, Williams finds it odd that Deleuze criticises both Hegel and Leibniz, given how their idea of the infinite undoes identity. Ultimately, despite his criticism that their ideas return to "tame the infinite", or to subordinate difference to particular identities, Deleuze adopts Leibniz's difference which he calls "vice-diction".²⁷⁶

When difference is vice-diction, the infinitely tiny variations are not considered part of the thing's essence; rather, they remain significant to the thing as they retain autonomous 'power to do something' that reconfigures the entire thing. To clarify, Williams uses the phrase "life

²⁷³ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 45.

²⁷⁴ Williams, *Gilles Deleuze's Difference and Repetition*, 69.

²⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 70, and Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 48.

²⁷⁶ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 46-47.

plays in different ways” to explain that major points of change in history involve diverse realities converging at a single moment; those realities will potentially take a course due to seemingly insignificant, or infinitely small differences interacting with no contradictions. They vice-dict each other. Viewed in terms of Deleuze’s concept of “lines of flight”, the “inessential” does not refer to “that which lacks importance”.²⁷⁷

Turning to Plato, Deleuze launches into his discussion with the statement, “the task of modern philosophy has been defined; to overturn Platonism”. For Deleuze this is both inevitable and desirable.²⁷⁸ Overturning though, as Williams explains, refers to the “tweaking” of Plato’s conceptualisation of difference while remaining faithful to its structure.²⁷⁹ Briefly, Deleuze’s critique of Platonism brings together the difference presented by Aristotle, Hegel and Leibniz to demonstrate how pure difference can interact with well-defined things, when such pure difference is radically different. That is, to show how things with nothing in common belong to the same system.²⁸⁰ As will be shown later, Deleuzian difference and Mbembe’s critique draw on this structure or dialectic, especially the notion of *grounding* or *Idea*.²⁸¹ This *Idea* lays true ground or foundation for *unveiling a thing itself*; to mark difference among the identical. This constitutes the second major problematic for Mbembe, which concerns the discourse of lack, or gap, between what Africa is, and what it ought to be.²⁸²

²⁷⁷ Ibid., 47.

²⁷⁸ Plato’s difference was regarded as more powerful than Aristotle’s, Hegel’s and Leibniz’s. Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 59.

²⁷⁹ Williams cautions against a perfunctory reading of the term “overturn” to mean overthrowing: something which has been erroneously imposed on Deleuze, as it effectively detaches him from his very concept of difference. Williams, *Gilles Deleuze’s Difference and Repetition*, 79.

²⁸⁰ Ibid., 80. Deleuze describes Ideas as multiplicities, whereby a multiplicity entails relations of exteriority. That is, diverse whole components do not exist in a system simply as qualities, or as part-features of a network combining as cogs fitting other cogs/fitting parts to form a unity – namely relations of interiority. Rather in exteriority, components can belong as whole individuated organs but, relating in different roles within the system. See Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 182.

²⁸¹ See Valentin-Yves Mudimbe’s works *The Invention of Africa* and *The Idea of Africa*. These are key to African thought given their rigorous critique of Plato’s concept of setting ground, which is particularly important in understanding the place of Africa within Western epistemology.

²⁸² Mbembe, “On the Postcolony”, 147.

Deleuze focuses on the “four figures” which hold the structure of Platonic dialectic. These are, selection of difference, installation of the mythic circle, the establishment of a foundation, and the position of a question-problem complex.²⁸³ He contends that the Platonic dialectic depends on the wrong foundation, whereby identity is related to the *Same*, or “the One”. Invariably, difference will imply divisions between original and simulacra, model and copies.²⁸⁴ That explains why Mbembe’s project begins by disclosing how dominant this Platonism, or ground, remains in the ‘invention’ of Africa, even within attempts to counter it. In particular, he notes how it employs myths about the *ideal type* of reason and modernity to assign an African pathology (dysfunctionality), giving little place for open argument.²⁸⁵ Eventually, this leads to Africa being cast as a ‘poor copy’ of Europe, and thus seeking its own equivalent ground, which Africans are expected to accept with little resistance.

The first Platonic figure relates to the division of things. For Deleuze, unlike Aristotle’s difference which uses fixed traits to subdivide things in progressive series of small contrasts (genera and species), the Platonic process of difference is about *valuations*. It proceeds on the question “which is best?”²⁸⁶ However, like Aristotle’s, the problem remains that choice of best requires another to precede it; that means, a counter-position is sought before determining value, and vice versa. Thus a form of identity recurs in subsequent categories of difference.

The second Platonic figure comes in response to the first. It attempts to know how one can select without recourse to prior determinate positions.²⁸⁷ As Deleuze shows, Plato introduces a *myth*, or the “mythic circle” as the basis for selection and valuation of the true or authentic,

²⁸³ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 60. See especially pages 59-69 where Deleuze works through Plato’s *The Statesman* and *Phaedrus* in his inversion of Plato’s difference.

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 66-67.

²⁸⁵ Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, 4.

²⁸⁶ Williams, *Gilles Deleuze’s Difference and Repetition*, 80.

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 79-80.

or bad and false.²⁸⁸ The difference between this mythical reason, and logic for division into established genera, is that “the myth is not present”;²⁸⁹ it is not an identifiable trait useable to differentiate what is selected for classification. Thus the selected can only be a role-player, a pretender or claimant evaluated against the perfection of the *original Idea* the myth propounds. That means, processes of differentiation select and separate by connecting with an “imaginary equivalent”;²⁹⁰ a foundational myth or story of a ‘best model’, the One. It is this mythical or *grounding* concept which allocates value. Importantly, this method of division enables such valuations to recur perpetually albeit in different contexts; that is “turning and returning”. Common examples include references to foundational concepts of *ideal* leadership as Solomonic wisdom, lover as Romeo and Juliet. This concept of grounding ties to the third figure of establishment of foundation.

Establishing foundation: Affirming ground

Deleuze draws on the concept of *Idea* to show how it sets foundations, upon which actual people, objects and their problems can participate. That is, how parts in system can assert their worth in relation to *Idea*, and thus unsettle it to greater or lesser degrees.²⁹¹ Stated differently, since the “ideal original” is what gives the degree of difference, or value, its function becomes one of differentiating against an unreachable standard using its grounding test. As Deleuze says, “the claimant calls for ground; and their claim must be grounded or denounced as groundless”.²⁹² Using the example of the *Idea of Africa*, Mudimbe rigorously outlines how Africa, the land of the ‘grotesque’ features, and of primitive mentalities and habits, is founded on a long line of European epistemological orders. And so the ‘deformed’ Africa(ns) can only be claimant(s) to notions of civilisation, and subsist as inferior participants to the *Idea* of proper

²⁸⁸ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 60-61.

²⁸⁹ Williams, *Gilles Deleuze's Difference and Repetition*, 81.

²⁹⁰ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 61.

²⁹¹ Williams, *Gilles Deleuze's Difference and Repetition*, 81.

²⁹² Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 62.

civilisation set by European myth. Indeed slavery and colonisation relied on this ground not only to affirm this claimant role for Africa, but also to justify its control. For Mbembe, in turn, this ground produces Africa's absolute backwardness, against which the West and its vocabularies find polemical justification for supremacy and the 'right to dispose'. However, as will be shown in Chapter 6, Owomoyela offers a sharp critique of Mudimbe's arguments on invention for reinforcing this *ground* of grotesques, in the manner that they eliminate the experience and capacity of the African subject, and dwell on the fixedness of the invented subject in a way that suggests embarrassment with African differences.

Significantly though, Deleuze is more interested in the other function of establishing foundation, namely, how it enables "double selection". Briefly put, when actual things are put through the grounding test, they allow the foundational concept to return and do well, or poorly.²⁹³ In other words, how *Idea/ground* evolves, to become sharper, more reliable or weaker, depending on how it interacts with actual issues. For Deleuze, Platonic division prevents greater distribution of difference as it mostly serves a selective foundation for ideal ground, with an identity that remains unattainable.²⁹⁴ Predictably, actual things are only engaged as test samples. As seen later, this reflects on Deleuzian difference in the concepts of the actual/virtual, and lines of flight, only if it connects with the fourth figure: the question-problem complex.

Deleuze begins by asking "what exactly does the grounding test consist [of]?"²⁹⁵ The answer is, it consists of a tension between a question and a problem. A problem shows a tension which Deleuze calls "irony" within Ideas that cannot be resolved, but only participated with, or expressed well or poorly.²⁹⁶ Deleuze adds that the irony consists in treating things and beings

²⁹³ Williams, *Gilles Deleuze's Difference and Repetition*, 81.

²⁹⁴ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 62.

²⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 63.

²⁹⁶ Williams, *Gilles Deleuze's Difference and Repetition*, 81.

as so many responses to hidden solutions; as many cases for problems yet to be resolved.²⁹⁷ This is because problems are not always logical or cognitive, classified according to what might be already known as the case.²⁹⁸ They are often encountered by contingent happenings in the course of lived experiences, as the social transforms alongside physical environments. And so if ground sets problems or questions, expecting certain false or true answers, the participating parts bring their responses and solutions which make the issue clearer or worse by opening it up wider. For example, a select group being interviewed on the problem of violent crime, may instinctively respond: *why not kill all criminals promptly? Why can't everybody carry a gun freely to defend themselves because the State is never present? Why should I pay taxes?* Here, what comes across as a solution for a few participants, will cause more problems as opposed to giving a final solution to that overall problem. Thus, for Deleuze, this tension in the question-problem complex does not show lack of contradictions in the ground, but rather a problematic *structure in ground* as a foundation of all things, or as a single resolution to the original tension.

Remarkably, however, the tension also incites “creative destruction” of the problem. That is, it unveils rare, fit solutions to the problem, alongside well-known, or commonly-identified ideas/questions which are expected to return. This is significant for Deleuze, as it manifests an ontological gap. This gap says that *ground* is also a source of difference in itself; a problem. That is to say, ground also opens possibilities of broadening the number of participating parts to the problem, which can lead to affirmations of multiple non-recognisable, far-from-ideal solutions.²⁹⁹ This enables Deleuze’s difference to begin at such a crucial place.

²⁹⁷ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 63.

²⁹⁸ Williams, *Gilles Deleuze's Difference and Repetition*, 130.

²⁹⁹ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 64.

Differentiation, *differenciación*, and becoming

Deleuzian scholar Adrian Parr asks: seeing that Deleuze is not a representational thinker, how does his system distribute difference to avoid the very trap of similitude and pre-determined classifications of identity?³⁰⁰ Drawing on the above traditions of difference, Deleuze formulates the concept of “difference in itself” or “*differenciación*” as the principle which affirms individuating things and happenings which already exist within predetermined identities, and are in continuous interaction between physical parts and the *virtual realm* of sense, memory and ideas, to evolve whole beings beyond the limits of classifications.³⁰¹ As Deleuze puts it, individuation precedes matter, form, species and parts, and every other aspect of the constituted individual.³⁰² The term *Differenciación*,³⁰³ as already seen, derives from Deleuze’s connection with the concept of *differentiation* in mathematics to develop his idea of *virtuality*. Summed up, Deleuze’s concepts of difference commit to processes of seeking *spaces of possibilities*, through the numerous unique encounters between the actual and virtual. These ought to locate new trajectories of continuous transformation by solving immediate problems, while unveiling new ones to be engaged with in turn.

The second part of Parr’s question is, if *differenciación* is the process of actualising the virtual, why is *differenciación* not similar to, or a version of the virtual it differentiates?³⁰⁴ The answer is: the physically-actualised differences are not privileged over the many individuating processes and the resulting properties affirmed by interconnections in the virtual. That is to say, *differenciación does not freeze the continual processes of interconnection* to unify diverse heterogeneous qualities.³⁰⁵ And so, while Deleuze understands that things must necessarily

³⁰⁰ Adrian Parr, “Differentiation/Differenciación”, in *The Deleuze Dictionary*, ed. Adrian Parr (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005), 75-76.

³⁰¹ Ibid.

³⁰² Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 38.

³⁰³ See the upcoming section titled “Differentiation: Processes to solutions without limits”.

³⁰⁴ Parr, “Differentiation/Differenciación”, 76.

³⁰⁵ Ibid.

exist in an externally-identifiable form which they are allocated, in reality, their individuating features occur contingently. That means, any member of a species (whether human or animal) cannot be simply equated or replaced with something resembling them physically. What they are and evolve into, are a result of distinctive processes which evince possibilities for change, due to constant encounters between their physical bodies, objects, sensations, and ideas within a given situation.

So, for Deleuze, a full explanation of a reality must consider how actual events touch on, or interact with, the virtual, as it explains why life is significant, and uniquely so, for each individual.³⁰⁶ This can be summed as follows: whereas the actual is the undeniable physically-measurable form packaged into a category, the virtual consists of incorporeal happenings³⁰⁷ like senses, memories and ideas, which are not physically visible. Yet, they reveal themselves as part of that physical situation in varying degrees or intensities to give it unique significance.³⁰⁸ This virtual plane is what brings difference in itself, or pure difference. Thus, for Deleuze, life describes itself as continuous processes of multiple unique changes, or becomings in *virtual Ideas*, as well as degrees of virtual *intensities* and *extensities*, connected to actual things.

In short, virtual ideas allow for different states, or ways in which the known physical thing can exist as an individuated form, beyond what is given by *ground*. This is facilitated by intensities – the degrees of sense and memory properties, and, extensities – the duration of those intensities, as the overall process of connections between the actual and virtual moves in a particular direction.³⁰⁹ Therefore as opposed to Plato's ground, *Ideas* itself constitutes relations

³⁰⁶ Williams, *Gilles Deleuze's Difference and Repetition*, 7-9.

³⁰⁷ This is developed in Deleuze's *The Logic of Sense*, 4-5.

³⁰⁸ Williams, *Gilles Deleuze's Difference and Repetition*, 7-9.

³⁰⁹ Admittedly, this grossly abbreviates Deleuze's *virtuality*, considering the rigour applied in relation to, and further complexities involved in, the concepts of virtual intensities, extensities and ideas, as well as how they relate to other concepts such as velocity and vectors, longitudes and latitudes within assemblages. See Gilles Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (New York: Zone Books, 1988), and Deleuze's *The Logic of Sense*.

of pure becomings³¹⁰ because what is expressed in the physical identity, are varieties of differential elements connecting with each encounter, as the virtual is incarnated in different actual terms and forms.³¹¹

To illustrate the virtual/actual dynamic, Williams for instance, uses a coconut. The hard fruit generally recognisable by its coarse outer shell – the actual. At the same time, that fruit exists, or is understood in multiple ways, in processes of encounters with different entities. Thus it can express itself as to become smooth, hard or soft, and to nourish. Additionally, in each subsequent encounter with the coconut, all these aspects of coconut are experienced, sensed and memorised uniquely in varying degrees of intensity. That is why the virtual cannot be understood as a replacement version of the actual: a fixed identity of something called to-be-different. Virtual intensities can be further illustrated when contemplating the expression *the plate is too hot*. While a universal scientific metric can be allocated to a concept of hotness of a physical object a plate, hotness, or, the notion of a plate is hot, cannot be reduced and fixed to any specific plate. Moreover, the person expressing hotness regarding that plate cannot be the sole reference to all ideas of its hotness. Rather, one cannot adequately pass on the intensity of hotness.

From the perspective of this study, disregard for such complex interactions between the virtual and actual is demonstrated in the meta-questions on Africa's dysfunctions posed by the ilk of Richard Guest as seen in Chapter 2. Addressing issues of suffering, death and economic development, they ask *why can't Africans get over it and move forward? Why are Africans still held back by outdated toxic things like ethnicity/tribalism and witchcraft?* In his criticism of Africa's failures, Guest draws equivalences of pain caused by legacies of slavery and

³¹⁰ Williams, *Gilles Deleuze's Difference and Repetition*, 8.

³¹¹ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 183.

colonialism by stating: “We have all suffered”. To him, pain, suffering, colonial violence and political evolutions have a universal *grounding* model. Thus the brutal conflict triggered by Tutsi-Hutu ethnic sensibilities due to the colonial legacy in Rwanda, is equivalent to the hostilities between Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland, or frictions between the Chinese and the Japanese. So in Guest’s view, there is no reason why the Rwandese cannot simply ‘move on’ from historical deep-seated ethno-tribal antagonisms to produce equivalent levels of economic development to these other groups in the global North. Overall, unlike Aristotle’s generic categories genus and species which predetermine how a thing is different, or Leibniz’s and Hegel’s infinitesimal variations which are ignored, virtual events continuously multiply and cannot be reduced to numbers. Furthermore, unlike Plato’s claimants, the virtual cannot be a copy of an original, explained against fixed *Ideas*. Virtual events always do something new, although it is seldom affirmed. This underlies the process of producing difference in itself with each encounter, or *repetition*; that means, creative and endless expressions of difference at varying intensities.

Repetition³¹² and passive synthesis: Never the same river, never the same man³¹³

Deleuze articulates the process of repetition as “difference pure synthetic and in itself... [and] the eternal return for the itself of difference”.³¹⁴ Briefly, repetition is connected to the power of difference in terms of dynamic processes that diversify through every repetition,³¹⁵ or each process of encounter. However, as Williams points out, Deleuze is cautious about a lurking contradiction if repetition simply is understood as a process in which an actual identity occurs

³¹² The concepts of repetition and passive synthesis grows out of Deleuze’s conceptualisation of difference in time, in conversation with Kant, Heidegger and Bergson extending Nietzsche’s concept of time and eternal return in *Bergsonism* and *The Logic of Sense*.

³¹³ See the fragment by Heraclitus at the beginning of this chapter.

³¹⁴ Deleuze builds his concept of repetition on Nietzsche’s *will to power*, which is described as a creative driving force for continually new experiences of life. Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 125.

³¹⁵ Adrian Parr, “Repetition”, in *The Deleuze Dictionary*, ed. Adrian Parr (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005), 223.

over again.³¹⁶ Then how does repetition differentiate? This is explained in Deleuze's idea of passive synthesis of time, or characterisation of moments of encounter. It is also key to Mbembe's reading of contemporary complexities and contradictions in sub-Saharan Africa as will be seen later. It concerns three kinds of repetitions, or, how time is viewed or synthesised in relation to life's events. In this study these are crucial in the examination of dysfunctions and future solutions, linked to Africanity as an open process of learning. Mbembe conceives them as an interlocking or entangling of moments related to Africa's *longue durée*.³¹⁷

If repetition is summarised using Williams's example of a coconut, then difference must be in relation to a previous moment of encounter, and not determined solely in relation to a fixed *Idea*, or standard notion of a coconut. That means, difference must entail processes of encounter as "beginning and beginning again".³¹⁸ In Deleuze's terms, past and present are dimensions of the future, whereby there is no past or future independent of each process in the living present.³¹⁹ To clarify, while the various parts involved in bringing change to one context will appear to undergo concurrent changes at the same moment, each part however subsists, and conducts its relations within that very context, with different contents of time.³²⁰ That reiterates the idea of reality as multiplicities of ongoing processes, where something like a river's flow signals its own contents of change involving diverse moments of happenings, which are not determined by the often privileged conscious human experience.³²¹ Difference in itself is thus disclosed by recording the variations in pain, joy, memory, volume and so on, brought by earlier

³¹⁶ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 1, and Williams, *Deleuze's Difference and Repetition*, 11.

³¹⁷ As will be discussed below, a reading the African postcolony and its contradictions, especially the nature of violence on its own, would require a reading of time that looks at the past from slavery in the 14th to 19th century and colonialism. It should show how those modes of legitimised humiliation of the African are not only recalled for pain of loss of humanity, but also, how they are relived in present forms of state power, and other institutionalised configurations which authorise destruction of life since independence, thus causing anxiety over Africa's future.

³¹⁸ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 136.

³¹⁹ Williams, *Gilles Deleuze's Philosophy of Time*, 102-103.

³²⁰ *Ibid.*, 102.

³²¹ Williams, *Deleuze's Difference and Repetition*, 6, 87.

times of encounter, towards the overall change of that context. This can be better understood when considering the three syntheses of repetition.

The first synthesis of time or the “living present” is *passive*, and it describes habitual repetition.³²² Here, past experiences are absorbed into automatic actions which are repeated at the present, and point to expected future behaviour. For Williams, this assumes that time can be contracted in the present.³²³ For instance, a shoulder discomfort caused by hammering at full swing is related to that initial action and moment of pain. Through experimentation in a few proceeding sessions, the body may adjust action to keep the hammer swing shorter and pain-free from thereon. For Deleuze, the new swing is “not a conscious reflection”,³²⁴ but habit that condenses all earlier repetitions or experiences. This forms part of an *image* of sense of representations of repetitions, an “umbrella over many sensations”.³²⁵ This umbrella even swallows the little reflection which may occur at a moment prior to swinging, because when action begins it retains insensitivity to reflection itself. This is key to discussions that will follow in Chapters 4 and 5, where recurrent debates on representations of African’s dysfunctions show unreflective contradictions and at times seemingly debilitating contradictions by presenting past brutalities as always fixed and expected in the present. Yet, even at their gloomiest, these very voices propose how Africans can change the future, thus implying expectancy of future changes of habit.

The second repetition concerns actions in relation to *memory* of past, or “archiving”. Deleuze calls this “synthesis of pure past”,³²⁶ which cannot be re-lived. Similar to the first synthesis, this is passive too as it requires a precondition. That is, a prior or archived representation of the

³²² Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 73.

³²³ Williams, *Deleuze’s Difference and Repetition*, 87-89.

³²⁴ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 97, and Williams, *Gilles Deleuze’s Philosophy of Time*, 21.

³²⁵ Deleuze *Ibid.*, 87-88, and Williams *Ibid.*, 23.

³²⁶ Deleuze *Ibid.*, 81.

situation encountered in the present. In it, present encounters are never contemplated in themselves; or, the present is never here as it is always seen through past representations. Put differently, what was experienced or told about the past and recorded in memory, is repeatedly recalled as a standard measure to make sense of present events, before these events are archived again as the new updated memory of that past. Yet this notion of “mediation of pasts”, implies a paradoxical quality of *remembering* and *forgetting*;³²⁷ that is, if calling the past constitutes involuntary remembering, which then adjusts those archived images, it discloses an active process of both recalling and repeating the past differently. Summed up, regardless of whether or not past memories are vague, if this paradox is overlooked, the archived past remains potent. In relation to commentary on Africa, this dynamic sees comments often dwell on Africa’s deficits, sustaining a paralysing victimhood which fixates on an old ‘evil empire’, while negating glaring contradictions of present-day complexities. Sometimes, this involves a yearning for return to a pure indigeneity.

The third synthesis of time has to do with eternal return of difference, where things always have the possibility to repeat differently. As Williams puts it, it entails “the condition for actions that drive towards the new”.³²⁸ In relation to the first two repetitions, this third repetition activates a perplexing contradiction to Deleuze’s ontology because in one way, it implies a new *ground* to thinking time, in which case it would negate Deleuze’s entire criticism of privileged fixed conceptions of things. And at the same time, by proposing repetition in virtuality, it draws criticism for offering a vicious circularity, a constant flux in which actual things in past and present are either dead, or too fluid to sustain anything tangible for the future. Deleuze attempts to inoculate himself against these charges by emphasising that in all three syntheses, focus should be on the multiple processes which unveil happenings, as opposed to using his method

³²⁷ Williams, *Gilles Deleuze’s Philosophy of Time*, 53, 102-104.

³²⁸ *Ibid.*

to justify a third permanent concept of time. Accordingly, he reconciles all these time syntheses and argues that, in reality, both expectancy caused by habit and archiving are mutually dependent; and they cannot be seen as detached from the sense of future possibilities which they open in their immediate situations.³²⁹ How? The habit of adjusting swing to avoid pain, comes from an archived memory of pain-free action. And so each anticipated swing relies on a newly-created memory which continually adjusts the previous one. In the end, notions of independently-existing pasts and presents are obsolete, because in each moment an event passes or ‘dies’, it is recorded as a changed content, and stored in anticipation of the future event.³³⁰

This captures Deleuze’s third repetition, described as processes of *connecting* and *forgetting*. It draws on Nietzsche’s concepts of “death”, “eternal return”, and *chancing*.³³¹ First, eternal return does not imply cycles of actual re-birth from physical death. Rather, since Deleuze’s difference constitutes virtual processes, constantly connecting with changes in the actual, these changes of difference are regarded as “deaths” of something. Repetition becomes a creative process that continually brings unique experiences of senses and ideas, connected to different passing pasts and presents, despite the restrictions imposed by actual bodies before they eventually expire.³³² Those are processes of eternal return – remembering and forgetting and remembering again – which creatively produce novelties. Inversely, if death is thought of as *negation*, or erasure of fixed identity, it gives back sameness. Such is the work of catatonic thought, which feeds illusions of life as moving in linear time, where changing the past by reversing time is somehow possible.³³³

³²⁹ Ibid., 113.

³³⁰ Ibid., 114.

³³¹ Williams, *Deleuze’s Difference and Repetition*, 102, and Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 126.

³³² Williams, *Gilles Deleuze’s Philosophy of Time*, 113-114.

³³³ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 41.

Second, thought seeking difference in the process of eternal return, against the nagging reality that the actual body will expire in the future, commits to *chancing*. As theorised by Williams, chancing involves necessary creative acts to overcome anxieties regarding the future, when the past is the only reference point in the present. This describes a creative sense of “openness and risk” towards becoming,³³⁴ embracing deviations from the norm, or *off-centring*. Here, thought concedes that time is asymmetrical, because past and present events are interlocked in overlapping processes of connecting and forgetting in each passing moment. In practice, chancing correlates with the prospective attitude of “developing a political culture of time” exemplified by post-independence leaders like Amilcar Cabral, as a necessary ingredient for thought committed to development.³³⁵ This attitude insists that the future does not come by itself, and so one needs to think of today as a part of tomorrow’s road, even if all the turns are not known. How?

The future subordinates both past and present, and strips them of their autonomy.³³⁶ As Williams says, past and present are selected as enabling components in processes which make the future possible. So, whereas the past no longer offers a foundational event to future actions which cannot be changed, the present no longer clutches to a single past event for all reference. Thus, the present becomes all presents. That means, present action enters new connections with other present processes – even those linked to past events – to open fresh possibilities. Altogether, time is cut and reassembled such that, the notions of before and after, enter a “pure order of time” in which the past is cut from all events of the future, and nothing will remain the same again.³³⁷

³³⁴ Williams, *Deleuze’s Difference and Repetition*, 102.

³³⁵ Digne, “On Prospective Development and a Political Culture of Time”, 58.

³³⁶ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 125.

³³⁷ Williams, *Gilles Deleuze’s Philosophy of Time*, 103-104, and Williams, *Deleuze’s Difference and Repetition*, 102-103.

Yet, paradoxically, as Deleuze notes, there are some past events that are not ready for the cut. These maintain independence depending on their standing in history, and so they always return with the cut and are “re-lived” with future presents. While this constitutes a clear contradiction, Deleuze reiterates that in processes of difference, these events will never occur, or be present, as time is irreversible; rather, they are coexisted with. Thus different thinking does not affirm them as foundational. Instead, they are relational. They are among the many processes which unveil happenings in a situation, and so they will provoke sense to a variety of actions. Correspondingly, in his clarification of why problems in the African postcolony continue to be read poorly, Mbembe criticises the propensity to think Africa in linear time, drawing on these parts of reassembled time. He conceives contemporary Africa’s tough situations as occurring in time of *existence* – that is presents receding to pasts, and carried in memory, time of *experience* – which is the present, and time of *entanglement* – the anticipated future which is always an interlocking of pasts relived with the present. In this study, examples include what Dowden calls “old cultures” that lie deep in Africa, including ethnic identification, religion and witchcraft, as well as the events of slavery and colonialism as will be discussed in Chapters 4 and 5.

Mbembe’s method and ‘irreverence’: Re-reading Africa’s dysfunctions

Mbembe’s quest is difficult. He employs excruciating language with new concepts to provoke both African and Euro-American audiences to different thinking about Africa. As explained in the chapter “Time On the Move”, and the specific section “Long Dogmatic Sleep”, this task seeks to “to force Africa to face up to itself in the world”.³³⁸ It insists on a process that re-enters Africa with true accounts of contemporary African political and cultural reality, in relation to

³³⁸ Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, 14.

nothing but itself.³³⁹ However, Mbembe acknowledges a patent conundrum for such a task, especially when African historicity cannot be conceived outside “rhythms and times” of European domination since the 15th century. He states:

There thus arises the purely methodological question of knowing whether it is possible to offer an intelligible reading of the forms of social and political imagination in contemporary Africa solely through conceptual structures and fictional representations used precisely to deny African societies any historical depth and to define them as radically other, as all that the West is not.³⁴⁰

What follows is an outline of those conceptual structures and fictions against which contemporary African thought – including Mbembe’s own – attempts to navigate in order to locate its difference.

First, this attempt to formulate self in a non-binary process comes against *original* ground or the mythical *Idea* of Africa, set and advanced by the Western image of thought of Kant, Hegel and Bruhl among others. In it, Africa is an abnormal pathological thing, and human action there always proceeds from anything but rational calculation.³⁴¹ For Mbembe, given that there “hardly ever was any discourse about Africa for itself”, Africa was cast as “incomplete and mutilated, as its history was reduced to a series of setbacks of nature in search of humankind.”³⁴² Assessed in reference to Hegelian myth, Africa is fact traditional primitive society, needing no further justification. Even more concerning for Mbembe is the function of social theories critical of Western modernity, including those critical of Westernism. To him, they always seek to legitimise themselves by stressing their capacity to offer universal grammars.³⁴³ Thus Marx’s

³³⁹ Here Mbembe observes an exhortation by historian and sociologist J. F. Bayart on how one can do justice to African societies against a long history of extraversion, that is being understood from outside, in “Africa in the World: A History of Extraversion” (2000).

³⁴⁰ Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, 9.

³⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 8.

³⁴² *Ibid.*, 1, 3.

³⁴³ *Ibid.*, 9.

critique of total assimilation and power; Nietzsche's antipathy to corruption of all rational criteria, such as reason and technicism; Heidegger's rejection of a unifying notion of Being; as well as Derrida's and Foucault's concepts, all present conventions about the world from purely provincial idioms. Yet their social theory authorises itself to make generalisations that no longer require substantiation. Ultimately, the problem is not only about the Westernness of modernity, but the claim of a universal enlightenment that these social theories supposedly bequeath to the world.³⁴⁴

Second, with the foregoing in mind, the challenge then becomes that of locating a methodology that offers epistemological solutions; not as a null-response, or a "copy" which acquiesces to the negative ground already set. Rather, one that connects productively with difficult contradictions and complexities of materiality, sense, and memory in everyday experience. This is encapsulated in two primary postulates or observations on Africa itself, and the African subject.

1. What passes for social reality in sub-Saharan Africa is made up of a number of socially produced and objectified practices.
2. The African subject does not exist apart from the acts that produce social reality, or apart from the processes by which those practices are, so to speak, imbued with meaning. These include religion, scholarship, political and economic arrangements, together with their brutalities, and media.

Insufficient approaches

Launching his commentary on these postulates, Mbembe observes disapprovingly that most counter-struggles in defence of Africa "have become struggles of discourse and

³⁴⁴ Ibid., 5.

representation”.³⁴⁵ Clarified, whereas existential experience is usually symbolically represented by language (including images), the production of social reality is not simply a matter of discourse and language, it involves concrete/material things. Here, Mbembe notes that attempts by postcolonial critiques to reveal multiple factors to a struggling contemporary Africa, tend to insist on the supremacy of “representations”, and of “invented” or “negotiated” identities. Instead, Mbembe argues that the African subject like any person is made of “meaningful human expressions”, which involve all bodily senses connecting with tangible things like food and basic physical infrastructure. Besides, their engagement in these meaningful practices may not make sense for all in the same way. Here, Mbembe highlights some conflicts within African thought in most attempts to grasp concrete psychological and emotional traumas; for instance laws that enable genocide, gods and beliefs that bring death and destitution, and as will be noted in Chapter 5, the killing of “spirit children” and albinos.

Turning inwards, Mbembe criticises Africa-centred apologetic thought and discourses like Afrocentrism and Africanism for their preoccupation with the “lazy” categories of permanence, and cynicisms about change, in their quest for an essential African identity. This criticism also extends to those Africanist views intent on rebuilding a history of a black nation “dense with meaning,” in equivalence to the Jewish project. This signals a yearning for a “messianic utopia of a world in complete absence of prejudice”.³⁴⁶ For Mbembe, such binary postures hinder the capacity to apprehend Africa’s complex reality of movement and change, through societal collapses, fluctuations and reversals. Overall, regardless of whatever claim one has to a universal rationality, or whatever counter-positions one feels entitled to, for Mbembe, all parts are constituted by contingent events in particular locales. Additionally, like other human societies, Africa “participates in a complex order, rich in unexpected turns, meanders and

³⁴⁵ Ibid., 6.

³⁴⁶ Ibid., 12.

changes of course without this implying absence of centre”.³⁴⁷ This means events in Africa also proceed diachronically through discontinuations and twists, and not in any linear time of a pure past and tainted present.

By disclosing that events in Africa unfold through discontinuations and twists, Mbembe has been the target of much criticism – especially due to his evaluation of disciplinary knowledges produced by Africans on Africa. Critics particularly point to his view on Africanist treatments of historical events, and their manifestations in contemporary politico-economic problems. This takes us back to Mbembe’s opening conundrum regarding the possibility of using Western methodology, for an intelligible reading of the very Africa it was set against. His argument for adopting such methods cites entangled world histories. For Mbembe, even though African societies definitely produced multiple trajectories of unique thought and aspirations, these cannot be conceived outside the globalised world. Mbembe thus adopts concepts from social theory, specifically those concepts that deal with time, bonds of subjection, how domination is validated, and the collapse of authorities which predict what is historically possible or extendable about being human.³⁴⁸ His key concept is that of a distinctive place and events – the postcolony – an *assemblage*, or site which hosts a coming together of complex and multiple relations termed *age* and *durée*. As Mbembe explains, what distinguishes this contemporary postcolony is the absolute split in times, and the past events are irreversible. This absolute split,

breaks up the spirit and splits it into many, is again contingent, dispersed, and powerless existence: existence that is contingent, dispersed, and powerless but reveals itself in the guise of arbitrariness and the absolute power to give death anytime, anywhere, by any means, and for any reason.³⁴⁹

³⁴⁷ Ibid., 8.

³⁴⁸ Ibid., 14.

³⁴⁹ Ibid., 13.

This idea of an absolute split of time in processes of life, correlates with Deleuze's third synthesis. For Mbembe, the postcolony is contemporary *age* – a present, made up of multiple enveloping *durées*, or overlapping times – *entanglement*. Then, entanglement as overlapping times contains processes of *displacement*; that is, things intersecting each other in many distinctive happenings. Such happenings are ad hoc and temporary, and they also produce contradictions. Overall it is these many processes of interconnection (displacement), within distinctive happenings of entanglement, which give the contemporary period (age) its overall distinct, albeit temporary, identity. In technical terms, age is not an unfolding of events in simple linear time. It is historical spaces, or actual “sites and moments” of “imbuing with meaning”,³⁵⁰ made of a multiplicity of concrete situations. And therein occurs several ongoing processes of interactions involving physical objects and humans performing their existence in distinct ways.

Put in everyday terms, within this particular period called the African postcolony, Africans encounter complex circumstances physically, as well as in intensities of senses and memories. They express their experiences in relation to such circumstances, through various practices, superstitions, fictions, and images. In the virtual/actual dynamic, each of these circumstances indicates many ongoing exchanges happening within, at different entangled times – *durées* – including sensitivities to past issues carried forward in present memory. The present age shows an interweaving of contradictory socio-political and cultural happenings regarded as ‘dysfunctions’, as outlined in Chapters 1 and 2. These are viewed as reversals of, and discontinuities to, ‘progress’, in the form of politico-economic disarray, inertias, resignation, and apathy. However, these are not permanent, but rather conditional as African subjects struggle continually to reformulate their world.

³⁵⁰ Ibid., 7.

Commandement: Arbitrariness and banality of violent dehumanisation

Considering that such processes of displacement and entanglement give a “spirit of distinctiveness” to a specific age, Mbembe’s African postcolony at the point of writing this text was distinctly marked by arbitrariness.³⁵¹ The term arbitrariness refers to distinctive processes of brutal violence, to give death anywhere, at any time and for whatever reason. That describes “stark horror”, human contingent violence, never-ending processes and acts of destruction, and the burying of human suffering. In this study, such violence will be illustrated in discussion of the banality of killing of albinos, “spirit children”, and foreigners, and of ethnicised political conflicts. This arbitrariness comes over the *longue durée*. It traces back to slavery, “as the major event through which Africa was born to modernity”, replicated in colonial strategies which then passed on to modes of bureaucratic power and rule post-independence.³⁵²

The greater significance of this concept of arbitrariness, lies in how it binds such contemporary processes of brutality, with slave trade, colonialism, and thereafter with the phallus. That is, how such brutal acts of violence interconnect with the idea of *male potency/power*. For Mbembe, the preoccupation with the phallus authorises domineering relations in all societal processes, starting with “the general economy of sexuality”³⁵³ by which normative masculinity is privileged over femininity. As will be shown in Chapter 4, the fierce intolerance surrounding the contradictory ‘un-Africanness’ of homosexuality, does not convincingly justify the claim that it acts in defence of traditional family values. Rather, the ferocity tends towards fear of public humiliation in relation to masculine “power” and potential undermining of the patriarchal political order, due to “the spectacle of the phallus”.³⁵⁴ That is why expressions of outrage, as well as the framing of death laws for homosexuals across Africa, tend to emphasise

³⁵¹ In the period this text was produced – 2001 – violence was a distinguishing feature of the postcolony. Still, the kind of violence described seems to continue in the present as will be seen in Chapters 4 and 5.

³⁵² Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, 25-26.

³⁵³ *Ibid.*, 13.

³⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

the unfathomable ‘deviance’ of such African men. This is seen in *Africarise*’s encounters with anti-gay rhetoric, as more African countries draft new constitutions. It is this distinctive arbitrariness of violence in everyday life that guides Mbembe towards a few very important concepts through which to understand the bases of its banality.

Specifically, the idea of commandment refers to formally recognised processes of authorising violence. However, deeper examination reveals other informal, yet equally crucial, authoritative levers and processes. In the first instance, commandment involves certain modes of thinking within state apparatuses, deployed to regulate human behaviour, for example, during distribution of scarce resources. Since most postcolonial regimes inherited their systems of governance as Ake shows,³⁵⁵ this study asserts that commandment involves some disguised yet powerful validations for indiscriminate use of force, built on entanglements between reconstituted forms of traditional practices and Western modes of control. This refers to forceful conjunctions between contemporary traditional religious institutions, various forms of supernatural beliefs, and modes of political control which were passed on through slavery and colonisation. These conjunctions are then compounded by pressures of neoliberal capitalism, which over time erode legitimacy and trust in social institutions and government.

First, colonial violence as a formal type distinguished itself as a very particular “authority and morality”; it was immediately tangible as it gave the natives a clear impression of themselves in proportion to the power that they had lost.³⁵⁶ Based on this definition, Mbembe unveils two key concepts which grounded commandment from colonial rule to the present. Of the two, Hegel’s idea of master/slave and his related concepts of subject/object relations are most prominent. Here, the coloniser saw no other basis for what it is to be human other than himself.

³⁵⁵ Ake, *Development and Democracy in Africa*, 3.

³⁵⁶ Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, 26.

And so all other beings, especially black ones, were relegated to the category of animal objects, possessions with no capacities; the kind that can be cut, and even cooked. Closely related is Bergson's "becoming animal".³⁵⁷ Here, the colonialist shares a sense of empathy with the colonised as they would with a domestic animal, thus notions of domestication and servitude sprung forth. And so when this 'animal' pains or dies, it is relatable as it belongs somewhere close to a familiar world.³⁵⁸ With the foregoing in place, the coloniser established his own moral authority to justify the right to conquer. This justified annexation of already-occupied territories for Christianising, civilising and commerce ventures. Put simply, the brutality of slave trade, flowing on to colonialism, rested on the 'subhuman' status of the black man, the inferior native of the missionaries and of Kant and Hegel.

Second, colonial authority exercised commandment by planting itself as the sole power to judge its laws, and to deny rights. In specific terms, this concerns sole custodianship of absolute truth. It involved establishing 'authorising authority', through a self-interpreting language that fixed meanings to its own vocabularies, followed by the installation of that language as the standard medium to be emulated in all subsequent exchanges.

Third, and significantly, this violence was intended to ensure the longevity and permanence of this authority through an authenticating and reiterating function. As Mbembe notes, the efficacy and crystallisation of colonial strategy lie in its recurrence in everyday ordinary situations. It involved numerous acts and rituals which accumulated to impress on the populations cultural values and ideas, shared by authority and society.³⁵⁹ Such features of commandment characterise the types of 'dysfunctions' which confront Anas's and Mwangi's journalistic

³⁵⁷ See Deleuze and Guattari's discussion on "becoming animal" in *A Thousand Plateaus*, 235-236. They show how relations between animals and humans are intertwined in symbolism, dreams, science and practice. These establish closeness, even psychological and emotional intimacy, as when an animal pet is a member of a human family, contributing as an equal to family life like other human kin.

³⁵⁸ Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, 26-27.

³⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 25.

activism, in the form of violent acts authorised by religious practices and institutions, and those acts commonly regarded as government corruption.

To reconnect Mbembe to Deleuze, then: Mbembe's insights on the concept of age, as those entanglements demonstrated in continuous interweaving of contradictory realities in the assemblage called the African postcolony, give contextual understanding to Deleuze's idea of life as processes of difference. Additionally, thinking which commits to understanding contemporary Africa rises from the 'dogmatic sleep' of privileged common-sense foundations about life, to explore Africa, African problems, culture, and pasts which may impinge on proposed African solutions, keeping in view all the time the constituting complex processes of difference. Such thought seeks concepts which will enable bold and incisive self-reflection on problems, and an openness to more problems, without being paralysed. These are processes and method of *differenciation*, which are 'untangled' in the analytical technique of *mapping* or decomposing the assemblage, as explained by Manuel Delanda, and as will be discussed in the upcoming section. Briefly, Delanda introduces Deleuze's *differenciation* and *virtuality* as conceived in relation to mathematics and geography.

Differenciation: Processes to solutions without limits

Deleuze turns to processes of differential calculus and geography in search of creative concepts which can reveal multiple ways in which a problem can be expressed, as well as many possible routes to solutions.³⁶⁰ As Delanda observes, Deleuze revisits Aristotle's and Plato's key ideas of distributing difference commonly used in practical explanations of causal relations – that is, genus, species, and Idea – in order to formulate a path to virtuality through the domain of science.³⁶¹ This move is provoked by a dominant realist view in this domain, which holds that

³⁶⁰ Manuel Delanda, "Deleuze, Mathematics and Realist Ontology, 228.

³⁶¹ Ibid., 226. Debates surrounding scientist Bas Van Fraassen's views and ontological commitments to scientific inquiry note that axiomatic approaches to scientific theory demand self-evident truths, or *ground*, in processes

if the observed does not meet concretely measurable, predictable, empirical adequacy, any other considerations for individuating possibilities become “useful fiction”. Broadly summarised, Deleuze’s approach resonates with that of philosopher of science Arthur Fine,³⁶² insofar as it maintains that: (1) Whether properties are measurable or not is not the only factor, they cannot be ignored. They constitute crucial factors and traces that yield pure difference within processes of overall transformation of a reality, or an entity. (2) Even when some infinitesimal entities are adjudged as marginal to a massive change overall, it does not imply falsity of that science. Rather, it indicates that science provides a specific language through which to apprehend the world, even if it does not provide an end solution to a particular problem.

However it is important to keep in mind the caveat that the concepts and terminology of differential calculus which Deleuze taps into cannot be sufficiently explored in the succeeding pages. Accordingly, the discussion focuses in on key ideas which allow me to explain how the dynamic of the actual and virtual is theorised, in order to produce a useful tool for mapping/locating paths of difference in an assemblage.

Deleuze seeks to unlock and replace the highest categories of universal classification – genera and species – with a model that can yield a topological (abstract), uniquely individuated entity, specific to itself. That means, a model that can individuate an actual entity woman, or, a banking institution, to be grasped as a specific person that is woman, or a specific banking organisation, among the many under the umbrella category of women and banks. It requires a scheme that allows for selection of both unique and important, as well as less significant, attributes, then affirming those which allow an entity to exist and change differently. These may include

that rely on language and deductive theory. This is rejected by semantic approaches which see language as trivial. They see the scientific sufficiency contained in areas like differential calculus, with its ability to replicate physical phenomena, as the proper content of philosophy of science, as opposed to logical reconstructions in language.

³⁶² Arthur Fine, *The Shaky Game: Einstein Realism and the Quantum Theory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 126-127.

historical, political and cultural practices, as well as geographical factors, including climatic shifts at certain moments.

Differential calculus provides such methods for constructing models that deduce complete changes in physical systems. The modelling process must specify *space of possibilities*. That is, the relevant ways, or degrees of freedom, in which the system is allowed to change, especially instantaneous or infinitesimal changes over small intervals. This gives the creators the ability to control or shape, for example chemical reactions, predator-prey systems, institutional life, their growth, their effectiveness and even their shrinking.³⁶³ Explained in basic terms, differential modelling involves setting up algebraic algorithms; that is, mathematical language for reading patterns or relationships between sets of numbers grouped into sequences, which capture several possible and significant states a phenomenon can exist in nature at different points, in magnitude or distance. A sequence begins at a certain specified point, and proceeds to introduce other small factors or *derivatives*, in numbers, to measure differentials at different points in relation to an overall feasible change. Guiding questions include: how does an equation grow, shrink, and accumulate over time? When does it reach its lowest or highest points? How does one account for variables that keep fluctuating, for instance heat, motion or populations?³⁶⁴

The latter question points to why differential models interest Deleuze. For him, modelling allows one to describe and select such *intangible* differentiating factors, which exceed strict quantification in a metric binary system. These include degrees of fear, conflict and remedial action. Additionally, modelling allows one to account for *space of possibilities* in multiple trajectories, with dependable regularity. Crucially, his main concern is how mathematic

³⁶³ Daniel Kleitman, "Calculus For Beginners and Artists", *Massachusetts Institute for Technology Mathematics Department*. Available at http://www-math.mit.edu/~djk/calculus_beginners/. Accessed December 20, 2017.

³⁶⁴ Ibid.

sequences alongside geographical concepts and other creative modes of thought, become appropriate organs for maximising thought processes of difference for practical life solutions. Thus, focus is not the formulas, and/or the correctness of solutions themselves in strict disciplinary application.³⁶⁵ As argued in *A Thousand Plateaus*, the “number” is no longer a universal concept, measuring elements according to their emplacement in a given dimension, but has itself become a multiplicity that varies according to dimensions considered, (i.e. the primacy of the domain, over a complex of numbers attached to the domain).³⁶⁶

In philosophical terms, selecting and describing significant *intangible* factors which can account for *space of possibilities* in already-existing material phenomena, requires a different ontological commitment. Because as Deleuze’s question-problem complex shows, solutions to problems contain the requisite degree of adequacy, depending on the specifications laid out by the type of questions *ground* permits or affirms as necessary. And so, if trivial degrees of expansion are specified, the state of change realised will be poor.³⁶⁷ Thus a requisite ontological commitment is acceptance that possible changes do not always exist independent of one’s mind,³⁶⁸ as with metric determinations. They include sense as presenting valuable data. As Deleuze illustrates, while temperature or speed can be metered at different points, their magnitudes are not addable quantities as serial increments of smaller temperatures and speeds fixed to those moments. They are mainly expressed in relation to a virtual real, and not to physical events.³⁶⁹ That is, truly differentiating sequences, which give relevant specifications to how a real system is allowed to change, occur in abstract geometric spaces, and not Cartesian metric spaces.³⁷⁰ As Whitehead notes, taken strictly, the role of limits in differential calculus

³⁶⁵ See pages 133-134 of this chapter for how Whitehead faults the insistence on the function of limits in differential calculus, by certain notions of realist thought.

³⁶⁶ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 8.

³⁶⁷ Delanda, “Deleuze, Mathematics and Realist Ontology”, 229.

³⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 227.

³⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, and Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 453.

³⁷⁰ Delanda *Ibid.*

invalidates the process of difference as it requires that space covered at a certain velocity, be determined as final reference for all happenings at that selected point, without reference to any other spaces and moments; it does not show what becomes of the speed at each moment, relative to states of change in the larger space.³⁷¹ However, in Deleuze's *virtuality*, readings are in relation to ongoing changes at all points of measuring, at times not visible in relation to the overall environment. Thus "discovering" what makes significant difference for change accounts for *velocity* – rates of connections, signifying intensities, and, *vector* – the directions these rates of connections move in.

Deleuze describes these as movements and connections in both "abstract lines with no outlines", those which pass between things, as well as purely geometrical lines.³⁷² Those connections differ from those in metric spaces, where things and events are positioned along *commonsense* universal Cartesian points; the 'correct' longitude and latitude routes, which locate generalisable solutions. Conversely, differential points give attention to multiples of relevant local data unique to the immediate terrain, which do not appear on the universal map. Thus a mathematical sequences starting at an initial single point registers varying rates of change, by accounting for tiny increments in magnitude and speed on physical elements, assisted by virtual senses. Such processes offer closer understanding of the problem intended to be addressed because regardless of the varying speeds of change recorded by different vector lines, over time their curves show consistency in the overall trajectory of change.

These concepts are especially important for this study's technique of analysis, as it pertains to understanding processes within assemblages, including the African postcolony, in their concrete conditions and in time. As seen in Chapter 1, and as will be seen in Chapter 4, despite

³⁷¹ Whitehead, *Modes of Thought*, 145-146.

³⁷² Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 178.

their stay inside Africa to collect ‘local data’, prognosis of Africa’s future by commentators like Guest and Foster upholds Africa’s dysfunctionality. They somehow forget that the future is always undetermined by failing to account for the *longue durée*; or, Africa’s transformation occurs at varying speeds in virtual ideas and senses about pasts in the present. That is why their mapping takes those data in the direction of pathology, against immediate abstract notions of progress which incidentally, are physically linked to geographical metric points of global North and global South.

Analysing assemblages: Collective enunciation and mapping difference

The concept, assemblage, is better described than defined, using the key concepts of *differenciation* seen so far. Briefly, difference is conceived as consisting of *multiplicities*; that is, multiples of active processes of connections between actual physical features and virtual intensities and Ideas. These processes happen at different speeds, moving in particular directions of change, where each interconnection in each of the processes is an event at different times. All these happenings which lead to collectivised change in physically-visible systems particularly the social, envelop the concept of *assemblages*. This captures this study’s conception of *Africarise*; as an assemblage of collectivising thought and action by Africa-centred media institutions the *New African* and the African Journalist of the Year Award system, and their products. *Africarise* processes are those involving practices of mediatising contemporary social politics of affirming Africanity, and those processes that arise in interactions with audiences. This next section focuses on the key features of assemblages, which will help to explain the analytical method of mapping.

Deleuze and Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus*, and Mbembe in *On the Postcolony*, give key features of assemblages without tying these to a unified definition. But before discussing these, Bruno Latour’s depiction of social assemblages in Actor Network Theory (ANT) offers a

suitable point of entry. In *We Have Never Been Modern*, Latour observes that a single newspaper page reveals complex interrelations between humans and non-human things in that one place. Therefore, a full account of reality must situate itself in a network of human actions, and non-human things which they ceaselessly connect to, because networks are not exclusively stimulated by human actions.³⁷³ Latour further criticises the centrality accorded to language and human capacity to will self to act – or “free will” – in the construction of meanings about reality. So, he rejects the view that reality only exists in the “linguistic play of speaking subjects”, and instead, asserts that material things do not just sit there to be re-presented and acted upon.³⁷⁴ This accords with Mbembe’s criticism of reducing Africa’s struggles to representations and discourses alone.

As will be elaborated on in the upcoming section, Deleuze and Guattari’s philosophical concept of *agencement*³⁷⁵ emphasises that assemblages are specific kinds of connections, inclined towards provoking multiple differentiating processes. Their idea of assemblages is conceived as follows:

- Assemblages have two main dimensions; they are simultaneously and inseparably *machinic or territorial* physical things, as well as *enunciation*.³⁷⁶ It is a coexistence that co-creates both the physical entity and its constituent parts which produces expressions that give it identity, in processes by which these parts retain freedom to change, while subsisting within the entity. As Delanda explains, because the concept of assemblages often relates to social structures, assemblages are geographical material things which ought to be grasped literally, as organisations inside buildings in particular streets,

³⁷³ Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, trans. Catherine Porter (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 1-3.

³⁷⁴ Latour, *Reassembling the Social*, 58-61, and Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, 138.

³⁷⁵ Deleuzian thinkers have argued for the need to ‘rescue’ the idea of assemblage from common conceptions of a network, and return to Deleuze and Guattari’s philosophical idea of *agencement*: the kinds of connections in the network which compel new movements. In this regard, see John Phillips’s “*Agencement/Assemblage*”, *Theory Culture and Society* 23 no. 2 (2006): 2-3.

³⁷⁶ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 504, and Delanda, *A New Philosophy of Society*, 11-12.

where people converse, connect, contest, and separate.³⁷⁷ In turn, *enunciations*, or modes of expression which Deleuze calls “verdicts”, are collective utterances instantaneous and incorporeal, and carry currency in a given context to guide “higher unity” of that organisation.³⁷⁸ It is those generally-acknowledged words, symbols, sounds, and bodily gestures used in a context, without needing prompting. Ordinarily, they sustain the stability of this context; however when flouted suddenly, they have the capacity to cause instabilities, separations, and overall transformation of that setting.

- In connection to the first point, assemblages consist of two extreme poles or vectors: the “striated and destratified”. That is, those which compel conformity to instil order, or axioms, and those which constantly open paths of flight, or new areas in the territory against conformity to axioms. Delanda describes these two poles as involving processes of territorialisation – those that sharpen spatial boundaries (outer-shell),³⁷⁹ which give assemblages distinctive identity, and deterritorialising, those that destabilise this identity and transform it by increasing internal heterogeneity. This latter mostly occurs as verdicts increase vital creative connections outside set guidelines. For instance in media, internet technology has allowed more fluid spatio-temporal modes of mediation and feedback, which transcend traditional sites of physical institutions and formats for media products.
- The concept *agencement* grasps assemblages as kinds of connections and arrangements which bring speed to interactions, to cut new territories towards different realities within the same contexts. This implies unanticipated states of being, or *events*. Here, *events* means there is always a state of becoming something else, because connections do unplanned things. And those unplanned things manifest as multiple states of being, both physical and virtual. That is why Deleuze urges recognition that the multiple must

³⁷⁷ Delanda Ibid., 12-15, 31-33.

³⁷⁸ Deleuze, *Two Regimes of Madness*, 177, and Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 457.

³⁷⁹ Delanda, *A New Philosophy of Society*, 13.

always be made with the dimensions already available.³⁸⁰ That means, expanding dimensions to ideas through new interactions with creative concepts from anywhere, at varying speeds and intensities, to provoke *events* which cannot be condensed to a unified identity of meaning. To illustrate this, Deleuze explains that when a knife cuts flesh, the created wound is an event, whose meaning cannot be tied to flesh or to knife. Other senses, intensities and trajectories of experiencing the meaning of wound emerge. That is, to be wounded as suffering, vulnerability of flesh, and, coldness and sharpness of the knife.

- Overall, the distinguishing nature of an assemblage is its “bunch of lines”; trajectories in which processes either move towards a “threshold” then change, or experience “limit” and inertia.³⁸¹ Deleuze describes them as abstract segmentary lines, that is “molar”, “molecular” and “lines of flight”. These always tie back and interpenetrate each other, whereby molar lines connect in binaries and get caught in a rut, or become destructive, molecular lines run and either are rearrested or disappear, while deterritorialising lines are vital and creative, opening up the assemblage for new lines.

Assemblages of mediatisation

As a re-examination of media assemblages, this study draws on Deleuze and Guattari’s explanation of the idea of a book to illustrate the complex nature of assemblages of enunciation. They begin with a stern rebuke, “what a vapid idea, the book as an image of the world”.³⁸² In contrast to common beliefs, their book “has neither subject nor object; it is a co-creation, made up of variously formed matters and very different dates and speeds”. To attribute the book to a subject is to overlook this working of matters, and the exteriority of their relations.³⁸³ What this

³⁸⁰ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 6.

³⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 9-10, 438, and Deleuze, *Two Regimes of Madness*, 178-179.

³⁸² Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 6.

³⁸³ *Ibid.*, 3.

means is that a book is undeniably a material thing created by someone using certain guidelines, to be sold and placed on a shelf. However, that simple compacted thing and what it stirs, involves combinations of processes of *aparallel coevolution* with the world, as explained in the foregoing section. *Aparallel coevolution* means that the physical object book, is not defined by its external features (i.e. title and cover), nor as an imitation of its surroundings. Rather the entire object is co-created with processes of life, which also transform the world in which the book emerges.

Further illustrated, creators of books live in particular locales. Their processes of growing up may entail physical encounters with machinic assemblages/organisations called schools in that locale. These organisations give an overall enunciation called education or schooling, which involves physical things like desks, books and laboratories. Alongside this would be diverse incorporeal school experiences, like play, bullying, and notions future success and progress linked to discourses of disciplinary knowledge delivered by teachers using prescribed books. Therefore, what a book transmits in-between its covers are interactions involving all the above things and processes. It employs certain vocabularies and images which interconnect with diverse readers at specific locations, at varying intensities of sense. Importantly, when that book is placed in any particular library, at home or in a public institution, it plays a specific role on different shelves, in accordance with themes in the entire library collection. This conception of coevolution between wholes made up of their own processes was already stated in the Introduction, around African thought and thinkers being able to develop and maintain an Africanist cause, despite being immersed in Western academies, and surrounded by universally-dominant epistemologies. That is why as will be discussed in Chapter 6, Owomoyela says that in a situation where Africanist practice cannot be realistically returned geographically to Africa, it can be returned epistemologically at any place.

Furthermore, if that book lies unused, it does not lose its potential, nor does the library lose its impact. In this instance, the role of the book is not dependent on the roles played by others. It is not a cog in larger organism, adding a specific quality in relations of *interiority*. This is because it operates in relations of *exteriority*; as a *whole* entity which retains its full capacity, in this library, and in any other collection it enters. As Delanda explains, relations of exteriority imply a certain autonomy for whole entities to create own *events*, whereby “a relation may change without terms changing”.³⁸⁴ As already seen above, *events*, or multiple dimensions of one occurrence, cannot be explained by properties of the component parts. And, overall change in an assemblage is not caused by few properties of these parts. Rather, each part exercises its own capacities, out of the multiple movements within itself to meet other parts in the same way. Thus assemblages are wholes interconnecting with wholes.³⁸⁵

Drawing on the above discussion, it is to time to point out the following: (A) Media organisations – either internet-based or traditionally-housed – are located at a specific geographical locale. The physical address of a building is comprised of geographical lines of latitude and longitude. So is the address of the person(s) running an online media platform, as well as the address of their equipment (servers and desktops), given that operations oblige them to sit at specific physical sites for connections to power grids. (B) Institutions are also collections of practitioners and historical backgrounds. And so they have verdicts: those expressions which guide institutional practices, often without much prompting, for instance approved language registers and discourses governing production processes. (C) All the above-mentioned parts interact with discourses and sensibilities held by individual practitioners. In the contemporary setting, mediatisation has to foreground that as science, and the character of social politics transform with the world, so do media technologies and modes of

³⁸⁴ Delanda, *A New Philosophy of Society*, 11, and Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, “On the Superiority of Anglo American Literature”, in *Dialogues II*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson, Barbara Habberjam, and Elliot Ross Albert (London: Continuum, 2002), 55.

³⁸⁵ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 8.

communication, especially with the internet which allows for tangible interconnections across spatio-temporal lines. This suggests that what is commonly identified as media and media events will invariably evolve as practitioners enter new modes of producing content in different intensities.

At the same time as these new modes and products alter a practitioner's way of doing, overall transformation occurs as new ideas change institutions. Then again, practitioners can break with institutions to create their own audacious events which unsettle entire planes of media expressions. This will be seen in Chapter 4, around the editorial decisions made to the *New African* over the years, thrusting the publication and organisation into continental prominence. And as will be shown in Chapter 5, while Anas and Mwangi form part of the African Journalist award system, their brazen creativity has 'disfigured' the customary categories of investigative reporting and photojournalism, invigorating belief in a better life among many Africans disillusioned by the state and by an increasingly predatory society.

Scaling assemblages to *Africanise*: Micro to macro

Considering that relations among parts of an assemblage are those of exteriority, where whole parts meet with their own capacities to form a collective, it is possible that larger assemblages too can emerge from a number of smaller ones through similar processes. This is what Delanda describes as scaling, or recurrence of an assemblage.³⁸⁶ A macro assemblage will emerge from a micro assemblage that originated from a particular point or problem, in pursuit of possible solutions. A key factor to that point of origin is *contingencies*. Contingencies are unanticipated nonlinear happenings, which oblige a number of distinct heterogeneous entities and capacities, to gather into a single context where something organised arises.³⁸⁷ As Delanda notes, for

³⁸⁶ Delanda, *A New Philosophy of Society*, 16-17.

³⁸⁷ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 3-8, and Raymond A. Eve, Sara Horsfall, and Mary E. Lee, *Chaos, Complexity and Sociology: Myths, Models and Theories* (London: Sage, 1997), 57-63.

traditional assemblages which involve community networks (for example, political parties and markets), it is possible to map successive scales of emergence, from a small group or an event. However, scaling media enunciation relies on the intensification of particular historical events as a consequence of an unexpected unsettling occurrence, or contingencies. Media institutions and practitioners emerging at difference times and locations react to those events in unexpected, unspecified solidarity, to birth a single cause in collective consciousness, in language, imagery, and activism. Importantly, as this cause attains consistency, it evolves in multiple distinct media-driven functions and dimensions. This is the case with *Africarise*. It began as an expression of optimism – ‘it’s Africa’s time’ – during the 1960s, the decade of decolonisation: a long-fought psychological and material battle against slavery and colonialism, which veered towards the 1980s’ lost decade of state violence. As seen in the three moments of Africa’s rebirth outlined in Chapter 2, the idea began with diverse individuals and groups, but was also shared by local communities across the continent. For Nkrumah it was a call for likeminded Africans pursuing unity.

Mapping the assemblage

Mapping as a technique of analysis ties to the preceding aspects of *differenciatio* through the injunction; “make a map, not tracing... always follow the rhizome by rupture; lengthen, prolong, and relay the line of flight; make it vary, until you have produced the most abstract and tortuous of lines of *n* dimensions and broken directions”.³⁸⁸ Read in this way, *mapping* is a process of “creative experimentation”,³⁸⁹ whereby the cartographer thinks rigorously in-between the lines of intersecting ideas to *de-compose*, or, to open space for possibilities. That means, expanding dimensions of the assemblage to show other possible ways it can change. This involves repetition with new movements, to cut new areas within the same territory. It is not *tracing*,³⁹⁰

³⁸⁸ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 11.

³⁸⁹ Williams, *Gilles Deleuze’s Difference and Repetition*, 76, and Baugh, “Experimentation”, 91-93.

³⁹⁰ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 12-15.

that is, thinking in habit and mimicry that causes blockages and lines to disappear. What distinguishes mapping from tracing in particular is experimentation with the real, because a map is open, connectable, detachable, and reversible in all of its dimensions and thus is susceptible to modifications.

Crucial to mapping is novelty, a different *repetition* in active creative experimentation, that leads to a parallel coevolution for cartographer and map itself. “Creativity” as described by Whitehead, is the principle of novelty, where the instance of experimentation is distinct from any other among the many which it unifies.³⁹¹ Additionally, the “process for its intelligibility, involves the notion of a creative activity belonging to the very essence of the occasion”.³⁹² This suggests that while the act of creatively mapping anew is always unique, it must necessarily involve the cartographer within the map itself. Thus coevolution expects creative movement between lines of enunciation, opening new thinking to familiar terrain, as the map itself composes the cartographer.

Mapping assemblages of enunciation: Key elements to a combinatorial associative model

According to Delanda, the mapping of traditional assemblages requires one to identify that starting point (point of origin in calculus) for the different lines of movement which allow a phenomenon to change. It involves identifying key non-discursive and discursive components within the material and the expressive dimensions. As Mbembe insists, even represented reality entails both discourse and materiality. Thus, a combinatorial associationist technique must begin by accounting for how these traditional dimensions intersect with discourses of the enunciation. That is, concepts in language, images and dominant practices of producing the

³⁹¹ Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology*, eds. David Ray Griffin and Donald W. Sherburne (New York: The Free Press, 1978), 21.

³⁹² Whitehead, *Modes of Thought*, 151.

enunciation, as appropriate responses to a correlated material problem. As seen above, the point of origin that precedes such connection is ‘pre-language’: non-linguistic intensities of sense expressions, corresponding to contingent occurrences of slavery, colonisation and post-independence struggles in the African context.

As Delanda explains, language at personal/group scale has the function of shaping beliefs, and beliefs comprise a process of encountering reality with language, subsequent to affect. In other words, language follows non-linguistic expressions, or attitudes, which correspond to appropriate action. In this study, language accords some degree of trust to the whole package of components in *Africarise*, and is appropriate for the formulation of African solutions. Such components include skills and a sense of commitment to diverse ideas. This is demonstrated in the mapping of the emergence of the *New African*, and in the rise and evolution Anas’s and Mwangi’s work.

Routinisation and coding/de-coding are key components of the combinatorial associative model of mapping. These refer to what Delanda calls the movements of recurrence or disruption of verdicts. In other words, coding and de-coding relate to the pull of the vectors of striation and deterritorialisation, where processes of interconnection among parts in the assemblage appear to produce a ‘homogeneity’ or external identity of the assemblage. Put simply, it is the overall enunciation as unspoken gestures and ideas advancing in their own paths from different locations, as well as the duration these processes take to produce a consistency. This is called coding. It requires analysis of components, like recurrence of certain philosophical and ideological ideas or themes, and how they connect with social events of their time, as well as the grouping of such themes in different media productions. It also relates to recurrent institutional practices, involving overall actions and reactions, including those of individual

players. All these help with *delineating coinciding experiences and enunciation*³⁹³ in the scaling up process from a micro assemblage to a macro assemblage of enunciation. Such experiences and enunciations constitute a consistent unifying action, as illustrated in the emergence and evolution of the *New African* to become the premier Pan-African magazine, and joining others to produce *Africarise*.

Another aspect of coding is habitual comparison offers a genetic marker in processes of resemblance, whether in mimicry or coincidence. Here, diverse individuals and productions may attend to specific events of their time by comparing each other's use of standard concepts and language. Significantly, it might involve experimental use of acceptable, but uncommon, non-discursive individual behaviours as part of a style with the intention of drawing specific responses from adjudicators or from a particular audience. This is demonstrated in the treatments of collective themes in certain media awards categories, where dominant issues like slavery and xenophobia are addressed by several individuals. One's sense of what the category implies may provoke certain gestures intended to draw attention to the production and the practitioner's adherence to codes.

By contrast, de-coding brings into play what Deleuze and Guattari argue as "the function of deterritorialisation", or those movements by which one leaves the territory. Put succinctly, deterritorialisation is the operation of the "line of flight".³⁹⁴ It always entangles with correlative processes of reterritorialisation. This does not mean returning to the original territory, but rather to new processes in which deterritorialised elements recombine and enter into new relations. That being so, Delanda clarifies that macro assemblages of enunciation are, by definition, physically deterritorialised. However, here the term refers to non-spatial processes and

³⁹³ Delanda, *A New Philosophy of Society*, 15, 36.

³⁹⁴ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 508.

behaviours that destabilise the perceived distinctiveness or ‘homogeneity’ of enunciation. These destabilising movements open up modes of coding – for instance mimicry – in unique disquieting ways, which open the assemblage to new expressions without overhauling the overall enunciation. These may include radical processes that ruffle accepted rules and values of practice, through intensification of physical involvement by practitioners, new skills and production formats, and manners of phrasing and speech, which when performed reveal unsaid things about the individual, or disclose a novel application of common concepts. Practically, some of these deviations might be motivated by reputational or image concerns. For instance, as will be shown in Chapters 4 and 5, both Anas and Ankomah have been criticised for harming the image of their profession by either employing subterfuge or irreverence to rule, in their practices.

Concluding remarks on use of the methodological framework

Deleuze and Mbembe ask whether it is possible to give form to difference and repetition, without impeding thought with the very oppositions and sameness their thinking commits to refuting. In the words of Parr, why is *differentiation* not similar to, or a version of, the virtual it differentiates? Deleuze’s and Mbembe’s explanation of the seeming contradiction begins by denouncing the overriding tendency to privilege physically-noticeable changes, while discounting as insignificant the unique minor elements which come into processes of distinguishing things and change. Moreover, in their affirmation of these smaller elements and qualities, they refuse to bind them as fixed forms called ‘heterogeneous qualities’, as it would impede their ability to move for change. As summarised by Williams, contrasts are often sought based on observed physical things; yet, processes of difference and repetition are always present, it depends on what one chooses to do with them. Thus for Mbembe, the African must always be acknowledged as different in themselves, and as capable of bringing meanings to processes in their situations, in a way that will not come to everyone the same way.

The upcoming analyses in Chapters 4 and 5 will be undertaken using the technique of mapping, which entails a process of creative experimentation, which accounts for key elements in the concept of an assemblage, within philosophy of difference and becoming. These include *agencement*: specific kinds of connections made by the constituent parts, to enable “creative destruction” of a problem, or continual opening of spaces and new movement. That is to say, *agencement* concerns degrees and dimensions of a problem, specified or calibrated by such connections, in way that meaningfully accounts for parts and events which are ordinarily disregarded as insignificant. This way, it distinguishes processes that can unveil sets of alternative solutions, pointing out new problems and contradictions, as well as those processes offering poor specification to problems, often through binary confrontations which yield deadlocks and converse moulds of the same problem.

Put in technical terms, this analysis requires that *New African* as treated in Chapter 4, and the CNNMultichoice African journalism awards dealt with in Chapter 5, should not be regarded as overall embodiments of the sets of discourses and practices working towards Africa’s rising. Rather, because they are principal components, or organs, within the collectivising connections that produce the enunciation *Africarise*, their own multiple processes can be used as guide to demonstrate possibilities of locating distinct ideas, and thought for difference in itself, within privileged, dominant discourses, ideas and structures – especially those which propose a consummate African locus and method for solving Africa’s problems. It should help to explain how complex processes of difference can arise by interconnecting dissimilar parts including ideas, humans, objects and places “with nothing in common”, to “belong to the same system”,³⁹⁵ to produce numerous new *events* in encounters with Africa’s realities, and meanings of Africinity.

³⁹⁵ Williams, *Gilles Deleuze’s Difference and Repetition*, 80.

Kwame Nkrumah's 1963 speech published in your January "Africa Must Unite" issue, should be our Bible...

(Prince Odugun Olusun, February 2000)³⁹⁶

He accuses Africans of docility and gullibility who fail to throw out despotic regimes...Baffour is a stooge, he wants to drag Africa to the economic and mental slavery in which he finds himself.

(Dan Mdluli, August 1991)³⁹⁷

Chapter 4: Is *New Africa* Possible? *New African* as a Principal Expression of *Africarise*

This chapter offers a 'phase one' in response to the central research question of the study through a mapping analysis of the *New African*. Paraphrased, the central research question asks: Within the discourse and activism of *Africarise*, what components bring the risk of re-inscribing Africa as pathology? Put this way, it opens possibilities for a number of creative responses, if advanced with the first sub-question, namely: How does *Africarise* demonstrate its distinctiveness amid other discourses and activisms that claim to offer unique contemporary treatments of African solutions to problems relating to: identity; belonging; lingering discourses and narratives of slavery; colonialism; racism; governance; and economic sufficiency?

In response to these questions, this analysis of the *New African's* routinisation of verdicts, and deterritorialisation, considers three main components. First, the *New African* is regarded as a *machinic* assemblage, meaning a physical structure in the form of a media organisation, situated at a specific geographical locale, due to certain strategic objectives and reasons, including the profit motive. As an institution pursuing these objectives, it requires interconnection with human practitioners in their turn interacting with diverse technologies and modes of media production

³⁹⁶ P. Odugun Olusun, "Africa Must Unite", *New African* no. 382 (February 2000): 4.

³⁹⁷ Dan Mdluli, "Beefing about Beefs", *New African* no. 287(August 1991): 39.

and norms of publication process which produce *enunciations*; that is, themed analytical columns made up of words and images. And so, this discussion will address institutional practices, including processes of hiring editorial staff, with special focus on editorship and production during the tenure of Baffour Ankomah. Overall, mapping will be conducted on a select publications and themes which recurred in the period between 1999 and 2016. These include:

- Pan-Africanism
- Slavery, Colonialism and Imperialism
- Africanness and Belonging, Homosexuality, Xenophobia, and White Messiahs
- Governance and Economic Development

Why the *New African* is worth analysing, is because it displays a number of key features that define *Africarise*, fitting both empirical and theoretical dimensions. Firstly, its advertorial tagline “best-selling Pan African magazine - founded in 1966”, by the “leading publisher in the Middle East and Africa”,³⁹⁸ establishes its pedigree as the forerunner to *Africarise*. It emerged during the first decade, or first wave of Africa’s political decolonisation, spurred by a desire to urge independent African countries towards economic sufficiency. It has coevolved with the continent’s complex history, while contributing extensively to the contours of the narrative and discourses of Africa’s reawakening, as already demonstrated in its rebuttals to the narrative of “Hopeless Continent” discussed in Chapter 1. In the words of Alan Rake, “the father” of the *New African*, the magazine has been “a mirror to several decades of African evolution...we have spanned most of Africa’s five decades of independence, identifying with the continent’s struggles, successes and failures”.³⁹⁹ As current owner Affif Ben Yedder affirmed in the early

³⁹⁸ This is included in an advert which appears recurrently inside *New African* editions to showcase IC Publications products, including *New African*, *African Business*, *African Woman* and *The Middle East*.

³⁹⁹ Alan Rake was the founding editor of the *New African* in its current format, and retained this position from 1970 to 1999. See Rake, “New African Story”, 14-16, 30-41, and Alan Rake, “The New African Story”, *New African* no. 500 (November 2010): 5, 8-11.

stages of its inception, “we therefore dedicate *New African* to the post-independence generations of New Africans, with whom we hope to make the voice of Africa better heard”.⁴⁰⁰ Still running after 50 years, it certainly stands as the singularly most dominant entity among *Africarise*, in terms of penetration and visibility. This is possible because of a contingent of editorial personnel spread across the continent. As much is attested to in Alhagie Ceesay’s “Thank You *New African*” in which the *New African* team is thanked for making the magazine available to every black man and woman. As he says “I carry it everywhere I go and use it for reference in debates and teaching material”.⁴⁰¹

Founding ‘pathologists’: Entangling geographical rationality and new Africa

The *New African* is physically situated at no. 7 Coldbath Square, EC1r 4LQ, London (Lat 51.524, Long -0.110, GPS 51° 31’ 27.0696” N, 0° 6’ 37.2708” W) and has been situated in London since its inception. In the column titled “Our Roots”, Rake reveals that the forerunner to *New African*, *African Development* founded in October 1966, was intended for British exporters to Africa. Given the tide of developmentalism of that period, *African Development* articulated the conjunction between a peculiar sense of ethical obligation by the former colonialists, and media discourses about modernisation and economic progress. Such media discourses set the tone for the post-independence imagination, by offering the most visible platforms for promoting change in Africa. Remarkably, an indicting fact paralleling respected figures of European thought Hegel and Kant, the two founders of *African Development* had never travelled to Africa. Moreover, there was not a person of African descent associated with the magazine as a contributor. Nonetheless, the succeeding set of editors – Oliver Carruthers, whose name, according to Rake “was a clue to his colonial service origins”, and Derek Ingram,

⁴⁰⁰ Afif Ben Yedder, “The First Issue Under Afif Ben Yedder”, *New African* no. 500 (November 2010): 6.

⁴⁰¹ Alhagie Ceesay, “Thank You *New African*”, *New African* no. 463 (June 2007): 4.

former editor at the *Daily Mail* – wanted a magazine that would care for the newly-emerging continent. This objective of building up a magazine that was in touch with Africa was gradually affirmed as Rake began his tenure as editor in 1970.

The irony described above is sharply captured in *New African*'s motto, as promoted by Rake: "A magazine for Africans by Africans". This was an endorsement of black radical nationalist Marcus Garvey's proclamation "Africa for Africans", calling for black people's emancipation and Africa's return. This irony sharpens further with the events of the oil crisis of 1973, when *African Development* made a new institutional turn. As the oil crisis stretched African economies and drove away the magazine's advertisers, Carruthers, who by this time was majority shareholder of *African Development* was pushed to let it go. This led to negotiations with American, British and African companies. Ultimately, the magazine was sold to Afif Ben Yedder, who is racially categorised as Middle Eastern or Arab and was educated in France and America. Ben Yedder developed his experience publishing *Jeune Afrique*, a Paris-based weekly. It is at this stage that the publication *African Development* changed its name to *New African Development* in January 1977, and soon after, in May of 1978, to the *New African*.⁴⁰²

Viewed critically, despite the overall turn to Garvey's call to reawaken the collective "we" black and African subject's soul the *New African* struggled, and even failed, to actualise a consummate ideologically-detached entity, often implied through dualisms espoused by some editors like Ankomah and Jere-Malanda as noted in Chapter 1. As will be demonstrated, the degree of deep entanglement – though unappreciated in the extensive writings on slavery and colonialism – remains evident in the attitudes, ideas and actions of the publication's European founders towards Africa. This is reflected in the founders' stated objective to build a magazine in touch with Africa, even though some like colonial officer Carruthers, remained outside

⁴⁰² Editorial column, "The New African Story", *New African* no. 500 (November 2010): 6.

Africa in their European locales, where the publication evolved, to emerge as the most prominent Pan-African magazine. To date, strict Africa-centred separatism eludes the *New African* because the publication and its governing institution International Communications (or IC publications) are still located in London, even though IC publications is an African company. Moreover, its individual practitioners, guests and the diversity of discourses assembled in it have not remained static over time as they entangle further with evolving meanings of Africa's political history and the global neoliberal order. This is articulated by many *New African* readers across the globe, and in particular, in one reader's acknowledgement of Rake's work for Africa.

“Escorted by Europeans”: Who has the right to speak Africa?

As already stated, one struggles to find formal acknowledgment or explanation by the *New African*, regarding the above entanglement. So occasionally, such explanations force their presence, or emerge through ‘leakage’, in the course of the magazine's own processes. A letter to the editor by *New African* reader Paul Kapapa exposes such entanglement and contradictions around authentic rights to write on Africa, as raised by Mbeki's question “Who shall define Africa?” and Khadija Sharife's reflections “In whose reality are we living?”⁴⁰³ For example, on the theme “Reporting Africa”, such tension and related contradictions confront Ankomah's annoyance at a thing he calls the ‘British mind’, an inbuilt system whose power broadly sways the opinion of Western media. Furthermore, Ankomah charges the British mind for getting the “Psychological” job done⁴⁰⁴ on the African, causing complete damage to African identity, politics and economics. Yet, for 29 years there was, and there still is, no dispute about the irreversible magnitude of the contribution to Africa's cause by the Briton Alan Rake, the very person who recruited Ankomah into the *New African*.

⁴⁰³ Khadija Sharife, “Whose Reality are We Living”, *New African* no. 474 (July 2008): 22-24.

⁴⁰⁴ Baffour Ankomah, “In the Name of National Interests”, *New African* no. 387 (July/August 2000): 16-24, and Baffour Ankomah, “Reporting Africa”, *New African* no. 474 (July 2008): 8-14.

Rake remains in record, as the longest-serving editor of the *New African*. He strongly campaigned for change in editorial policy in favour of recruiting indigenous Africans to lead the *New African*. Rake narrates how the tension between difficulty and commitment to report Africa intensified with each first-hand encounter with the continent during an earlier stint with *Drum* magazine. Such experiences include British colonial rule in Kenya, and the Sharpeville Massacre that occurred in South Africa on 21 March 1960. In Kenya, it was at the height of the bloody Mau Mau rebellion pressing for independence, although the British establishment had resolved to defend their privileges. And in South Africa, *Drum* magazine at the time was led by British journalists, and clashed repeatedly with the apartheid government for publishing pictures of bloody events such as those of Sharpeville. As Rake admits, writing these events remoulded his attitude towards Africa, prompting a search into his own inner reality. This was expressed in his following advice to research journalist Roger Murray: “you can never make a fortune working for the *New African*, but think of the prestige”. The ‘prestige’ Rake alludes to is that of participating at the forefront of difficult action, aimed at bringing change to Africa.

In recognition of Rake, Kapapa writes a letter to the *New African* titled “Nobel Prize for Alan Rake”.⁴⁰⁵ He begins by declaring that over the years, he had differed with some of Rake’s controversial writings on Africa. At the same time, he admits that these writings drove him to search deeper as an African. As he goes on to say:

It may sound like a paradox to many, but it is true. We Africans have been escorted, (so far at least) by Europeans on our way to Africa. *New African* is not written in any African language. The first Editor of *New African* was a white man. Whereas colonialists came to divide our continent, the *New African* has assisted to unite the continent...This is, at least in part Alan

⁴⁰⁵ Paul Kapapa, “Nobel Prize for Rake”, *New African* no. 376 (July/August 1999): 4-5.

Rake's achievement. Historians may be glad to refer to this magazine when reviewing our history.⁴⁰⁶

By pointing out that Rake's presence, attitude and actions present a "paradox" around rethinking Africa, the letter highlights two key issues around the *New African's* distinctive enunciation towards the idea of Africa's own solutions. One, it exposes from an ordinary African's vantage point, the inadequacy in thinking that attempts to confine ideas on African solutions to a single identity, as promoted with the statement 'Africa for Africans'. Two, and as will be seen later on, the editorial decision to publish the letter in itself becomes irrefutable acknowledgement of such entanglement by the magazine. This is significant, not because this Pan-African magazine allows an ordinary African to outline how such contradiction is constructive in finding African solutions. Rather, it is significant because the letter exposes the precarious nature of any implied separatism in the magazine's Africa-centred enunciation, and because its own process of 'objectively' publishing responses from its target audience will obligate any contemporary conception of African-centred enunciation to connect with the complex reality of diverse 'problematic' things. An example of such problematic things is seen in Kapapa's use of the typically pejorative colonialist tag "explorer" in reference to Rake; he discloses awareness of past difficult encounters with the Europeans who wore the title. Yet, Kapapa sees Rake's 'explorer' ventures as involving a different coevolution with Europeans, those whose attitude supports the cause for African expressions. Those include Polish journalist Ryszard Kapuściński, and the Hungarian-born historian Marika Sherwood who has contributed to the *New African's* in-depth historical accounts on slavery for a decade.

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid.

Becoming distinctly African-ist: Radical editorial shifts and “Beefs”

Confronted by these contradictions, the *New African* intensified its pursuit for a distinctive Africa-centred enunciation with no equivocation. This is revealed in the bold decisions relating to appointments of chief editors, and selection of content. In “New African Story” of September 1992, and “Still We Rise” of June 2010, Rake explains how the magazine’s transition from the British exporter focus of *African Development*, to Africa-focused *New African Development* January 1977, and then *New African* in May 1978, was concurrent with the decision to appoint the first African editor, Peter Enahoro. This marked a radical shift that sparked anxieties around the ambition and sustainability of the magazine, given the reality that regardless of the principle to deliver an Africa-centred message, the dictates of profit could not be ignored. Enahoro was a young but seasoned journalist, who had served as editor of *Sunday Times*, *Daily Times* and then as group editor-in-chief in Nigeria, in the period immediate to Nigeria’s independence from Britain. Ironically, he went into exile in the UK in 1996 following a series of military revolts that deposed the first civilian government.⁴⁰⁷

Enahoro’s appointment actualised the *New African*’s initial political expression of caring for Africa, by Africanising editorial leadership. However, this decision proved costly due to disapproval from, and conflicts among, advertisers, management and editors over the strong political bent of the new format. Eventually, Enahoro left in 1981 along with most of the editorial team. Regardless, Afif Bin Yedder went ahead to recruit another politically-radical African editor, Kofi Buenor Hadjor, the former press aide to Kwame Nkrumah. Theoretically, these events in the *New African* describe movements that open new lines of doing, where verdicts of practice, and attempts to reterritorialise the deliberate African enunciation within

⁴⁰⁷ Peter Enahoro, “An African Tragedy: Why I left Nigeria”, *Transition* 36 (1968): 26-30. Available at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2934671>. Accessed September 11, 2017.

accepted/existing codes and discourse of reporting Africa, provoked yet another action by the owner to deterritorialise.

The swift hiring of Kofi Buenor Hadjor affirms this pursuit for distinctive enunciation towards Africa's reawakening on two counts. First, and of central importance to this study, Hadjor exhibits a fundamental grasp of the complex nature of a politically-emerging Africa in relation to media. Considered in context, by restating Nkrumah's proclamation that African journalists should not believe that there are certainly two sides to a story, Hadjor uniquely lays instructive ground for appreciating the difficulty that confronts universalist common-sense ideas of media objectivity, as well as the problem of binary treatments of African issues. This is noteworthy, considering the escalating post-independence state-sponsored violence that deposed Nkrumah, which Hadjor and Enahoro had criticised harshly. At the same time, despite the heightened state violence, it was necessary for such publications to openly address the concerns of angry Africans who still pursued greater detachment from the former colonist due to intensifying African nationalism. Inexplicably, the implications of Hadjor's critical insight concerning binary thinking seem to have gone unheeded, given that the bulk premise for theorisations on media and democracy in Africa has persisted with the development and articulation of separatist arguments for pure African media systems as discussed in Chapters 1 and 6 in relation to the work of Ogundimu, Akigbo, Hyden, and Chinweizu.

Second, the immediate appointment of Hadjor, on the back of the challenges that arose with the appointment and departure of Enahoro demonstrates the owner's attitude of commitment to affirming the magazine's bold Africa-centred message of Africa determining its future, regardless of any ominous consequences to business strategy. This claim is established on a series of costly events involving Hadjor's departure after three editions only, coupled with declining circulation. Rake was then rehired as stand-in editor. However, soon thereafter, yet

another radical African in Baffour Ankomah was appointed. As Omar Ben Yedder, son of Affif Ben Yedder, puts it, the spirit of the *New African* editorial policy since Affif took over, remained committed to the idea that “we are here to serve Africa and to defend Africa’s interests”.⁴⁰⁸ He adds that the “New African will continue to plough its furrow as long as we are convinced of the correctness of our views”. This commitment is what underpinned the *New African*’s new turn with the appointment of Ankomah as editor in 1999. As Ben Yedder further observes, Ankomah “transformed the magazine and reinforced its slant”, by reasserting confidence in the African discourse. In Ankomah’s words, he and Africans were tired of “being pushed around by people who were not better than us”.⁴⁰⁹

To the present moment, Ankomah is globally renowned for his column “Baffour’s Beefs”. For Ankomah, it affronts any form of disrespect towards Africa, by affirming Africans regardless of any charges of blind contradictions or illogicality cast against him as a consequence. As Rake observes, “Baffour’s beefing was ahead of its time”.⁴¹⁰ It injected a new velocity, or speed, into the *New African*’s project for developing and strengthening Africa’s voice. Ankomah came into the *New African* as an exile from Ghana, following a stint as a columnist for Ghana’s *Pioneer*. He was elevated to assistant editor for the *New African* in 1991 and advanced to editor-in-chief in 1999. His beefs style which adopts “gonzo” form, provoked intense objections among established practitioners who thought it “too direct...too pungent”.⁴¹¹ Beefs continued to gain prominence and became identified as a “scourge” to the established power structure in media writing on Africa, upsetting old ways of practice. According to Rake, Ankomah was “the product and prophet of new thinking”.⁴¹² Rake’s injunction to Ankomah was “sock it to them”; and Ankomah did so, with a bold voice intended to shock an Africa coming to age from a

⁴⁰⁸ Omar Ben Yedder, “What It Means To Be 50”, *New African*, Celebrating 50 years edition, no. 557 (January 2016): 6-7.

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid. (quoting Ankomah).

⁴¹⁰ Rake, “New African Story”, 16.

⁴¹¹ Ibid.

⁴¹² Ibid.

difficult decade of bad government and authoritarian rule. Put theoretically, Ankomah's thinking through beefs opens spaces of difference which "intervene in-between an older practical orientation to the world which has exhausted its power to incite change for a people to come".⁴¹³ In Deleuzian terms, thinking and practice with capacity for 'insurgency' is revealed when it encounters limits: it locates the infinitesimal/minor paths by opening and answering a range of *new* questions within familiar situations. Ankomah's beefs open Africa in this way.

For example, observations made in, and titles given for, beefs, have always been incendiary and cynical. Ankomah gives the title "Great Things are Happening in Britain Dear Lord!",⁴¹⁴ in a response to British conservative writer Peregrine Worsthorne's appeal to the world to defend blacks. Then, in response to columnist Bruce Anderson's article in *The Independent*, June 2003, which argued that "Africa deserves better, but not all its problems were created by the West", Ankomah says, "there is nothing as harrowing as to see a Western writer consumed by nostalgia because these days the natives of Africa have ideas above their station".⁴¹⁵ Further, in "When Superb Is Not Superb",⁴¹⁶ on the suspicious death of Nigeria's president Sani Abacha, Ankomah lauds Britain's purported involvement as doing a "superb job" in that country. He says, "since I am supposed to be obsessed with Nigeria people are expecting me to write about General Abacha. I won't. I am a farmer's boy, and my dear father (God Bless his Soul) taught me to never shoot a dead sheep".

Although Rake and other stakeholders did not always agree with the causticness of some of these beefs, things evolved differently this time. Partly because, paradoxically, Ankomah and his beefs settled the *New African's* commercial worries. The *New African's* profitability was

⁴¹³ Eugene Holland, *Deleuze and Guattari's 'A Thousand Plateaus': A Reader's Guide* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), 40.

⁴¹⁴ Baffour Ankomah, "Great Things are Happening in Britain, Dear Lord!", *New African* no. 361 (March 1998): 19.

⁴¹⁵ Baffour Ankomah, "Dr Livingstone, I Presume", *New African* no. 420 (July 2003): 8-9.

⁴¹⁶ Baffour Ankomah, "When Superb is Not Superb", *New African* no. 365 (July/August 1998): 7.

sustained and increased as Ankomah and *Beefs* continued to attract a vast readership, drawing substantial responses in letters which both praised and castigated him. This is captured in readers' letters including comments like: "would like you to continue providing more *Beefs* for our table"; "Thank you Baffour for putting a mirror up against our selves"; "Beefs on romance between Mandela and Graça must rank as one of the most moralistic pieces of nonsense that I have ever read, Ankomah expressed an old fashioned mind that seems to derive from anti-European indoctrination"; and, "Keep doing what you are doing, Africa is behind you".⁴¹⁷

As will be shown in the upcoming section on Ankomah, his editorship is especially significant in the mapping of the *New African's* distinctive enunciation for African solutions, as it marks a lasting break – a deterritorialisation or de-coding of popular discourse on reporting Africa. It allowed new territory for a broadly distinctive enunciation that was ideologically Africa-centred, at times displaying wilful blindness to the damage and suffering caused by Africans. How was this achieved? It was during Ankomah's tenure as editor from July/August 1999 to February 2016 when the magazine emphasised the intense Afrocentric politics of refusal to be erased or negated, of emancipation and redefinition that this format of the magazine thrived. It tapped into the politics of African personality akin to Seme's "each is self",⁴¹⁸ and Nkrumah's, Senghor's, Garvey's and Diop's African as a capable subject, whose experiences are also legitimate.⁴¹⁹ Put differently, it is in this overall expression, linked to diverse African traditional and contemporary vocabularies – including linguistic syntax and idiom– that the magazine's popularity rose globally. This is proved by how *New African*-driven debates on decolonisation returned to the popular mainstream, as the publication provided a bigger platform for the most

⁴¹⁷ Ebrahima Baldeh, "Liberia's Sad Picture", *New African* no. 422 (October 2003): 5, Thandile Kona, "Great Stuff", *New African* no. 463 (June 2007): 6, Samuel K. Mensah, "Mandela-Graça Romance Deserves our Blessing", *New African* no. 347 (December 1996): 6, Marcia Williams, "Baffour Under Fire", *New African* no. 385 (May 2000): 4, and Simphiwe Sesanti, "Simply Brilliant", *New African* no. 463 (June 2007): 6.

⁴¹⁸ Seme, "The Regeneration of Africa".

⁴¹⁹ See the related discussion in Chapter 2, in the sections on phases of Africa's rebirth, articulated as the Pan-Negro and Pan-African moments.

contested issues of Africa's history through special themes in serialised editions. The most prominent series and themes involved anti-Western rage, which entailed Pan-Africanist calls to pursue continental unity, and patriotic columns advocating nationalistic defence of African political leaders against what Ankomah regarded as condescension of Euro-American media and "white messiahs".⁴²⁰ As already noted, captivating debates included "Who Controls the Past?",⁴²¹ and all such themes galvanised to confront pessimisms about Africa and the agency of African people as suggested in *The Economist's* "Hopeless Continent".

Significantly still, Ankomah's *New African* was inspired by African linguistic and idiomatic expressions, which are often enlisted as resources for Africa-purposed modes of philosophic thought. As will be further expounded in Chapter 6, Ankomah uses African traditional ways of dialogue, thought, proverbs and idioms, as adapted in contemporary literature by Achebe and others. For Wiredu, this is an obligatory task if Africa is to clarify its own issues for itself, by conceptualising its world closely, against the conceptual hegemony about the world that rests with European syntax and linguistic registers.⁴²² In terms of Deleuze and Guattari's thought, difference is affirmed through Ankomah's scourge of established codes of language within practice because, "there is no ideal speaker-listener anymore, than there is a homogenous linguistic community or linguistic universals, because language is never closed except as a take-over by dominant one...there are only dialects, patois, slangs, and specialized languages opening the world in many dimensions".⁴²³ With the *New African*, Ankomah brings these African modes of expression to a popular space, as valid bases for critical thought in the process of rehumanising the African. For example, in a series of prickly exchanges over what Ankomah denounced as Mugabe-bashing, he invokes the Akan proverb "monkeys play by their sizes" in

⁴²⁰ See Carina Ray's critique of celebrity philanthropy involving the likes of Bono and Bob Geldof in "The Dangers of Brand Aid", *New African* no. 470 (February 2008): 18-19, and James Schneider, "Politics of Pity: Inside the White Saviour Industrial Complex", *New African* no. 546 (January 2015): 8-12.

⁴²¹ Baffour Ankomah, "Who Controls the Past", *New African* no. 383 (March 2000): 8.

⁴²² Wiredu, "Toward Decolonising African Philosophy and Religion", 17-18.

⁴²³ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 7-8.

reflexive admission that he was “boxing above his weight” yet his truth had to be told.⁴²⁴ This process also relies on statements like “the head of a man is not like a paw-paw that you can split open and know what goes on there”,⁴²⁵ written in defence of African leaders who are judged harshly in Euro-American commentary without any first-hand interactions.

Beyond Africa rising: The struggle to re-manufacture Africa’s reality

In February 2016, incoming editor Parselelo Kantai’s inaugural commentary “Beyond Africa Rising”,⁴²⁶ signalled yet another shift for the *New African*. It conveyed a de-territorialisation and de-coding of Ankomah’s Pan-Africanist nationalist disposition on politics of identity and looking to the past. Kantai’s *New African* manifests as a more complex, self-critical yet affirmative disposition in the enunciation of Africa’s own solutions, one that encourages multiple lines of seeing to detect blind-spots instantiated by the previous nationalist enunciation. This is evident in all of his commentary, in particular a piece titled “The Pitfalls of Occupational Thinking”.⁴²⁷ Here Kantai uses the tragedy *Antigone* by Jean Anouilh, to criticise the fatalism of liberation literature, which sustains a victim’s existential, inescapable absurdities, as well as false pragmatisms because the heroes either have long exited, or have overstayed and soured to set up a new stage for new tragedy. This piece directed sharp criticism at Africa’s continued mismanagement by an overstayed elite and at continually laying blame on the West, in contrast to Ankomah’s sympathy to both. Such entry by a new editor articulated a perceptively-measured decision on the part of the *New African*, probably in anticipation of a change in editorial leadership, and consequent substantive tweaking of its enunciation. This deduction is made upon evidence of a gradual shift in overall message during the latter years of

⁴²⁴ Baffour Ankomah, “A Bad Man In Africa”, *New African* no. 395 (April 2001): 8-9.

⁴²⁵ Baffour Ankomah, “What Goes Through their Heads”, *New African* no. 555 (November 2015): 6-7.

⁴²⁶ Kantai, “Beyond Africa Rising”, 6.

⁴²⁷ Parselelo Kantai, “The Pitfalls of Occupational Thinking”, *New African* no. 562 (June 2016): 6.

Ankomah's tenure, between 2012 and 2015, when the *New African* gradually selected more content with critical and positive outlooks on Africa's future.

Accordingly, in "Beyond Africa Rising", Kantai offers a sweeping critical evaluation of Africa's condition and its future, premised on the need to re-invent thought and actions within empirical conditions. He begins by rejecting ideological separatist narratives on Africa's renewal which he regards as generally lacking in solutions. And so, while he acknowledges that Africa rising is not "our" invention, he challenges the growing acquiescence to idea of a hopeful continent. He particularly queries how Africa can be hopeful if the structures and thinking that had underdeveloped Africa since the 1960s, way before Walter Rodney's ground-breaking critique *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, are still validated in many guises. He cites as examples the looting during Africa's oil boom, and allowing foreign smart money into African economies in the form of the West's and China's cheap credit. He especially queries why Africa accepts China's deals as alternative thinking, yet political leaders remain unaccountable as always, taking leave from their responsibilities while the Chinese build things.⁴²⁸ That is why Selelo publishes William Gumede's "Debunking Development Myths"⁴²⁹ in which Gumede criticises African populists who rebuke partnerships with the West while exercising the "waiting-for-help" approach and doing nothing.

It is during Kantai's tenure as editor that critical analyses of African situations saw the concept African *postcolony* being employed. Such analyses include "The Era of Moral Dwarves", and, "Museveni's Empty Harvest" – critiques of Africa's lack of moral authority to hold its own

⁴²⁸ See the section on cartooning below by G. Gado, *New African* no. 561 (May 2016): 8, and also in *New African* no. 308 (May 1993): 4.

⁴²⁹ William Gumede, "Debunking Development Myths", *New African* no. 562 (June 2016): 10.

leaders to account;⁴³⁰ “Sans Papiers” and “After the Leaks”,⁴³¹ on the paradox of African immigration to Europe, and financial outflows enabled both in Africa and externally as carried in the myth of the “Age of Tutelage”. In terms of this myth, austerity measures in the form of structural adjustment programs of the 1990s were justified on the claims that “Africa has no excuse” as its failures were largely due to its pathological corruption. “Biafra: Return of Cessionists” and “Third Termers: Sending Great Lakes Region into Turmoil”,⁴³² in turn, were reflections on waning democracies as leaders of Burundi, Rwanda and Uganda pushed for referenda to undo term limits, despite a history of volatile ethno-lingual politics in the region. Notwithstanding this shift, the *New African* still struggled with the fatalist narrative, in a manner identified in Mbembe’s concept of displacements in *age* of the postcolony. Thus new columns insisted on looking to the past using a separatist lens, and any criticism of Africans was regarded as blaming the victim, as seen in Boubacar Diop’s “Afropessimists: Black Skins, White Fantasies”,⁴³³ and Ankomah’s defence of the legitimacy of breaking term limits for presidents in Africa. Up to this point, the *New African*’s distinctive discourse of rising lies in first locating the precarity in new possibilities, but still affirming the pains of new lines of thought as seen in Kantai’s *New African*, forced through reversals and recapture into previous paths. As will be seen ahead, such realisation reaffirms the argument that mapping new paths with ontological commitments to difference must be a deliberate process of continual discovery and connection, motivated rather than paralysed by recurring contradictions.

Importantly, the decision to introduce cartoon images by Tanzanian political cartoonist Mwampembwa G. Gado for the period between 1992 and 2016, adds to the *New African*’s

⁴³⁰ Parselelo Kantai, “The Era of Moral Dwarves”, 6, and Kalundi Serumaga, “Museveni’s Empty Harvest”, 16-19, both in *New African* no. 559 (March 2016).

⁴³¹ Parselelo Kantai, “After the Leaks”, *New African* no. 561 (May 2016): 6, and Santorri Chamley, “Sans Papiers”, *New African* no. 564 (August/September 2016): 48-52.

⁴³² Angelo Izama “Third Term Fever”, 8-9, Jessica Hatcher, “Burundi on the Precipice”, 10-12, Baffour Ankomah, “Term Limits: Allowing Rwanda To Chart its Course”, 14-17, and Max Siollun “Half a Loaf and Half of a Yellow Sun”, 20-21, all in *New African* no. 558 (February 2016).

⁴³³ Boubacar Diop, “Black Skins, White Fantasies”, *New African* no. 566 (November 2016): 42-43.

distinctive Africa-centred enunciation. On the one hand, it opens space of possibilities for self-criticism by provoking multiple sense events and meanings; what Massumi calls the “voluminousness” of interactivity for each individual through repeated encounters with provoking images. This can be based on the kind of sense events provoked when certain images used by both Africans and externalists appear to affront traditional or closely-guarded sensibilities, such as about washing an African family’s dirty linen in public. For example, on what became popularly known as the ‘look east’ policy as trade relations with China deepened among many African governments, Gado’s cartoon (see Figure 1 below) of African politicians ‘prostituting’ the continent to China to build things including the new AU headquarters in Addis Ababa, stirred sharp debates around Western influences on notions of shameless parody, and the un-Africanness of such methods. It is such perceived un-Africanness, in this case conceived in terms of lack of respect for elders and authority, which provokes unmitigated censorships.

Thus for the *New African*’s distinctive enunciation, the magnitude of possibilities for self-criticism through cartooning become sharper if one considers that in 2016, Gado was perplexingly sacked from the employ of a comparatively lesser publication – the *East African* – after it published Gado’s provocative cartoon, critical of the poor record of then Tanzanian President Jakaya Kikwete⁴³⁴ (see Figure 2 below). The offices of this publication in Tanzania were also shut temporarily. Ironically, it is the same President Kikwete to whom Ankomah dedicated two special editions of the *New African*, in order to emphasise African successes, as also highlighted in the upcoming section about Ankomah’s unrepentant Afrocentrism.

⁴³⁴ “Gado Blames Government Pressure As Cartoonist’s Contract at Kenya’s Nation Ends”, Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), March 17, 2016. Available at <https://cpj.org/blog/2016/03/gado-blames-government-pressure-as-cartoonists-con.php>. Accessed March 5, 2018, and “The Bold Cartoon That Got GADO Fired by Nation Media”, *Business Today*, March 14, 2016. Available at <https://businesstoday.co.ke/the-bold-cartoon-that-got-gado-fired-by-nation-media/>. Accessed March 5, 2018.

Figure 1.⁴³⁵



Figure 2.⁴³⁶



⁴³⁵ Mwampembwa Gado, *New African* no. 561 (May 2016): 8.

⁴³⁶ Mwampembwa Gado, "President JK, Corrupting, Incompetence and Cronyism in Tanzania", Gado cartoons.com, January 17, 2015. Available at <http://gadocartoons.com/president-jk-corruptionincompetence-cronyism-tanzania/>. Accessed April 5, 2018.

Re-awakening Africa rudely: Recurrent movement, reversals and blockages in themes

A glance at all *New African* editions published between 1991 and 2016 paints a picture of an entity vigorously determined to carve out a distinct Pan-African theme of waking Africa to its aspirations, regardless of the discomforts the entity provokes in this process. That explains the recurrence of specific thematic issues over the years, as the publication sought to differentiate itself from others, as well as from its previous incarnations. This strategy of recurrent themes implies favouring certain arguments and their counterpoints. It also involves certain interconnections between journalistic method and scholarly discourses for in-depth theoretical and historical treatments, with the aim of making complex material accessible to a broader audience. Consequently, readers regularly challenge a number of these analyses. In terms of mapping, producing distinctive enunciations for African solutions requires repetition of themes to force different thinking with each recurring production, or in comparison to an earlier moment. As Hadorj urges, it should entail an anti-common-sense approach gauged by diversified uses of the very concepts, language, styles of writing, and aspects of research to the very themes selected to return. Thus for the *New African*, distinctiveness should be measured in relation to an extended trajectory of treatments, corresponding to the movements, reversals and blockages of key aspects of African socio-political life since the difficult 1990s.

In the mid-1990s, the period labelled Africa's second liberation, the *New African* largely employed the common informational format providing straightforward updates on political events across the continent. This familiar format is still employed in most *Africanise* publications, including *Africa Research Bulletin: Political, Social and Cultural Series*⁴³⁷ and *Africa Confidential*. At that time, the *New African* was engaging universal discourses of mis-

⁴³⁷ See the publications in the Wiley Online Library: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/1467825x>.

reporting Africa with regard to democratisation and economic adjustments, within the context of the post-Cold War new world order.⁴³⁸ Accordingly, in order to improve its legitimacy and distinct message for Africa, the *New African* enlisted a number of African stringers and correspondents situated in different countries across the continent. In terms of difference, this describes legitimacy enhanced by empirical connection to multiple points, acting immanently within actual situations. As Rake and Ankomah have indicated, the *New African* maintained this crucial practice as senior staff also began to travel for in-depth analyses in attempts to sustain a distinctively African voice. Some of the main themes are captured in the *New African* covers in Figure 3.

Figure 3.⁴³⁹



⁴³⁸ As indicated in Chapter 2, the idea of a second liberation is often used in political studies speak in reference to the period following reversals in democracy in Africa in the 1970s and 1980s. Media practice in Africa was mostly assessed in relation to the motions of political life as seen in Okigbo, Hyden and Ogundimu.

⁴³⁹ “Africa and The Aids Myth”, *New African* no. 271 (April 1990), “The Democratic Debate”, *New African* no. 285 (June 1991), Democracy Hits Barriers”, *New African* no. 302 (November 1992), “Who’s Afraid of Aids?”, *New African* no. 314 (December 1993), “Aids Is Not African”, *New African* no. 323 (October 1994), and “Dogs of War”, *New African* no. 335 (November 1995).



For most of the 1990s, stories revolved around Africa’s struggle to shed the negativity described by deputy editor Jere-Malanda as PIDIC (Poverty, Disease, Incompetence and Corruption). This happened against the backdrop of a return to multiparty politics, where the theme of good governance dominated. Examples include Anver Versi and Ankomah’s “Democratic Debate”, as well as Rake’s “What Hope for Democracy?”, and “Democracy Hits Barriers”.⁴⁴⁰ This theme recurred in every monthly edition for the first half of that decade, and for every election in the continent in what manifested as confrontations between Africa’s aspirations and the Bretton

⁴⁴⁰ Anver Versi and Baffour Ankomah, “Democratic Debate”, *New African* no. 285 (June 1991): 9-13, Alan Rake, “What Hope for Democracy?”, *New African* no. 312 (October 1993): 10-11, and Alan Rake, “Democracy Hits Barriers”, *New African* no. 302 (November 1992): 11-14.

Woods institutional logic of good governance that forbade single-party nationalism and ‘big-man’ politics. Alongside came the Aids issue, for which about four special editions were produced. These include “Africa and the Aids Myth”, “Aids Is Not African”, and “Who Is Afraid of Aids”,⁴⁴¹ which delivered an anti-Western defence of Africa against ideas of Africa as pathological. On the theme of African conflicts came “Dogs of War”, an exposé on the Executive Outcomes mercenaries and their work in Africa. This theme recurs in “Arms Pour into Africa”, and “The Sponsor of War: The Hidden Hands Behind Africa’s Conflicts”. Others included “Liberia On A Knife’s Edge”, and commentary on African conflicts including Rwanda in 1994, and the rise of Foday Sankoh in Sierra Leone written in the period 1994-1995.⁴⁴²

Viewed critically, there is almost no dispute that treatments of all the above themes using a universalist ‘objective’ informational formula, will not differentiate an African enunciation from that of a Western correspondent inserted into the middle of such events. As will be elaborated upon later, regular methods and grammar employed to read political processes, elite infighting and conflict especially along ethnic lines, are grounded in Western rationality which specifies the standard of ‘civilised’ society. Thus notions of dysfunctionality against moral civility and progress emerge, relegating political heads to tribal chiefs. Yet, regardless of the format, the recurrence of this theme in the *New African* brought a different repetition and enunciation of an African solution to reporting inwards. For example, Ankomah’s response “Trouble With Aids”,⁴⁴³ was shrouded in the kind of disrespect that follows most Africa-centred apologists’ stance. As pointed out by one reader, Agnes Makonda Ridley, Ankomah offered a “long winded” ideological rhetoric which lacked scientific rigour.⁴⁴⁴ Still, by repeating the

⁴⁴¹ “Africa and The Aids Myth”, *New African* no. 271 (April 1990), “Who’s Afraid of Aids?”, *New African* no. 314 (December 1993), and “Aids Is Not African”, *New African* no. 323 (October 1994).

⁴⁴² “Dogs of War”, *New African* no. 335 (November 1995), “Arms Pour into Africa”, *New African* no. 370 (January 1999), “The Sponsors of War: The Hidden Hands Behind Africa’s Conflicts”, *New African* no. 524 (January 2013), “Liberia On A Knife Edge”, *New African* no. 328 (March 1995), and “Year of Blood and Hope” *New African* no. 326 (January 1995).

⁴⁴³ Baffour Ankomah, “Trouble With Aids”, *New African* no. 372 (March 1999): 10.

⁴⁴⁴ Agnes Makonda Ridley, “AIDS: Give Me More Evidence”, *New African* no. 372 (March 1999): 7.

subject in “Are 26 Million Africans Dying of Aids: The Biggest Lie of the Century Under Fire” – a nine-page column – and “The Trouble With Marylyn’s Virus”,⁴⁴⁵ the *New African* amplified a shifting form of the Aids debate: one that deemphasised the deemed infallibility of Scientism, in order to unnerve the casual synonymy of Aids with Africa, as had been done in *Time* magazine’s “A Continent In Peril”.⁴⁴⁶ Beefs were especially contemptuous of the dehumanising moral-ethical allusions that connected Marylyn, a monkey, and origins of Aids in Africa. Ankomah asserted that “it’s all bad science” quoting pandemic figures produced by UNAids. Overall, while the commitment in content, style and language in the themes sustained a different African enunciation, in its determination not to re-pathologise Africa the *New African* ineluctably became increasingly Africa-centred, or, coded.

Now, I turn to how the *New African* has recurrently thematised democracy, politicised ethnicity and the idea of the archetypal ‘tribal chief’. While *New African* discussions on democratisation since the initial Anver Versi series in the mid-1990s, through to Ankomah’s 2000s, offered sharp criticism, those treatments, however, sought to offer a differentiated enunciation. One that humanised and respected the ‘problematic’ differences within such processes in Africa. This is because understandings of this profound and particular aspect of African life – that is, processes of interpersonal and intergroup relations in view of dispensing power – remain inadequate. This is because most treatments trivialise the continued mixing of contemporary and long-existing modes of social and political organisation, especially those containing traditional sensitivities, as redundant in the modern rational social order. Yet their effects do not lack importance and so cannot be ignored. In short, there exists a general failure to grasp the multiplicity of concrete African reality, which entails traditional notions of belonging and social organisation, experienced and validated by a conscious African subject.⁴⁴⁷

⁴⁴⁵ Baffour Ankomah, “Are 26 Million Africans Dying of AIDS: The Biggest Lie of the Century Under Fire”, *New African* no. 369 (December 1998): 34-42.

⁴⁴⁶ See Chapter 1, page 24 on Joanna McGreary’s story “A Continent in Peril” in *Time*, February 2001.

⁴⁴⁷ Mbembe’s emphasis.

Difficulty surrounding ‘traditional ways’ continues to rear its head in other closely-related issues, such as xenophobia/Afrophobia, and rituals to ancestors.

Thus in editions covering the transition to multiparty politics such as, “Under Bashir’s Boot”, “Turning Point Tanzania”, “Africa’s Falling Heads”, “Mandela: What Next”, and “Kenya the Reformers”,⁴⁴⁸ one sees the *New African* striving to straddle criticism towards abuse of power and unethical leadership, and at the same time affirming controversially, certain aspects of personalised political power. This means that, similar to the traditional African chief, the role of a political head of an ethnically-defined political party, often implied pragmatic political processes. This relates to mitigating risk of internecine conflict and volatility, which have been heightened by the rushed turn into multiparty politics. And so, affirming certain political heads brought a sense of respect, belonging and legitimacy to the new order of politics within certain communities. That is why poor actions by leaders like Omar Al Bashir, Ali Hassan Mwinyi, Mwai Kibaki and Raila Odinga, resulted in them being criticised for failing their people, yet the idea of ethnic power and tribal chiefs as downright dysfunctional was repeatedly rejected. This aligns with Chabal and Daloz’s argument that what the Western world calls dysfunction or irrationality, is in practical terms actualised as a meaningful instrument of social order.⁴⁴⁹ It consists of other legitimate approaches of expressing traditional ways that are coexisting in modernity. As will be discussed in more depth later, Ankomah adopts this position in his patriotic defence of African leaders, given that a supposedly ‘illogical’ form of dual citizenship is undeniable. That is, Africans bear loyalties to both ethno-cultural systems, and the modern state. That is why political scientist Stephen Ndegwa argued a while back, that universal political science (with regard to mainstream teaching of African politics), should tweak its

⁴⁴⁸ “Under Bashir’s Boot”, *New African* no. 274 (July 1990), “Turning Point Tanzania”, *New African* no. 276 (September 1990), “Africa’s Falling Heads”, *New African* no. 286 (July 1991), “Mandela What Next?”, *New African* no. 270 (March 1990), and “Kenya the Reformers”, *New African* no. 287 (August 1991).

⁴⁴⁹ Chabal and Daloz, *Africa Works*, xv-xix.

conceptual frameworks, as it still fails to grasp the difference in African politics by refusing to accommodate such factors.⁴⁵⁰

“Pouring sand in their *gari*”:⁴⁵¹ Ankomah’s era of unrepentant

Afrocentrism

The significance of Ankomah to the *New African*’s enunciation is two-fold. The first thing to consider are the recurrent themes during Ankomah’s editorship, which gave the publication its genetic code, and thus propped up its dominance. The second factor to focus on is himself as an African and activist media practitioner. As already noted, the impetus behind Ankomah’s *New African*’s distinctive expression is an unapologetic Pan-Africanist, black consciousness view on emancipation and unity. Overall, the themes can be summarised in John Henrik Clarke’s entreaty that Africans must look to the past in order to build the future, and evinced in the *New African*’s focus on ancient Egypt titled “Africa’s Stolen Legacies”,⁴⁵² and Santorri Chamley’s “The Rise and Rise of Black Consciousness”.⁴⁵³ In the latter, Chamley traces the emergence of world-pioneering influences from Egypt and Ethiopia, in a process that links those innovations to Greece, Rome, and modern Europe. He emphasises the importance of linkages in black heritage including black consciousness and the Rasta movement, in bringing those legacies to the world. That is why, during Ankomah’s initial 10-year stretch at the helm, the most notable columns were inclined towards emancipation and patriotic defence of the continent, as a response to dehumanisation of the African. Themes included slavery, reparations, reporting Africa and Africans, and Africa’s contributions to Europe, mostly

⁴⁵⁰ Stephen Ndegwa, “The Struggle for Relevance in African Studies: An African Student’s Perspective”, *A Journal of Opinion* 20 no. 2 (1992): 42-43, and Stephen Ndegwa, “Citizenship and Ethnicity: An Examination of Two Transition Moments in Kenya Politics”, *American Political Science Review*, 91 no. 3 (1997): 600-602.

⁴⁵¹ This is an Akan idiom whereby if grains of sand mix with *Gari* (ground cassava), it will ruin the much-loved staple *Gari* meal because the cassava cannot be recovered without impurities, hence ruining it. Used here, it translates to a severe act of sabotage, and irreversible change to a former ‘pure’ state.

⁴⁵² “Ancient Egypt: Africa’s Stolen Legacy”, *New African* no. 389 (October 2000).

⁴⁵³ Santorri Chamley, “The Rise and Rise of Black Consciousness”, *New African* no. 470 (February 2008): 80-84.

published every October during Black History Month in the United States. Other major themes were African unity in celebration of Kwame Nkrumah, and recurring since 1997, the profiling of influential African leaders, belonging and xenophobia. A collection of cover pages to some of the themed editions is seen below in Figure 4.

Figure 4.⁴⁵⁴



⁴⁵⁴ "It's Time To Pay For This", *New African* no. 377 (September 1999), "Slavery: Greatest Crime Against Humanity", *New African* no. 398 (July/August 2001), "Africa Must Unite", *New African* no. 381 (January 2000), "Africa Must Unite", *New African* no. 464 (July 2007), "Black Inventions", *New African* no. 383 (April 2000), "Africa's Glorious Heritage", *New African* no. 455 (October 2006), "Africa: Who Says We are Independent", *New African* no. 420 (July 2003), "Biopiracy: The New Scramble for Africa", *New African* no. 424 (December 2003), "Masters of the Universe: Still Meddling in Africa", *New African* no. 490 (December 2007), and "Carving up Africa: 125 Years of the Berlin Conference", *New African* no. 492 (February 2010).



These covers speak powerfully to the content of the issues:

- Themes on slavery and reparations: September 2009, July/August 2001, June 2007, February 2008, and October 2009.
- The imperative that Africa must unite: January 2000, July 2007, October 2009, December 2009.

- Africa's legacy to the world, a series which first appeared in April and October 2000. Then following a three-year gap, and the series resumed in April 2004 and continued in every October issue until 2015.
- On false independence and meddling: December 1988, January 1999, October 2003, March 2004, April 2007, December 2009, February 2010, February 2012.

Certainly, in the midst of this overall expression of emancipation and reawakening were themes of affirmation, and a positive outlook, highlighting some significant politico-economic events. Examples of affirmative series included "What a Delight, Ghana" reporting on Ghana's democracy; "There Is Hope For Africa", a special edition on Tanzania with columns such as "Tanzania Takes the Breath Away" and "Tanzania an Investor's Haven"; and, "Africa: The Gas Man Cometh"⁴⁵⁵ which focuses on recent discoveries of oil in East Africa. It also marked the rise of columnists like William Kumuyi whose articles, including "Why Serious Visioning and Visioners are Strangers in Africa" and "Sir, Listen Up!",⁴⁵⁶ argued that regardless of the destructions of colonialism, Africa still retains a capacity for holistic development, through servant leaders with native wisdom. Yet, these affirmative themes paled in numbers, and plausibly, in their appeal, against the volume of recurring Fanonian themes. The latter recurred very often, in a manner that seemed to echo Mbembe's argument that because of Fanon, we will, and should not, forget slavery and colonialism.⁴⁵⁷

⁴⁵⁵ Baffour Ankomah, "What a Delight, Ghana", *New African* no. 427 (March 2004): i-iv, Baffour Ankomah, "There is Hope for Africa" and "Tanzania an Investor's Haven", *New African* no. 463 (June 2007): 12-20, 54-60, Graham Mercer, "Tanzania Takes the Breath Away", *New African* no. 463 (June 2007): 46-50, and Neil Ford, "The Gasman Cometh", *New African* no. 463 (June 2007): 72-73.

⁴⁵⁶ William F. Kumuyi, "Why Serious Visioning and Visioners are Strangers in Africa", *New African* no. 470 (February 2008): 58, and "Sir Listen Up", *New African* no. 474 (June 2008): 48.

⁴⁵⁷ Michael Syrotinski, "Violence and Writing in the African Postcolony: Achille Mbembe and Labou Tansi", in *Deconstruction and the Postcolonial: At the Limits of Theory* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2007), 98-116.

Even so, the repetition of Afrocentric themes in Ankomah's *New African* strengthened *Africarise* distinctively for the following reasons. First, the consistent reiteration of Clarke's injunction that changing tomorrow demands looking back, reminds the world of the reality that a lot of Africans are still working through mental and emotional layers in relation the past, in their own ways. Moreover, it tells of how such 'working-through' influences present reappearances of discourses on decolonisation, with difficult questions around the intransigence of racism and self-hate. And ultimately, how such burdens pass on to the future. Altogether, Ankomah's *New African* achieves its Afrocentric identity by addressing these concerns over time, taking bold editorial decisions to enlist authoritative resources, which include likeminded African intellectuals, in-depth historical accounts, and related theories. Examples of such contributors and works include Ayi Kweyi Armah's "What Colonial Education Did To Africans",⁴⁵⁸ Africanist activist Toyin Agbetu's "Britain, Not In Our Name",⁴⁵⁹ and several works by David Hoile, Xolela Mancgu, Patrick Adibe and Boubacar Diop. Also featured were publications of primary historical documents, for instance speeches and letters by notable persons such as slave trader William Lynch.

Second, on the ground of these resources and themes, the *New African* has sought to enrich and sustain the level of discourse of reawakening for the broader readership, where *realpolitik* happens. That is, the recurring presence of a discourse for Africa rising to itself, not only reshapes and hoists itself to prominence, but also attracts new forms of audience interactions with the *New African*, thus offering further ideas for African solutions. That the *New African* serves as such a platform is demonstrated in letters to the editor and "Home truths" to be discussed later on. Third, in connection to both points above: this process of recurring themes quietly brings to the fore a cohort of media analysts and practitioners who become new

⁴⁵⁸ Ayi Kwei Armah "What Colonial Education Did to Africans", *New African* no. 451 (May 2006): 38-46.

⁴⁵⁹ Agbetu, "Britain, Not In Our Name", 82-86.

authorities on everyday contemporary matters in Africa. For instance, most themes were tackled by the same group of columnists: Osei Kofi and Moeletsi Mbeki on the past and future of Africa's political economy and governance, Akua Djanne on the difficult questions of Africanness including homosexuality, immigration and race, and then Femi Akomolafe and Cameron Duodu on the African's challenges to self-formulate. Notably, as has already been pointed out, with this determination to reaffirm Africa by favouring Africa-centred themes, most discussions, especially those on belonging, immigration and white messiahs, ultimately though, result in paralysis when it comes to positing Africa's solutions. That is, they struggle to engage adequately, and the tensions and entanglements they raise are seen in the upcoming section.

“Solutions lie in our continent”: Entanglements and difficult home truths

Femi Akomolafe's column “Solutions Lie In Our Continent”⁴⁶⁰ marks the third enunciation which begins shortly before the departure of Ankomah and the entry of Kantai. Its distinctiveness is marked by a discernible tension between the Afrocentric expressions of looking back, and forward looking affirmations to ‘seek own solutions’. For example, the start of this period was signalled by columns such as “Ripe for Change” – a debate on Africa's need for a new kind of leadership, and “The Africa We Want”⁴⁶¹ – in which former UN Secretary General Kofi Anan and sponsor of Africa's good governance award Mo Ibrahim Geral were interviewed. These were followed by a special edition commemorating 50 years of the OAU/AU titled “Our Future Made In Africa”,⁴⁶² then came “African Leaders Tell It Like It

⁴⁶⁰ Femi Akomolafe, “Solutions Lie in Our Continent”, *New African* no. 540 (June 2014): 42-47.

⁴⁶¹ “Ripe for Change”, *New African* no. 517 (May 2012): 9, and “The Africa We Want”, *New African* no. 522 (November 2012).

⁴⁶² “Our Future Made in Africa”, *New African* no. 528 (May 2013).

Is”,⁴⁶³ “Africa’s Time: Thinkers Edition”,⁴⁶⁴ and “How Africa Can Feed Itself”.⁴⁶⁵ These editions collated interviews with prominent Africans, including presidents Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and Omar Bongo, and South African freedom activist Jay Naidoo. Although the collective voice remained sympathetic to the idea of reaffirming Africans wounded by colonialism and neoliberal imperialism, it strongly emphasised that capacities built over the years must be brought to bear on current challenges. Thus the continent must look within to industrialise despite the unfair global system. Moeletsi Mbeki, for instance, argues that he does not see the West as Africa’s enemy, because some of the domestic strategies and potentials were destroyed by Africa’s own predatory elites. This emphasis on African capacities was reinforced with the introduction of the “100 Most Influential Africans”⁴⁶⁶ series, as a counterpoint to *Times* and *Forbes* magazines’ annual list of influential persons. Some of these themes in cover pages of the time are collated in Figure 5.

Figure 5.⁴⁶⁷



⁴⁶³ “African Leaders Tell It Like It Is”, *New African* no. 533 (November 2013). This edition comprises of exclusive interviews with former presidents, Yahya Jammeh of Gambia, and John Dramani Mahama of Namibia, and the incumbent Ivorian President Alassane Ouattara.

⁴⁶⁴ “Africa’s Time: Thinkers Edition”, *New African* no. 554 (October 2015).

⁴⁶⁵ “How Africa Can Feed Itself: Beyond Food Aid and Corporate Greed”, *New African* no. 537 (March 2014).

⁴⁶⁶ This series commenced in mid-2011, taking root from 2012 onwards.

⁴⁶⁷ See full references in the Bibliography, pgs. 304-306.



Despite this affirmative and self-critical turn in this enunciation, it had to contend with recurring fatalist expressions of recolonisation including “Berlin Again”, “Sponsors of War” and “The Dirty Deals Bleeding Africa Dry”.⁴⁶⁸ Such kinds of focus on the Western colonialist, and on imperialism, tended to be counterintuitive as these insisted on Africa being controlled externally. Notably though, the vacillation between (1) a counterintuitive blame of external forces doubting expressions that Africa can and should find solutions from within itself, and (2) the self-critical affirmative turn which marked this period, allows for another argument for difference. The tense coexistence of these enunciations within the premier pan-African magazine demonstrates its deep connection with the actual realities it attempts to explain. It is exposes the character of contemporary African problems and the difficulty within familiar

⁴⁶⁸ Chukwuma Soludo, “Berlin Again?: How Europe is Undermining African Development”, *New African* no. 516 (April 2012): 10-17, “The Sponsors of War”, *New African* no. 524 (January 2013), and “The Dirty Deals Bleeding Africa Dry”, *New African* no. 529 (June 2013).

processes (debates on ideologies versus pragmatic actions, and political policy), through which Africans seek new ways to understand their reality. Nothing exhibits this better than the content of, and the magazine's practice of allowing, letters to the editor, and its special columns on homosexuality, xenophobia and migration.

In terms of mapping, the unspoken acts/editorial decisions to publish letters to the editor and to establish the "Home Truths Reader's Forum", present a vital component in locating the distinctiveness of the *New African's* enunciation on these accounts. Some crucial elements must be pointed out in this regard. (a) Unlike scholarly and other media discourses on Africa's reawakening, the principal method and mechanism of evaluation is not removed from concrete realities of African life. That is to say, audience feedback entails a distinctive dimension within processes of social production in contemporary life, and so the *New African's* primary stakeholders are meaningfully brought into the publication's creative process, where both coevolve. (b) It unveils to the assemblage (the *New African*) the precarity that faces any pursuit of a separatist African voice, because African readers demonstrate multiple kinds of entangled Africanity, which defy any single reference to being African. (c) Overall, it exposes the *New African's* inadequacies and the sheer difficulty of addressing these tensions and contradictions, as the most prominent ideas on African solutions recur in almost the same coded Africa-centred terms, despite the diversity of critical expressions that come through this facility for open interactions with readers.

As Rake explicitly observes, part of the key decisions made during the establishment of the *New African*, was opening a letters to the editor section. During Ankomah's tenure it evolved into a designated section called "Home Truths", where readers were invited to provide in-depth analyses on key themes. Among the most notable home truths were "Why Africa Makes Little

Progress” and a four-part debate titled “Africa: Who Says We Are Independent?”⁴⁶⁹ But first, for the sake of argument, I would like to raise a counter-point on the usefulness of this process. It is possible to argue that, by definition, the practice of letters to the editor is flawed due to the generally opaque system of content editing. Drawing on Judith Butler’s argument on selection of media content, producing content for letters to the editor involves obscure modes of foreclosure, in processes of regulating media frames.⁴⁷⁰ And so, contributions are subjectively selected or suppressed, so absencing certain views.

Be that as it may, in terms of difference and *events* which are triggered in all interactions, the *New African* still retains a distinctiveness of enunciation with this process. This is because regardless of which letters are selected, the intensities surrounding the subject at hand creates multiple events, provoking various experiences at different levels of emotional and rational response among readers and staff at the magazine. The impact of Gathaara’s letter on quarrels with the past offers a strong case for this argument. It captures general sensibilities around uncertainties about Africa’s future due to historical pains and other memories of unresolved pasts, as well as desires to overcome the fatigue and paralysis caused by this uncertainty. As Mbembe observes, this shows the impossibility of any centrality on Africa and Africanity, “other than one that is provisional, ad hoc, and permanently being redefined”.⁴⁷¹ Moreover, in Masolo’s argument against fixing representations of Africa, he observes that since the messages are also apprehended by the minds of others, they cannot be dismissed nor condensed to

⁴⁶⁹ “Why Africa Makes Little Progress?: Time for Some Home Truths Part 2”, *New African* no. 368 (November 1988): 3, 6-7, 42, “Why Africa Makes Little Progress?: Time for Some Home Truths Part 3”, *New African* no. 369 (December 1998): 6, “Why Africa Makes Little Progress?: Time for Some Home Truths Part 4”, *New African* no. 370 (January 1999): 8, 42, “Africa: Who Says We are Independent? Part 1”, *New African* no. 420 (July 2003): 12-16, and “Africa: Who Says We are Independent? Part 2”, *New African* no. 427 (March 2004): 24-27.

⁴⁷⁰ Judith Butler, “Precarious Life, Vulnerability, and the Ethics of Cohabitation”, *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 26 no. 2 (2012): 136-137.

⁴⁷¹ Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, 15.

identical meanings, or detached from the historical factors to which individuals, sometimes idiosyncratically, respond, and in which they coevolve.⁴⁷²

Examples from letters to the editor and “Home Truths” include responses to the general themes of progress and Africa’s independence. Prior to opening the debate, these themes were given specific meanings revolving around political autonomy and legitimacy, self-reliance and capacity to act. Those were captured in a 2003 interview with then Malawian President Bakili Muluzi. According to President Muluzi, Africa was deficient on all these grounds as most African polities strove to mimic Europe’s model. Yet they lacked common national identities required for constituting a viable middle class. This implies a continued reliance on erstwhile colonial powers for economic stability, or otherwise the military, to hold on to power. Although the *New African* sustained a stringently apologist expression on this issue, it was doing so against a long trajectory of both critical responses and unsettled debates among its African readers. These include “Let Blame Fall Where It May”, “We Are Our Own Enemy”, and “Are We Ready To Learn From the Past”.⁴⁷³ The writers reject single-factor explanations that lay the blame solely on external forces, by pointing at Africa’s complicity in its own failures, in particular avarice among African political leaders, those “ministers who moved from newspaper vending and carpentry”. Others like Okello Oteng, Okwu Anazodo and Audrey Malambo⁴⁷⁴ presented sharply diverging viewpoints on Muluzi’s exposé. While Oteng criticises the failure to look “at own backyards” while fuelling a fatalistic mantra that blames slavery and neoliberalism for removing Africa’s capacity, in turn, Anazodo and Malambo point at the inevitable spectre of neoliberal imperialism which binds all aspects of African life: from anthems and schooling to superficial independence. Ultimately whereas Oteng asks Africa to

⁴⁷² Masolo, “Some Misleading Abstractions About Identity”, 285-287.

⁴⁷³ Dimas Duarte, “Let the Blame Fall Where it May”, and Oheneba Poku Serkodie “We are Our Own Enemy”, *New African* no. 369 (December 1998): 7, and “Are We Ready to Learn From the Past?” *New African* no. 370 (January 1999): 8.

⁴⁷⁴ “Who Says Africa is Independent? Part 4”, *New African* no. 427 (March 2004).

look critically at other countries that overcame similar situations, Malambo struggles to find a separate path for Africa's emancipation, thus her perspective is suggestive of the very imperialist Western education she criticises.

Un-Africanness and the question of belonging: Homosexuality and ethnicity

Seeing as the *New African's* overall enunciation dedicates itself to the restoration of dignity to the African subject as part of its African solutions, the magazine's treatment of the complex theme of homosexuality in Africa raises a glaring, yet-to-be-explained contradiction due to its vilification and de-Africanising of Africans in the LGBTI community. In the late 2000s, a time marked by harsh political messages, actions and debates on homosexuality in Africa, the *New African's* handling of this aspect of Africanity and belonging was articulated in four columns. These included a special feature "Nothing African About Homosexuality"⁴⁷⁵ by Guyanese activist Ifagbamila Kamau Cush; Ankomah's beef "In the Name of God Leave Us Alone"; Akua Djanne's "Thanks but No Thanks";⁴⁷⁶ and Ankomah's "The Tyranny of the Minority".⁴⁷⁷ Certainly, the layers of discomfort caused by the issue cannot be ignored. However, since *Africarise* has generally remained silent on this theme, while the academic, government and street domains continue to carry tense exchanges, the question arises whether, for *Africarise* and the *New African*, it is a matter of a lack of other concepts with which to openly provide Pan-Africanist media commentary, or if it is simply difficulty to explain how the contemporary notion of reawakening to African solutions can coexist with the subject of homosexuality, in the reality that the issue refuses to simply disappear despite the 'scandal' it causes in relation to generally-held notions of African traditional mores, as shown in these columns.

⁴⁷⁵ Ifa Kamau Cush, "Nothing African About Homosexuality", *New African* no. 492 (February 2010): 76-77, and Baffour Ankomah, "In the Name of God Leave Us Alone!", *New African* no. 513 (January 2012): 8-9.

⁴⁷⁶ Akua Djanne, "Thanks but No Thanks", *New African* no. 513 (January 2012): 28-29.

⁴⁷⁷ Baffour Ankomah, "The Tyranny of the Minority", *New African* no. 559 (March 2016): 20-21.

The overall expression in these columns describes what Mbembe sees as a *tragic duality* that grows from consistent emphasis on the absoluteness of an African self in Afrocentric theses.⁴⁷⁸ Taking into account the patent admission by the magazine's readers, and the difficulty to achieve a separatist Africanist existence as evinced in the magazine's practices during its evolution, the insistence on homosexuality as a Western invention, un-African to African culture, imposed on unwitting Africans and enabled by African collaborators, utterly undermines the *New African's* own discourse of Africans as fully capable of rising on their own, and repathologises Africa in several ways. In this, the *New African* not only acquiesces to the possibility of an essential African non-being⁴⁷⁹ incapable of formulating him/herself, but also suddenly seems to cast doubt on the key premise of the entire Black History month theme on Africa's contributions to Western history.

Thus it quietly undermines its own primary argument of Africa's capacity to influence those cultures, and also avoids the idea that Africans are human bodies, like all others, whose lives entangle with others epistemologically, culturally and politically. The *New African* does so by electing to discuss only select areas of cross-influence, those deemed prestigious, less damning – for instance ancient Egypt and its engineering, philosophy and mathematics. Besides, given the continuing state-sponsored onslaught on the gay community in Africa, the *New African* overlooks the new forms of *commandement* – certain modes of thinking within state apparatuses deployed regulate human behaviour as if by right – which arbitrarily validate the indiscriminate use of force to destroy life. Such validations entwine with select, and indeed oppressive, notions of African tradition, and similar Western religious/conservative modes of social control.

⁴⁷⁸ Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, 12.

⁴⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 9.

So, activist Cush premises his argument on the separatist decolonisation thesis which requires that African knowledge production formulate itself in total detachment from the provincial universalised episteme of Europe. He refers to *The Encyclopaedia of African Religion* by Afrocentrists Molefi Kete Asante and Ama Mazama, to argue that discussions on homosexuality and processes of normalising it persist in the work of American NGOs and their African ‘collaborators’. These NGOs arrogantly impose paradigms drawn from parochial lifestyles of ancient Greek and Rome, to pivot Africans away from eons of fundamental African beliefs, the bedrock of African culture of spirituality and family whereby sexual intercourse was intended for reproduction. The marital relations between ancient Egyptian and Yoruba deities confirm it. In her turn, Djanne applauds President Kuffour of Ghana for refusing to accept political tolerance of homosexuality in his country, despite this risking the loss of financial support from the West. In his turn, Ankomah uses two beefs to advance Djanne’s legal argument on principles of sovereignty. He attacks the “insidious wiles of foreign influence” to which the “jealousy of a free people should be constantly awake”.⁴⁸⁰ This refers to foreign policy directives in the US, UK and Germany on punishing African governments for undermining gay rights. And so, he presents a comparative argument which invokes John Stuart Mill’s rejection the voice of a simple majority within a democracy, “tyranny of the majority” as enshrined in the American constitution. Consequently, Ankomah concludes, if tyranny of the majority was rejected despite the merits of large representation, why should voices of a few LGBT activists be imposed upon the many at a forum as large as the United Nations?

By advancing a separatist argument on homosexuality based on an essential African identity and traditions, the *New African* shows deliberate refusal to engage with, if not inadequacy to grasp, complex shifts in African realities and Africanity. Yet it is these issues which the *New*

⁴⁸⁰ Interestingly, while attacking the West for its cultural impositions, Ankomah appeals to a quote in Republican President George Washington’s farewell address on 17 September 1796 to defend African sensibilities.

African claims as its reason for being. Instead, enunciations on homosexuality and Africanity concerning the young contemporary “African subject, accomplishing the current age and validates it, who lives and espouses his/her contemporaneity connected in the real world”,⁴⁸¹ are largely presented by Euro-American researchers, while African scholars on the subject are not considered.⁴⁸² Again, critically speaking, the large silence on the persisting brutalisation and dehumanisation of homosexual Africans should raise sharp questions regarding the *New African*’s fight for the recovery of human dignity.

Of course, as has been pointed out by Cush and Africanist Marc Epprecht, the “NGOisation” of the LGBTIQ cause in Africa using the language of human rights and social justice on the back of Western activists and government sponsorships, quickly blurs meaningful debate as most of the exchanges are layered with historic and conceptual baggage.⁴⁸³ This is aggravated by zeal to enter into solidarities with Africans without heeding specific socio-cultural and historical sensitivities, as well as moves to censure African governments that do not heed foreign policy directives of powerful Western governments, something rather – and ironically – evocative of colonial imposition, considering that colonists instilled rigid religious conservatism around sexuality.⁴⁸⁴ Importantly though, with such state-level dynamics at play, the fixation on a Western interventionist discourse keeps the *New African* responding outwardly, even quoting Stuart Mill. It fails to look inwards for solutions, which can be found in discussions with African thinkers and scholarship on Africa’s history, cultures and homosexuality. For instance Thabo Msibi⁴⁸⁵ strives to open up myths around the purported un-

⁴⁸¹ Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, 17.

⁴⁸² Some of such in-depth research includes Ashley Currier’s *Out in Africa: LGBT Organising in Namibia and South Africa*, Marc Epprecht’s *Sexuality and Social Justice in Africa: Rethinking Homophobia and Forging Resistance*, and Rachel Spronk’s *Ambiguous Pleasures: Sexuality and Middle Class Self-Perceptions in Nairobi*.

⁴⁸³ Marc Epprecht, *Sexuality and Social Justice in Africa: Rethinking Homophobia and Forging Resistance* (London: Zed Books, 2013), 7, 149-151.

⁴⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 10-11, 118-127.

⁴⁸⁵ Thabo Msibi, “The Lies We Have Been Told: On (Homo) Sexuality in Africa”, *Africa Today* 58 no. 1 (2011): 55-77.

Africanness of homosexuality, by not only presenting historical proof to the contrary, but also explaining the role of patriarchy and a humiliated masculinity in justifying the use of formal instruments of violence ‘to protect’ African culture from homosexuality.

With the above-discussed treatments of the theme of homosexuality, one sees clear and substantial contradictions in the *New African* reprimands to Africans brutalising fellow Africans and the need to preserve human dignity, as seen in treatments of the theme of xenophobia/Afrophobia. But at the same time, this contradiction unveils a distinctive aspect of the *New African*’s enunciation, because its harshness on xenophobia strives for corrective contemporary self-criticism, for African solutions. Of the many violent confrontations amongst Africans reported by the *New African*, including ethnic killings in Rwanda, or episodes of ethnically-charged electoral violence in Kenya and Cote d’Ivoire, it is the attacks on migrant Africans that received tags like, “A National Disgrace”.⁴⁸⁶ Other severe titles include “South Africa Ejects Aliens”, “Indescribable Shame”, and “Saying No! To Afrophobia”.⁴⁸⁷

Seeing that the *New African* adopted a Pan-Africanist posture in line with Garvey’s nationalist mantra ‘Africa for Africans’, which intensified steadily in Ankomah’s Afrocentric patriotism, it becomes clear that the strong rebuke against Afrophobia articulates a deep sense of betrayal of Nkrumah’s plea for African unity, as course to Africa’s rise. As Motsoko Pheko says in his column “Afrophobia Undermining African Unity”, the use of terms like Kaffir, and their equivalents *makwerekwere* and *matswantle*, must be eradicated as these Africans cannot be foreigners if at the same time “we Africans” have agreed to a common destiny.⁴⁸⁸ However, while on this issue the *New African* puts forward self-criticism without reverting to blaming

⁴⁸⁶ Pusch Commey, “A National Disgrace”, *New African* no. 475 (July 2008): 10-16.

⁴⁸⁷ Emmanuel Chuma, “South Africa Ejects Aliens”, *New African* no. 320 (June 1994): 20, Benjamin Seitisho, “Afrophobia: An Indescribable Shame”, and Edward Tsumele, “Saying No! to Afrophobia: The Yeoville Example”, *New African* no. 550 (May 2015): 6, 48-49.

⁴⁸⁸ Motsoko Pheko, “Afrophobia is Undermining African Unity”, *New African* no. 550 (May 2015): 52-53. Pheko is the former president of the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC) in South Africa.

slavery and colonialism as was shown earlier in this chapter, most commentary on Afrophobia lacks with respect to apprehending the depth and multi-faceted composition of such events in contemporary reality. Furthermore, it fails to grasp the challenge of such events on Africanity, with regard to traditional notions of belonging, validated by conscious African subjects.

In “Do Something, President Zuma”,⁴⁸⁹ Ankomah sees South Africans who kill Africans as having colonists’ “Airs and Graces”. He quotes Ian Smith’s bitter comment that “I have met the arrogant Englishman on a few occasions, never more so than when they carry the stamp of the British home office”.⁴⁹⁰ Thus his disappointment is that, similarly, South African political leadership allows such attacks to recur, while aware of the tacit support for such previous attacks within the corridors of state. Besides, these leaders know the challenges facing countries where most of those Africans come from. Pusch Comey’s broader commentary strives to capture sentiments in the streets where these acts occur, by using historical accounts for clarity. Generally, Comey focuses on bread-and-butter issues in the midst of a saturated job market. He explains that: (1) *Kwerekweres* (foreigners/scavengers) are attacked because of locals’ frustrations with social institutions and declining structures of governances. For example, one of the main issues which frustrates the locals is the illegal process used in acquiring what they call the “the book of life”, or the identity document and citizenship, aided by corrupt Home Affairs officials. (2) Such “othering” relies on tools of the very colonialists that dehumanised all Africans, starting with arbitrary boundaries used to separate kin. For example, historically the Zulu and the Ndebele from Zimbabwe were cousins forced to part due to a conflict between King Shaka and his uncle Mzilikazi. So in some cases of Afrophobia, inclusivity is vetted using particular tangible markers. These include one’s complexion, in a manner that corresponds to the advice given by Williams Lynch in his slaver’s handbook, as well as certain references to

⁴⁸⁹ Baffour Ankomah, “Do Something, President Zuma”, *New African* no. 550 (May 2015): 8-9.

⁴⁹⁰ Ian Smith, *The Great Betrayal* (London: Blake Publishing Ltd, 1997).

things in local ethnic languages, for instance names of body parts such as the elbow, which foreigners may not know.

Ethnic belonging as a deficit

Similarly, the *New African's* treatments of tense ethnic relations in contestations for political power, convey binarisms of modern Western logic, in the casual and recurrent use of the descriptor *tribe*. For instance, since Ankomah and Versi's "Democratic Debate"⁴⁹¹ on the return of multiparty politics, *New African* editions on elections have recurrently highlighted the challenge of ethnic identification with political heads. This identification competes with devotion to liberal democratic ideals, whereby ethnic affiliations are consistently regarded with pride when stories on prominent Africans make reference to their ethnicity, flying in the face of the democratic notion of non-ethnic alignment. The question then arises why the *New African* still articulates ethnic belonging in language of deficit, for example Duodu's "terminal electionitis" due to "tyranny of [ethnic] numbers".⁴⁹²

To set a new course, Ankomah's *New African* brought a slightly different expression on political heads: framing them not as "tribal hucksters" as Guest claimed. Ankomah's African leaders' profiles detailed their ancestral heritage as well as political education. The importance of this expression is seen in a discussion where Nkrumah's ethnicity and ancestral heritage became the subject of fierce exchanges between readers. In "Nkrumah Was Not Kru-ba"⁴⁹³ one Frank Codjoe eventually says that "it is an obligation for me to correct fallacies" about Nkrumah's birth names, since "Nkrumah was ethnically Nzima". He goes on to give an etymology and evolution of Nkrumah's names to prove this point.

⁴⁹¹ Baffour Ankomah and Anver Versi, "Democratic Debate", *New African* no. 285 (June 1991): 9-13.

⁴⁹² Cameron Duodu, "Oh, That This Should Happen to Kenya", *New African* no. 470 (February 2008): 26-27.

⁴⁹³ Frank Codjoe, "Nkrumah Was Not Kru-ba", *New African* no. 355 (September 1997): 7.

While over the years the *New African* has succeeded in presenting unfettered, the brutalities of xenophobic/Afrophobic violence accompanied by piercing images, still, overall treatments remain inadequate to presenting the complexity of its contemporaneousness. For Chabal and Daloz, such treatment relies on pre/post dialectical expectations of Africa post-independence, largely based on common Western assumptions of modern identity.⁴⁹⁴ For example, most references to notions of ethnicity, as traditional or originally local, remain inadequate to understanding African identities, especially when such notions become politically instrumentalised. In other words, common uses of these notions often struggle in explaining certain dynamics of contemporary Africa and Africanity, especially where socio-economic and cultural sensibilities are linked to political shifts. This is what Comey's explanation above, on claims of belonging using ethnic language and colonial boundaries, reveals. Here, belonging using the concept *indigenous* or *indigene*, used to designate child of the soil, native as opposed to foreigner or outsider who settled,⁴⁹⁵ is often dismissed as trivial and primitive. It is relegated to what Wiredu calls lingering unexamined anachronisms,⁴⁹⁶ or colonial parochialisms. Such binary logics fail to note the dynamic conjunctions with components of history deemed insignificant, which are indeed significantly sensed and committed to virtually. These remain important to cultural self-validation, to sense of community, and thus to dwelling in certain lands. They are legitimately relived as in the case of being culturally Zulu or Ndebele, despite problematic displays of ethnic loyalty at certain moments. This is what Comey's and Duodu's accounts of ethno-nationalist tensions and conflicts in different African countries describe, around the loss of confidence in social and governmental institutions, as the burden of neoliberal capitalism overwhelms capacity to deliver a better life. So often, Africans will turn to historical places to derive political power and a sense of security.

⁴⁹⁴ Chabal and Daloz, *Africa Works*, 50.

⁴⁹⁵ Dismas Masolo, *Self and Community in a Changing World* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), 21, and Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, 28.

⁴⁹⁶ Kwasi Wiredu, *Philosophy and An African Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980).

Moreover, as Mbembe has already observed, such inadequacies expose self-paralysing thought since events are simply regarded in linear time – pre, and post. It discloses incapacity to grasp that reshaping Africa’s future necessarily involves contradictions and change; that is, encounters with reversals, inertias and affirmations of certain productive elements contained in memories of past cruelties of slavery and colonialism. That partly explains why the *New African* repeatedly exposed persisting ethnic and racial tensions and clashes around land, especially how colonial interference configured cotemporary forms of these antagonisms. Some examples covered in the special edition “The Land Issue” are “Kenya: Who Will Solve the 120 Years Land Question”, “Mercury Rising Namibia: Land of the Brave”, and many such contributions on South Africa.⁴⁹⁷

The importance of Ankomah: Activist practitioners for *Africarise*

As already explained, an assemblage that deterritorialises, or opens new lines of movement, is characterised by *agencement*. That is, certain kinds of connections between constituent parts which continually specify, or seek new possibilities. Among the key parts is the human actor or experiencer, whose experiences comprise continual connections with the immediate reality, or in cartographic terms, remains attuned to “local data”.⁴⁹⁸ With regard to Ankomah as a component within *Africarise*, what comes across as the *New African* contradictions above, are expressions of an ontological commitment in activist practice, striving to carve new paths of flight towards a distinctive enunciation, with events of Ankomah’s time. Accordingly, this section focuses on this particular aspect of mapping, whereby a conscious subject is *deliberate* in their creativity, with the intention of inciting distinct multiple events – new meanings and ideas which unsettle the familiar – in a manner that other actors in a similar position do not

⁴⁹⁷ Baffour Ankomah, “Mercury Rising: Africa’s Land Issue Heats Up”, *New African* no. 550 (May 2015): 10-20, 30-31.

⁴⁹⁸ See the Chapter 3 subsection “Differentiation: Processes to solutions without limits”.

attempt to achieve. Ankomah's can be described as necessary, even ironic, nomadic acts within an assemblage.

However, this still requires some conceptual clarification or caution. Fundamentally, mapping Ankomah as specified above is not counterintuitive to the concept of difference in itself, given that this process remains cautious not to privilege/condense all occurrences triggered by his acts to a single person or entity. Rather, it adheres to Deleuze's idea of tension in the question-problem complex, where an organ is only part of a solution, and not the main solution to a problem within a larger body. This way, Ankomah's role demonstrates how difference in itself and other thinking for African solutions can be conceived, due to specific, creative connections made by one component/organ, within the larger body of *Africarise*. This is particularly evidenced in Ankomah's tenure as editor, where commitments to consciously lay different ground selected and affirmed, or privileged *certain* unusual aspects, within the larger debate on Africa's future, without summarily rejecting or denying the role of those issues Ankomah disagreed with. That is why uncomfortable criticisms of Africa's political failures and a paradoxical endorsement of the Euro-American "Secret Societies" for their capacity to organise workable economies and politics – as discussed further ahead – were published alongside a hefty Afrocentric enunciation. The paradox here is that the core premise of Ankomah's Afrocentric enunciation is underpinned by a sharp rejection of the devastating legacy of these Euro-American secret societies in Africa, throughout modern history.

As already mentioned, Ankomah's entry into the *New African* was noted for its "menace" to existing traditions within the publication. This section pays attention to a consistency of attitude about Africa's renewal, expressed in Ankomah's beefs on disrespect and the righting of Africa's past. It also involves defending the present fiercely, albeit through curious altercations with readers and illogicalities in the selection of certain themes. For example, in the Africa - ICC

special editions, his rejection of the International Criminal Court (ICC) is unequivocal.⁴⁹⁹ But at the same time, he requests Africans to think about establishing secret societies in the mould of the notorious *Council on Foreign Relations* (CFR) and the *Round table* in order to advance their interests, yet some members of these societies have been the powers behind Africa's oppression, including the larger framework of colonialism and the institution of the ICC. Regardless, of greater significance to mapping this consistency in attitude is the entwining of Ankomah the practitioner, and his real-life activism, signalled by his permanent relocation from London to Africa in 2015. As Ankomah puts it, "Economists may throw up figures and reasons to who, how and why Africa is the poorest place on earth, but by Jove, for discerning Africans whose veins are filled with real African blood, there is no better place than our mother continent".⁵⁰⁰

Ankomah's engagements on the role of the ICC in African affairs cannot be detached from debates around "controlling the past". These possibly mark Ankomah's greatest individual acts towards significantly opening new directions for re-thinking and articulating African solutions. It lays ground for what becomes Ankomah's long-term project with the *New African*: that of reawakening Africans to that which erodes their dignity, and coincidentally triggering the *New African*'s successful run. First, a brief background to this story is in order. In response to Ankomah's column "Why Africa Must Unite",⁵⁰¹ Macharia wa Gathaara's piece titled "Lessons for African leaders"⁵⁰² seemed to vex Ankomah above others, with the statement that Ankomah has a "fondness of quarrelling with the past". And although there had been harsher responses

⁴⁹⁹ Baffour Ankomah, "Reaping the Whirlwind", in Targeting Africa: The Case for and Against the ICC, A special 33-page report, *New African* no. 484 (May 2009): 8-9, See special 20 page report in the ICC edition "ICC: Why Africa Will Always Lose", *New African* no. 515 (March 2012): 9-29, and Mercy Eze, "We Are Not Against Africa, Says the ICC", *New African* no. 520 (August/September 2012): 12-18. This latter is an interview with the ICC Chief Prosecutor, Fatou Bensouda.

⁵⁰⁰ Baffour Ankomah, "Gone but Not Gone", *New African* no. 549 (April 2015): 8-9. It here that he announces his stepping down from the role of editor.

⁵⁰¹ Baffour Ankomah, "Why Africa Must Unite", *New African* no. 381 (January 2000): 7.

⁵⁰² Macharia wa Gathaara, "Lessons for African Leaders", *New African* no. 382 (February 2000): 4.

previously, for example a debate surrounding the proposition “Africa Should Be Recolonized”, and, “Why Africa Is at the Bottom of the Heap”,⁵⁰³ Ankomah was especially concerned that the comment “quarrelling with the past was pregnant with meaning”,⁵⁰⁴ and thus required addressing. In the beef “Who Controls the Past”,⁵⁰⁵ Ankomah lays ground with George Orwell’s “who controls the past controls the future. Who controls the present controls the past”.⁵⁰⁶ Then he issues the following warning, “You don’t need eye glasses to see why Africa is on its knees, we can’t control our past, we don’t control our present nor can we control the future. And I am being accused of quarrelling with the past?”⁵⁰⁷

He proceeds to point at Britain’s hypocrisy in the observance of the January 27th Holocaust Memorial Day, where a free book on the Holocaust is distributed to every house to remind future generations. For Ankomah, this constitutes an affront to all Africans, given that the total human cost accrued over four centuries of transatlantic slave trade stands at approximately “210 Million human beings”.⁵⁰⁸ He asks, “do we have a memorial day (even in Africa) for these many lives? Yet Africa commemorates World War II losses on 11th November...did I see you wince?”⁵⁰⁹ Ankomah goes on to say that by not having a memorial day for Africans, Britain continues to show little remorse for its role in the transatlantic slave trade, while the Holocaust memorial involves people who were among the greatest financiers of transatlantic slave trade.

Certainly, Ankomah’s argument would attract sharp criticism from Mbembe – as shown in Chapter 3 – for inciting an apologist and emancipatory project consisting of simple polemical

⁵⁰³ John Kafwanka, “Africa Should Be Recolonised”, *New African* no. 339 (March 1996): 6, and E. F. Kolajo, “Why Africa is at the Bottom of the Heap,” *New African* no. 327 (February 1995): 4.

⁵⁰⁴ Ankomah, “Who Controls the Past”, 8.

⁵⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰⁸ *Ibid.* Ankomah quotes these figures from a summary report of the UNESCO conference held in Haiti from 31 January to 4 February 1978.

⁵⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

reaffirmations of black humanity. Such begins with hoary notions of Africa before and after; of what it means to be Africa in the world by trying to rebuild African history dense with meaning in similarity to the Jews; of rediscovery of what was supposed to be the essence, and distinctive genius of the black race; while also projecting a messianic utopia of a world that would in future be completely absent of prejudice and free of unreason. As Mbembe concludes, for many it has ended in acceptance of a tragic duality, an inner two-ness, as a result of Afrocentric over-insistence on the absoluteness of the African self, and an extraordinary sensitivity about identity. What Mbembe rejects is the idea of strict separatism of Africa and the West, based on permanency and linearity of time, which superficially rejects historical entanglements during certain temporary moments of contradictory reversals and changes.

Besides, even without Mbembe's critique, the very character of the *New African's* enunciation during Ankomah's editorship, especially the contradictions it passes through during its historical development – from origins with British founders Carruthers and Rake and offices in London – should prompt Ankomah to a more reflexive view of controlling the past and future. Ankomah's description of control here refuses to accord the African subject the capacity to participate meaningfully in the social practices of making meaning of their world. It suggests stagnation, incapability to prospectively think futures in present encounters with those pasts, especially where there is no signal of remorse from the oppressor. This comes across in his overall comment on commemorations of past pogroms, which tends to overemphasise that Africans were invented externally, and therefore why it is important that Britain and the West give their support in establishing such commemorative days.

Thinking with and against Mbembe: Ankomah's distinctive events

Regardless of Mbembe's sharp philosophical and theoretical criticisms, it is important to return to the philosophy of difference itself and eternal return; especially how actual reality is

individually experienced and registered in the virtual, regardless of established theory. This is because, whereas processes underpinned by critical theory are important for deeper specification of life encounters and problems, some of the meaningful experiences and expressions in the virtual which will enable and enhance an individual African subject, may not fulfil what is generally accepted as a critically rational process within scholarly discourse. This requires first, a re-invoking of Mbembe's second postulate, that the African subject does not exist apart from the acts that produce social reality, or apart from the processes by which those practices are, so to speak, imbued with meaning.⁵¹⁰ These include religion, scholarship, political economy, and media. Second, for Deleuze on whom Mbembe draws, it is expressions of intensities, or pure becomings, necessary for the explanation of why something is significant in the realm of actual things.⁵¹¹ And so regarded closely, if each individual encounter constitutes a repetition of *events* in the virtual, a different experience comprising of different degrees of intensities when compared to earlier moments, then one must also admit that even with its shaky and contradictory premise, Ankomah's emancipatory project presents possibilities of creating new meaningful events for the African subject; a subject who can meaningfully reengage differently with the past, in spite Ankomah's script suggesting a paralysed victimhood.

That explains why letters to the editor on Zimbabwe's land issue, specifically relating to the edition titled "Our Cause is Africa's Cause",⁵¹² were always passionately expressed. For instance Simphiwe Sesanti argued of Ankomah: "your coverage and interviews concerning the plight of Zimbabwe is simply brilliant...and the May issue was a must read for revolutionary Africans", Thandile Kona, in "Great Stuff" said "You are a true patriot and son of the soil". Conversely, Simon Baker in "When Will You Sack Baffour?" admits to halting his subscription of the *New African* due to Ankomah's "nauseating anti-white racism", and truly sickening

⁵¹⁰ Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, 6.

⁵¹¹ See discussion in Chapter 3 section on Virtuality, pg. 112.

⁵¹² "Our Cause is Africa's Cause", *New African* no. 462 (May 2007). The responses by Sesanti and Kona were discussed earlier on page 159. They appear in *New African* no. 463 (June 2007): 6.

servility that portrays Mugabe as an anti-imperialist hero, disregarding the destruction of Zimbabwe's economy.⁵¹³

Summed up, the overall sentiment of Ankomah, as well as the selection of the above letters in this discussion are clearly one-sided, as both default back to Afrocentric expression. However, that does not damage the mapping process for difference. The reason being, focus on this Africa-centred activism, even with its problems, does not necessarily require one to present counter voices to disclose its distinctiveness. Rather, this constitutes a mapping of enunciations by Africans with the capacity to create their own meaning in the world; and it requires one to discern sharply what is affirmed and pursued among different elements of contemporary African situations, and the degrees/paths of those affirmations to disclose African solutions.

Debates on controlling the past triggered the emergence of an enunciation in the *New African* that looks back to face the future, as described in the "Looking Back" editions.⁵¹⁴ In this regard, Ankomah evokes African-American writer John Henrik Clarke, who said:

If we have to change tomorrow, we are going to have to look back in order to look forward. We will have to look back with some courage, warm our hands on the revolutionary fires of those that came before us, and understand we have within ourselves rationally and internationally, the ability to build a new humanity for ourselves.⁵¹⁵

In view of this, the possibilities and thus distinctiveness, of Ankomah's move for the *New African*, entails: (1) An emotive introduction of the contested concept of 'control' of memory and history to everyday discussions of Africa's past, present, and future. (2) An enhancement

⁵¹³ Simon Baker, "When Will You Sack Baffour", *New African* no. 463 (June 2007): 4.

⁵¹⁴ The theme of looking back is covered extensively in the Black History Month editions from October 2003 to October 2012. Included was the theme on Egypt titled "Celebrating Africa's Glorious Heritage".

⁵¹⁵ Quoted in Ankomah's "Africa Must Unite", *New African* no. 381 (January 2000): 18.

in the calibre of public discourse on Africa's reawakening, through greater interconnection between ordinary readers and academic/disciplinary thinkers and knowledge about Africa's past. (3) For contemporary media scholars and practitioners, it discloses some key areas of tense entanglements surrounding media products on Africa's rise, which ought to provoke novel ways of thinking African solutions. All these aspects are illustrated in the following discussions on slavery and memory.

In the editions "It's Time To Pay", "Greatest Crime Against Humanity" and "Celebrating Africa's Heritage",⁵¹⁶ the theme of denied and belittled memory of Africa's experience with slavery recurred with unrelenting ferocity. The question for Ankomah was why should Africans, enslaved by Arabs and Europeans over a period of more than 500 years, not receive similar treatment as the Jews who received compensation for the Holocaust? Through contributions by scholars on the subject, such as Patrick Adibe, Osei Kofi Boateng, Marika Sherwood, George Pavlu, Toyin Agbetu, Kwasi Quartey and Nora Wittman, the question was explored in great depth over a 10-year period. The main topics included chronological narrations on the history of slavery, first-hand accounts by prominent slavers, and clarifications on Africa's reparations debate. Notably, historical narrations strove to highlight the main episodes of slave trade in Africa, from the Arabs to the Portuguese. They detailed how slaves were forced to trek across the Sahara in chains, the subsequent deaths from dehydration and exhaustion, and how women slaves were taken into harems, while men were castrated to thwart possible 'breeding' with the slavers' women. Adibe and Boateng in "Portugal the Mother of All Slavers",⁵¹⁷ specifically underlined how Portuguese slavery also received significant support from Jews-turned-Christians, or "conversos".

⁵¹⁶ "It's Time To Pay For This", *New African* no. 377 (September 1999), "Greatest Crime Against Humanity", *New African* no. 398 (July/August 2001), and "Celebrating Africa's Heritage", *New African* no. 488 (October 2009).

⁵¹⁷ Adibe Boateng, "Portugal the Mother of All Slavers" Pt II, *New African* no. 385 (May 2000): 18-23.

The most memorable account though, was one titled “Gospel According to William Lynch”.⁵¹⁸ It consists of a compilation of two speeches by Lynch, accompanied by a forewarning that “Lynch’s message is still so true today 289 years later”. Lynch opens up about his “foolproof method” of controlling black slaves. According to Lynch, if installed properly, he guarantees “it will remain effective for 300 years”. Basically, the method entails a process of continually breaking the will to resist because “both horse and nigger are not good for the economy in their natural state”. Thus one must exploit and magnify differences among slaves using fear, envy, and distrust. That means setting dark-skinned slaves against those with light skin, setting males against females, and intensifying fear of, and total dependency on, the Master. Lastly, one must pay special attention to women slaves: a broken woman will ensure that their male offspring will not resist. However, Lynch cautions that even the mind of a broken slave has ability to re-correct itself over a period of time, if it touched a substantial original base. In other words, if the slave reconnected with their past and communed with black people living freely.

Against this backdrop of such brutal history, Toyin Agbetu’s “Britain, Not In Our Name”,⁵¹⁹ expresses what Ankomah observes as Africans struggling to recover dignity through ideas, meanings and actions. It accords with Mbembe’s observation that such struggles actualise in ways that may not make sense to everyone in the same way. This column refers to events of 27 April 2007, when Agbetu – the founder of the Pan-African human rights organisation *Ligali*⁵²⁰ – was arrested and detained for ten hours for disrupting a church service organised by the British government to commemorate the Wilberfest 200-year anniversary of the abolition of transatlantic slavery. In the presence of the Queen and Prime Minister Tony Blair, Agbetu stood up just as the congregation was asked to kneel before “God and beg for forgiveness” for slavery

⁵¹⁸ Edited by Baffour Ankomah, “The Gospel According to William Lynch”, *New African* no. 398 (July/August 2001): 30-32.

⁵¹⁹ Agbetu, “Britain, Not In Our Name”, 82-86.

⁵²⁰ *Ligali* is a London-based Pan Human Rights Organisation. They published the book titled *Jesus Says Sorry: Anatomy of Political Apology for Slavery* (2006).

and shouted, “not in our name...you should be ashamed of yourselves”. He rebuked the establishment for asking God for forgiveness for “trading our (African) family” into slavery, without facing the Africans first. He then demanded that they pay reparations as well as rectify the narratives that Africans were responsible for slavery, and that the British elite initiated abolition. Immediately, he urged all Africans present to walk out in solidarity, but no one did. Agbetu describes the event as “emotionally uplifting and spiritually overwhelming”, as the day also ended with great support by Africans who joined him in a march, which concluded with a session of offering libations at Downing Street.

With regard to “controlling the past”, Agbetu’s case indicates a refusal to consent to formally regulated narratives of Africa’s brutal past or *Maafa*⁵²¹ – painful catastrophes – by embarking on a physical and symbolic confrontation with those seen to sustain such ‘truths’. It submits a positive contradictory outcome, from an individual’s attempt to encounter and alter meanings of that unchangeable past, in his own terms. The contradiction is shown in Agbetu’s act of imposing his self-consciousness over the oppressive entity, in a move that would be regarded as counterintuitive to the intended curative measure of reclaiming self. This is especially because it appears to parallel the very acts of erasing him and other Africans committed initially by the oppressor. Yet, instead of producing simple erasure, Agbetu, just like Ankomah, positively opens new movement by insisting on engaging as an African subject refusing to be negated in the present. So he confronts the powerful British elites, the structures they represent and their history as they have enacted it.

The boldness of his actions evinces how that past significantly intrudes into his present in ways only known to him. Conspicuously, re-creating the African ritual of offering libation on that

⁵²¹ *Maafa* is the title to *Ligali*’s publication, translatable to painful catastrophe, as a concept for collective brutality.

specific Memorial Day, and that in the wake of Agbetu's confrontation and detention, ignites a sense of return of dignity, personhood and community in connection with those lives that were dehumanised by slavery. It infers renewed courage to face the future. And despite Wiredu's caution that practices such as offering libations can be construed as "superstition", mystical belief for the sake of an essential Africanism without evidential support,⁵²² one sees logical motivation in Agbetu's acts of inciting collective spirit among Africans, for self-affirmation and appeasement in full awareness that no amount of pleas for forgiveness by former oppressors will suffice. This also explains why libations were offered outside 10 Downing Street, both as a centre of British political power, and given its historical connections to slavery through Reverend Will Downing.

As already argued, the overall distinctiveness of Ankomah's *New African* also rests on the tense extremes fed by Ankomah's activist commitment to African unity. The tension in question is evident in the polar positions between the early 1990s' Ankomah, who told Africans "let's not give moaning a bad name", and the one who at the tail-end of his editorship in the late 2000s points outwards and says, "What is Exactly Their Problem?"⁵²³ in a sharp reprimand of Sir Peregrine Worsthorne, former editor of the *Sunday Telegraph*, for admitting to anti-black prejudice which remains in British blood. Ankomah says that such assumptions affected his writing on decolonising Africa. Yet, in his beef "Let's Be Creative"⁵²⁴ of May 1991, Ankomah castigates Africans by saying "Wake up Africa...we can do something instead of moaning...we run the risk of giving moaning a bad name". He goes on show how colonialist ingenuity enabled the rise of cash crops in Africa, yet in independent Africa such efforts failed. He urges Africans to put on their creative caps to invent new ways of generating wealth like the Asians, while simultaneously proving wrong the notion that Africans are of an inferior intellect. Then,

⁵²² Kwasi Wiredu, "How Not to Compare African Traditional Thought to Western Thought", *Transition* no. 75/76 (1997): 321-322. Available at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2935425>. Accessed 6 February 2018.

⁵²³ Baffour Ankomah, "What is Exactly Their Problem?", *New African* no. 562 (June 2016): 16-17.

⁵²⁴ Baffour Ankomah, "Let's Be Creative", *New African* no. 284 (May 1991): 15.

contrarily, at the end of this very article he laments: “need we mention cultural imperialism as the impediment to African creative thinking?” As proof, he presents a story about Africans adopting Western cultural habits, as some schools force children to use forks, instead of hands in the African way. Curiously, this spirited commitment to Africa not only overlooks the entanglements that had just been noted between Africa, cash crops and Asia, but it forgets the initial admonition to Africans for failing to maximise their mental capacities, where Africans are not regarded as victims, even of cultural imperialism.

Yet, it is this 1990s’ attitude that propelled Ankomah’s *New African* to publish piercing criticism of some African leaders. For example, in “Friend’s Like These...”⁵²⁵ Ankomah caricatures Malawian President Hastings Kamuzu Banda’s self-authorised life presidency that commenced in 1964. He ridicules the president’s supposed ability to concurrently hold the portfolios of Minister of Internal affairs, Minister of Works, Minister of Women and Children Affairs, and Minister Community Services. Ankomah asks, are there no other competent Malawians? So what happens to Malawi if this multi-talented president dies? In a similar vein, the *New African* under Ankomah published Peter Strandberg’s “The Emperor’s Children”,⁵²⁶ a story on Emperor Bokassa, President For Life of Central Africa Republic (CAR) from 1966 to 1979, also regarded as Africa’s “most bizarre leader”. Bokassa was a product of 1960s’ French army, and the French treated him as family. He aspired to emulate Napoleon Bonaparte, and so in order to outdo Uganda’s Idi Amin, his coronation turned into an extensively elaborate affair, sponsored by the French government to the amount of 22 million US dollars (see Figure 6). Here, Ankomah seems to be engaged in a parody of the grotesque and obscene spectacle of state power described in Mbembe’s discussion on conviviality and commandement. In

⁵²⁵ Baffour Ankomah, “With Friends Like These...”, *New African* no. 294 (March 1992): 14.

⁵²⁶ Peter Strandberg, “The Emperor’s Children”, *New African* no. 470 (February 2008): 28-33.

summary, as power choreographs the dramatisation of its magnificence for the subjects, it at the same time offers a means of resistance through parody that undermines that very power.

Figure 6⁵²⁷.



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Ankomah's turn to patriotism

Probably because of intensifying difficulties for Africa following instantiation of the World Bank world order, which Catherine Caufield criticises sharply for creating development illusions through funded initiatives to fight poverty, illiteracy, and to improve healthcare and implement massive infrastructural programs, while simultaneously imprisoning African countries via Euro-American debt,⁵²⁸ Ankomah then turned his criticism to questions like “Are

⁵²⁷ Emperor Bokassa at his Coronation on 4 December 1977. *New African* no. 470 (February 2008): 28-29.

⁵²⁸ Catherine Caufield, *Masters of Illusion: The World Bank and the Poverty of the Nations* (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1997).

We Independent?⁵²⁹ Again, premised on the Afrocentric thesis of recovering past, Ankomah's activism took a stringent dualistic stance in defence of Africa, affirming the African subject as victim regardless of any glaring paradoxes that needed questioning, as well as diminishing the African's capacity to act on their own will. The focus was primarily on power and rule, and his patriotism is marked by statements including "I don't care whichever African is tried for alleged crimes against humanity, provided he is tried in Africa".⁵³⁰ This stance is illustrated in three prominent cases, where Ankomah emerged as a vigorous defender of African presidents who clashed with Europe and America. First it was Liberia's Charles Taylor. Over the course of 10 years (1992-2002), Ankomah travelled to Liberia on five occasions to report on, and interview, Taylor prior to his sentencing at the ICC for crimes against humanity. In articles like "Victory or Justice", and "When Your Master Is Your Enemy You Are Doomed",⁵³¹ Ankoma rebukes African leaders, particularly those of Nigeria and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), for opposing Taylor and enabling his ousting and hand-over to the ICC. He also accuses the West of hypocrisy, as they had supported Taylor to unseat a dictator, Samuel Doe, only to turn and remove him by declaring him a "war criminal" without good reason. Ankomah carried this argument despite letters from readers, and investigators inside Liberia who told of their experiences of state brutality under Taylor's regime.

A similar defence was given of the former (now exiled) Gambian President Yahya Jammeh, whom Ankomah had initially lauded as this "young general's" military overthrow of President Dawda Jawara. In articles such as "Welcome To the Club Sir Jawara",⁵³² Ankomah celebrates what he describes as the end of neocolonial misrule by former president Jawara, through 'appropriate' use of military force for the sake of the people. And despite serious concerns over

⁵²⁹ As discussed earlier, the theme "Who Says Africa Is Independent?" ran in the *New African* in December 1998, January 1999, and March 2004.

⁵³⁰ Baffour Ankomah, "A Pound of Flesh, But In Whose Interest?", *New African* no. 451 (May 2004): 8-9.

⁵³¹ Baffour Ankomah, "Victory for Justice", *New African* no. 355 (September 1997): 27, and "When Your Enemy Is Your Master You are Doomed", Taylor Interview, *New African* no. 451 (May 2006): 16-19.

⁵³² Baffour Ankomah, "Welcome to the Club, Sir Jawara", *New African* no. 323 (October 1994): 7.

Jammeh's misrule noted in "Gambia's Missing Millions" and "Under Jammeh's Carpet"⁵³³ – the use of excessive violence on his people, and relatedly the killing of journalists and homosexual citizens, puzzling claims of his ability to cure AIDS, and ultimately Jammeh's declaration of life presidency – Ankomah went ahead and interviewed him for a special edition to celebrate his 20 years in power in 2014.⁵³⁴ Unlike Bokassa's case, Ankomah did not deal with many of these concerns known and raised. Instead, Ankomah still defended Jammeh in "Bully Boy Tactics",⁵³⁵ saying that something terrible happened in West Africa, following Jammeh's exit forced by ECOWAS, as he gripped to power following electoral defeat in 2016. Similar treatment went to Robert Mugabe, especially after his land redistribution campaign of 2000. In a special edition on the land issue, in articles like "The Land Has Returned", "A Bad Man in Africa", "Mugabe 2 Britain 0", and "Shame to the Pretenders",⁵³⁶ Ankomah chastises both the West and Africa for giving Mugabe treatment similar to what they gave Nkrumah, and in particular, the West for manipulating economic conditions to incite public hostility.

Critically, though, Ankomah's activist position would ordinarily be dismissed for inexplicable bias by a journalistic publication. This was observed in a reader's letter "*New African* Is Too One-Sided",⁵³⁷ on the subject of Taylor. Yet, the importance of the *meanings* provoked by Ankomah's activism, on Africa's sustained struggles in the postcolony, cannot be overstated. This partly explains why the *New African* became successful during his editorship, as heated debates among columnists and readers on issues of African solutions, triggered by Mugabe's unrepentant policy of expropriating land from white farmers, returned to the fore the significance contemporary discussions on freedom and independence, versus economic safety

⁵³³ "Gambia's Missing Millions", and "Under Jammeh's Carpet", *New African* no. 348 (January 1997):10-13 and no. 369 (December 1998): 20.

⁵³⁴ "The Gambia Special Report: Progress, Self-Reliance, Peaceful Co-existence", *New African* (July 2014).

⁵³⁵ Baffour Ankomah, "Bully Boy Tactics", *New African* no. 570 (March 2017): 10-11.

⁵³⁶ Baffour Ankomah, "A Bad Man in Africa", "Shame to the Pretenders", and "Mugabe 2 Britain 0", *New African* no. 395 (April 2001): 8,12, and no. 415 (February 2003): 12-13.

⁵³⁷ Cecilia Reinjen, "New African Too One-Sided", *New African* no. 422 (October 2003): 5.

provided by Western market systems. Moreover, it raised the question of the legitimacy of African liberal democracy, and why fixed-term presidencies remained if the leaders were still popular and served the actual needs of their people, as in the case of Rwanda's Kagame discussed in "Third Termers".⁵³⁸ Such debates spread across the continent as electoral processes and ethnic violence in other countries like Kenya, Namibia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan, and Burundi, revealed some unresolved issues of postcolonial belonging, unveiling the inextricable links between land, ethnic identity, and political legitimacy.

At another level, for the readers who accused Ankomah of wilful blindness to state-sponsored violence and unaccountable misrule, Ankomah's stance seemed not to allow for the adequate and necessary exposition of challenges to power, against what Mbembe calls the "trinity of violence, transfers, and allocations constituting the foundation of postcolonial African authoritarian regimes".⁵³⁹ Ankomah's dualistic stance and fear of 'blaming the victim' can thus be read as acquiescing to insidious notions of African non-beings, of Africans as incapable of acting on their world. It either fails to grasp, or fails to acknowledge, the tragic complexities and terrible effects which necessarily emerge in the process of Africans emancipating themselves, as seen in the ousting of Taylor and Jammeh; it is such effects that these same powerful protagonists faced when they removed the previous dictators. These come from historical modes of dispensing power, whereby such actions sometimes produced new cycles of violence, for instance economic sanctions, or modes of allocation and transfer of land based on ethnic identification.

Yet, there is a moment of contradiction in Ankomah's patriotism. This comes in the form of the most implausible, yet undeniably unique, deterritorialising moment of Ankomah's activism and

⁵³⁸ Cover story, "Great Lakes Third-Termers: Sending the Region into Turmoil?", *New African* no. 558 (February 2016).

⁵³⁹ Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, 45.

enunciation in his *New African*. In the column “Secret Societies: Africa’s Way forward?”⁵⁴⁰ Ankomah asks: “doesn’t Africa need secret societies, (multiples, minus their sinister side) to defend its interests?” With the preceding sections in mind which constitute a reading of Ankomah’s *New African*, one cannot explain why he would propose Africa’s future as potentially better off with secret societies similar to those in the West. However, what arises are spaces of possibilities articulated with this specific and contradictory activist suggestion. It affirms other creative ideas which open Ankomah’s *New African* to difference itself, or rather, new paths to African solutions. Thus, the suggestion negates the idea that Ankomah’s activism and enunciation is a closed book, even though these consistently retain a contentious defence of Africa. Such contradiction shows creatively generative thought, which like the African postcolony, moves through complex motions of contradictions, reversals and unanticipated turns, sometimes to minor but also sometimes to significant changes.

In this case, Ankomah seems to return to the mould of the 1991 expression “let us be creative...and not give moaning a bad name”. Here Ankomah tells Africa “it is time to jump on our bicycles”, as it is time for Africa to have its own secret societies. Ankomah’s advice cites the economic prosperity achieved by Europe and America, including South Africa with its secretive ‘*broederbond*’, despite the society’s support for the horrendous racial system. He proceeds to highlight some of the most powerful secret societies in the West, most of which can be traced back to ancient societies that have sat behind corridors of power for centuries, leading to globalisation of economies for national interest. These include *The Round Table* which had among its members colonial settler Cecil Rhodes, *Council on Foreign Relations* (CFR) and *Skull and Bones*, both of which have engaged with many American presidents, *The Trilateral Commission*, and the *Bilderberg Group*. For Ankomah, secret societies are crucial for contemporary African government processes, due to the seemingly simple, yet actually

⁵⁴⁰ Baffour Ankomah, “Secret Societies: Africa’s Way Forward”, *New African* no. 470 (February 2008): 10-17.

complex, mix of traditional and modern sensibilities. As Ankomah explains, in Africa presidents and ministers have to contend with queues of people seeking an audience, and since they feel obliged to listen, they end up too exhausted to do any serious thinking and planning. This issue can be remedied by secret societies, seeing that modern organisations also constitute premier think tanks, which assist with the crucial work of planning for governance.

Overall, this particular move sets the *New African* apart from most of *Africarise*. It opens new ways to different thinking in defence of Africa, in a way that virtually and actually ruptures Ankomah's ideological separatist code and the *New African's* Afrocentric enunciation, as it suddenly allows itself to be entangled with some of the fiercely-criticised antagonists: for instance the biggest sponsors of slavery in Lynch's and Downing's mould. Yet it acknowledges the inadequacy of contemporary African government processes saddled with deficient structures and competencies for planning, which leave them incapable of innovation to maximise any meagre resources at their disposal. It thus points towards the necessity of creating a matrix of skills development and exchange through research and academic institutions and politics, albeit with the possibility of generating clandestine oligarchies, to facilitate critical decisions for limping democratic processes. Significantly, however, judging from Ankomah's activism and enunciation post this above-discussed article, it is not evident that he easily allows entanglement with such ideas, from bodies saddled with brutal legacies like colonialism and apartheid. Mostly, such entanglement is seen to imply capitulation, simple mimicry. Yet, there remain possibilities within, and in the wake of, the *events* he creates, such as when he asks Africans to jump on their bikes and formulate their own secret societies in defence of Africa.

Conclusion

The *New African's* distinctive enunciation is achieved not with a radical, separatist break from other discourses and modes of producing thought and grammars on solutions to contemporary

problems in Africa. Rather, it comes through attempts to respond to Sharife's question "Whose reality are we living in?",⁵⁴¹ as Africa-centred media content is consistently forced to return and face those African realities, from which it sometimes seeks to detach itself. In the process, tensions emerge, at times inadvertently, as the *New African* and its practitioners are pushed towards varying degrees of connection with everyday African life and its languages of furious commitment and exasperation. Thus, activist practitioners like Ankomah move in and out of accepted lines of practice to rescue Africa and Africans from enemies "pulling [the] strings"⁵⁴² of the continent, at times in clear disregard of readers' voices rejecting such a stance – cases in point being Bismarck Awusu's "Half of Africa's Culture Is As Good As Dead" and Kwadjo Poku's "Killing Ourselves Softly".⁵⁴³ All of this discloses that the *New African* does not produce a truth about African reality. Instead it provokes thought for many solutions, even at the level of sense, without hiding the divergent views that re-emerge time and again. In this way, the *New African* provokes Africans to seek their 'own solutions' in everyday experiences of Africanity but in sustained, open, reflexive ways, for change or difference within their struggle.

⁵⁴¹ *New African* (June 2008): 22. The red font in the title is deliberate, as it appears this way in the original column.

⁵⁴² Ivor Agyemang-Duah, "How the British Media Affect World Reporting", *New African* no. 387 (July/August 2000): 28-29.

⁵⁴³ Bismarck Awusu, "Half of Africa's Culture Is As Good As Dead", *New African* no. 345 (October 1996): 8, and Kwajdo Poku, "Killing Ourselves Softly", *New African* no. 345 (October 1996): 8.

I believe that extreme remedies are the most appropriate for extreme diseases, and I belong to the remedy.

(Anas Aremeyaw Anas, 2016)⁵⁴⁴

Kenya is a big talk shop, we talk a lot, we talk all the time...all we do it talk... let's stop talking and do something.

(Boniface Mwangi, 2014)⁵⁴⁵

Chapter 5: Agents of 'Subterfuge' and Transgression⁵⁴⁶

Whereas the distinctive enunciation of the *New African* is produced in constant tension, between coding and de-coding of discourse and practice, African journalism awards processes continually allow for a distinctive *Africanise* enunciation that is routinely deterritorialised. To contextualise, competition among media dedicated to Africa's voice has seen the "creative destruction"⁵⁴⁷ of investigative films by Ghana's Anas Aremeyaw Anas, and the activist-photography of Kenyan Boniface Mwangi. These emerge as prominent articulations of how to think and act for contemporary African solutions, *differently*. This is expressed in the extreme manner by which their productions continually stretch common rules or practice, particularly through deep entwinements with social activism. This is done to incite many responses around everyday practical issues in the African postcolony. When viewed through the lens of this study's argument for different African solutions, it becomes clear how their enunciation moves to tug at the core of normative life, repeatedly exposing encumbrances hobbling formal media discourse within a contemporary reality where most journalistic quests of social justice remain

⁵⁴⁴ Anas Aremeyaw Anas, speech delivered at the 7th African Development Conference: The African Renaissance, at Harvard University on 4 March 2016. Available at <https://www.harvardadc.com/2016-highlights/>.

⁵⁴⁵ *A Patriot*, directed by Boniface Mwangi, filmed 2014, Youtube Video, 12:30, posted by Boniface Mwangi, December 2014. Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3OUdX0efyt0>.

⁵⁴⁶ Please note that this chapter is accompanied by four short videos which are central to the analysis.

⁵⁴⁷ As seen in Chapter 3, Deleuze says that tension created by the question-problem complex opens an ontological gap when the ground set as the main basis for a solution finds itself becoming the new source for rare and better-suited solutions, as it allows for ideas that cannot be resolved, to be expressed as many possible responses alongside those commonly-expected solutions.

poor in grasping the “unjust justices”⁵⁴⁸ inflicted through politics and religion. In terms of mapping, their practice and work offer a powerful expression of an Africanity calibrated for difference, in the way that these works negotiate the question-problem tension for African solutions. This is to say: (1) Both Anas and Mwangi begin with, or ground their thinking and questioning within, the immediate problem. In Anas’s words, “true journalism does not write from [a] vacuum but it is communicating with a community, this is what tells us what to do, what to write”.⁵⁴⁹ (2) More importantly, their works and practices continuously unsettle specifications made for Africa’s problems in their time, by making clearer the multi-layered causes for what are deemed political and sociocultural ‘dysfunctions’, while complicating further how the structures that ought to enable better-quality political life, need to be engaged with and redesigned.

Summed up critically, their media practice and expression may not offer simple, easily-imitated, solutions to many problems of contemporary Africa. However, what they propose to African scholarship and everyday life, are connections with multiple approaches of developing thought for African solutions – transversalism – undeterred by temporary contradictions triggered by necessary albeit adverse interventions. That is to say, their works and practices help to unveil new features of existing problems of Africa’s *longue durée*, while forcing deeper thinking for fresher solutions. Such critical reflection remains necessary in order to make clear arguments for the kind of incitements for change, conveyed with such extreme methods. Distinctions do, however, need to be drawn or even better, ‘mapped’, between radically different movements to ideas, and proclivity towards potentially self-indulgent, nonconformist attitudes striving for fame.

⁵⁴⁸ Gordon, in “Justice Otherwise: Thoughts on Ubuntu”, shows the difficulty of formulating a just and unburdened life in the postcolony, given the weight of neoliberal capitalism, colonialism and slavery.

⁵⁴⁹ Anas Aremeyaw Anas, “Why I Name, Shame and Jail”, Interviewed by Moses Mutabaruka, *The African Perspective* no. 7, December 17, 2016. Available at <https://www.tapmagonline.com/anas-aremeyaw-anas/>.

The above is especially important to bear in mind, because Anas's and Mwangi's work has been censured for subterfuge, wanton transgression and dangerous flirtation with approaches which are at variance with esteemed conventions of transformative journalism. But in the view of Anas and Mwangi, their methods are a necessary form of insurgency compelled by a general loss of confidence in the prevailing journalistic ethos and related social institutions. That is why Anas earned the cynical label of "James Bond" journalist,⁵⁵⁰ while Mwangi is regarded as "one of the most invincible, indomitable and unassailable polarising public figures in Kenya's political counter-culture".⁵⁵¹

With the foregoing in mind, this chapter seeks to present another layer of responses to two key questions of this study. These are, whether or not there is something like getting Africa right? And, how does *Africanise* repeat or enunciate the arche-narrative of Africa's rising to itself, differently? The process of addressing these questions will be guided by an exploratory interrogation of the main actors and their enunciations. The queries relating to this interrogation are: Why choose Anas and Mwangi, given that the premier African journalism award – CNNMultichoice – has run for 23 years, and in the process a cohort of many esteemed practitioners dedicated to Africa's course have been acknowledged? What distinguishes Anas, Mwangi, and their media expressions from other finalists nominated in the competition?

Laying ground: Philosophical and practical considerations

Theoretically, the above-stated subterfuge and transgression fit in with Deleuze and Guattari's description of thought and action inclined to difference, immersed in material reality with processes of creative experimentation. Such approaches will often yield sharp or horrible interventions, to unsettle the familiar. This process of difference can also be described using

⁵⁵⁰ *Chameleon*, directed by Ryan Mullins (Canada: EyeSteel FP Productions, 2015).

⁵⁵¹ David Meffe, "Boniface Mwangi: Kenya's Rising Firebrand?", *New African* no. 548 (March 2015): 52-53.

Deleuze and Guattari's overworked, but nonetheless insightful, concept of "war machines". Such machines refer to thought, practices and products whose object is not simply the incident of 'war' they are engaged with. Rather, war machines are noted for the transformative power inherent in their processes, which exceeds thresholds in terms of how they move in-between spaces during the incident to open possibilities for difference for and against that war/incident.⁵⁵² Yet, through the engagement, they too undergo change.

In line with these concepts, Anas has sought to return African investigative journalism to its *raison d'être* within a span of almost two decades. His process involves a well-guarded formula to maintain his anonymity at all times, through use of different masks and disguises, and employment of tools of espionage for undercover role-play. These tactics have enabled Anas to sustain his maxim for practice: "name, shame and jail".⁵⁵³ This means, by remaining anonymous, Anas has been able to repeatedly infiltrate intricate networks of criminality in different sectors, including public service, human trafficking, trade in body parts, and sport, without raising suspicion. Significantly, these tactics enable the legal process to take its course because he is able to present himself as a witness.

Similarly combative in a Deleuzo-Guattarian 'war machine' sense, is Mwangi. His general style has been described as "vigorous", to the point of making him almost "infamous".⁵⁵⁴ This is because Mwangi's method requires him to take photographs in brazen proximity to the scene, and thereafter to unapologetically use those images in pursuit of social justice. Besides, Mwangi does not shy away from physical confrontations with political power either. Altogether, this is

⁵⁵² Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 437.

⁵⁵³ See the TED Talks video, "How I Named, Shamed and Jailed", Anas Aremeyaw Anas, TED2013, filmed February 2013, Video, 12:43, posted by TED Global, June 5, 2013. Available at https://www.ted.com/talks/anas_aremeyaw_anas_how_i_named_shamed_and_jailed.

⁵⁵⁴ David Corfield, "Boniface Mwangi: Activism, Photography and Making a Difference", *Canon Photography Network*, Interview May 2015. Available at http://cpn.canon-europe.com/content/interviews/boniface_mwangi_on_photo_activism.do. Accessed August 17, 2017.

media practice pushed to extremes. On the part of both Anas and Mwangi, this media practice moves in vice-diction, to allow for certain sensibilities, incidences and acts that would ordinarily be ignored, to come into prominence. Importantly, however, this happens without contradictions between their journalistic work, Africanity and activism. In terms of locating difference, their approach is intended to overcome the encumbrances of and loss of efficacy within prevailing methods.⁵⁵⁵

Additionally, given that their practice is strongly entangled with their own African identities – as contemporary Africans and participants in civic life – difference is disclosed in how the entwined factors enable them to motivate, admittedly with great difficulty, multiple justifications for their horrible interventions. These justifications are not formally spelt out. Rather, it is with their processes that clarifications around the necessity of such approaches surface. This is because their practice embodies, and simultaneously exposes, the tough questions around arbitrary power, unethical behaviour and injustice, and the corresponding codes of accountability within a single political order. That explains why their work has gained growing popularity and legitimacy among ordinary people, accompanied by contempt in certain parts of society, especially in the upper echelons. In response to such contempt, Anas scorns the idea that his methods are unethical by regarding such criticisms as hollow griping by “apostles of ethics”, who fail their society through virtuous adherence to ethical codes which are trampled with impunity by those charged with upholding them.⁵⁵⁶ In his words “I couldn’t listen to a society say we want change and do otherwise. No! I want to make change”.⁵⁵⁷ And because of that, “there is no point in doing journalism that doesn’t benefit the society. I don’t do journalism for the critics; I do it for the people”.⁵⁵⁸

⁵⁵⁵ Holland, *Deleuze and Guattari's 'A Thousand Plateaus'*, 40.

⁵⁵⁶ Anas Aremeyaw Anas, “*Jefferson Sackey Reports*”, Interviewed by Jefferson Sackey, 2015. YouTube Video, 27:44, posted by Jefferson Sackey, September 2015. Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cDgvkO8-GmU>.

⁵⁵⁷ Anas, “Why I Name, Shame and Jail”.

⁵⁵⁸ Anas, speech delivered at the 7th African Development Conference, , 2016.

For his part, Mwangi often ventures bluntly into the centre of a political storm to expose abuses of state resources and state-sponsored and community violence, despite efforts to silence him. He uses powerful images, including haunting images of death and despair, as central means of expression. At the same time, both Anas and Mwangi have to constantly contend with the legal system and political power, in confrontations which coerce them into rethinking their strategies in order to sustain their methods. Such clashes have frequently left Mwangi bloodied, and Anas encircled by security personnel.

Lastly, on the question of social activism and indigeneity: their sense of outrage against failing systems in Africa can be regarded as that of indigenous Africans performing their Africanity in activism for social justice. For Owomoyela, it is the dishing out of ameliorative justice in the presence of the community.⁵⁵⁹ Viewed in this way, Anas's and Mwangi's media practice indicates another language of grasping how Africa can speak to itself honestly, as was done by the Imbongi/Bard and the Griot. As Anas observes "I think that we have to be open and sincere with each other; we have to be honest, we have to accept that we have problems as a people and then invite everybody to put his or her hands on the bus for us to push the continent forward".⁵⁶⁰ Such self-critical modes have always been part of African life as Fanon reminds us. As he mentions in relation to self-criticism or communal self-criticism, "few people realise that it is an African institution".⁵⁶¹ Further to this claim, Mafeje observes that for a long time already, the Imbongi has been regarded as fulfilling the function of media in a traditional setting, in the manner in which he responded to people's aspirations and interests, by mediating between the rulers and ruled, while remaining inextricably bound inside that political community. The Imbongi gave sharp criticism both of abuse/perversion of power, and of

⁵⁵⁹ Owomoyela, "With Friends Like These...", 96.

⁵⁶⁰ Anas, "Why I Name, Shame and Jail", 2016.

⁵⁶¹ Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Constance Farrington (New York: Grove Weidenfield, 1965), 47-48.

neglect of obligations by chiefs and those in leadership, as well as offering praise for victories and good deeds of the nation.⁵⁶²

In a very similar way, then, Anas and Mwangi articulate what Wiredu described as an obligatory task, if Africa is to clarify its own issues for itself. This is the obligation to conceptualise their own situations closely, against conceptual hegemony about everything, which rests with universalised languages and social practice. In other words, they bring possibilities to uncover other critical vocabularies and modes of encountering African everyday life, through how they unveil home truths as members of their community performing their civic duty, and particularly as critical media practitioners. This underscores the importance and necessity of the African journalism system, as it offers a powerful platform upon which the most piercing African ideas for solutions, brought by dedicated African commentators in the street, can be acknowledged, for the kind of confrontation they present to all Africans and Africa's problems, through accessible media.

CNNMultichoice awards:⁵⁶³ An assemblage for recognising African journalists

The CNNMultichoice awards were launched as the CNN African Journalist of the Year Competition in August 1995, and joined later (in 2011) by the South African Digital Television Company, Multichoice. Among the founders were Edward Boateng, then Regional Director of Turner Broadcasting in Africa, Gary Streiker, then CNN Nairobi Bureau Chief, prominent photographer Mohammed Amin, and then Secretary General of the African Business Roundtable Esom Alintah. As Boateng says, he was concerned by the lack of respect towards African journalists. And so like the *New African*, the awards were conceived to recognise Africa

⁵⁶² Mafeje, "The Role of the Bard in a Contemporary African Community", 194-195, 221.

⁵⁶³ For greater detail, the evolution the African Journalist of the Year awards is available in the CNN archives available through this link: <https://africa.cnnjournalistaward.com/en/about/>.

within the continent, through the work of African journalists, based in Africa. However, there are a few crucial points to note on this process of producing and rewarding an enabling enunciation of Africa for itself. The first being that the main categories for the awards are designed for great inclusivity, in a continent that still organises some key issues along colonial linguistic inheritances. And so, over and above the overall winner categories, there are specific awards allocated for different African regions based on language (for instance, the French and Portuguese awards).

Second, the awards try to cover as many areas of African life, in relation to Africa's development. These categories are: Culture Award, Dow Technology & Innovation Reporting Award, Ecobank Economics & Business Award, Features Award, Francophone General News Award, Electronic Media, GE Energy & Infrastructure Award, Mohamed Amin Photographic Award, Health & Medical Award, News Impact Award, Portuguese Language General News Awards, Press Freedom Award, Sport Reporting Award, The African Development Bank Environment Award, and the newly-introduced Maggie Eales Young Journalist Award. The impact of this award system as an expression for African solutions bears similarity to the *New African* in several respects. Briefly, one, its origins and emergence were supported from outside Africa, by people who are considered to be of European or American descent, for instance Deputy President Maggie Eales,⁵⁶⁴ who dedicated a lot of her time to elevating young African journalists. Two, the idea of awards for African excellence in this field, supported by an entity whose mainstream practice has always been considered to be 'hostile' to Africa, raises the difficult question about African solutions, which Kantai, Ankomah, Dowden and later Owomoyela raise, as discussed in Chapters 2, 4 and 6. Primarily, these latter ask whether

⁵⁶⁴ Maggie Eales had a career in journalism spanning 40 years. She was senior vice president at CNN, and the new category for African Young journalist award is dedicated to her.

honesty about the realities in Africa is only acceptable or tolerable based on the nationality of commentator and the location of the media institution?

Mapping award processes

As seen in the previous chapter on mapping Ankomah as component of *Africarise*, one is able to map possibilities for new expressions of African solutions, by affirming distinctive aspects produced by processes inside one part, while it connects with many others within that assemblage. Correspondingly, focus on the work of award-winner Mwangi and finalist Anas allows one to map the CNN African Journalist of the Year award sharply, highlighting some powerful disruptive connections they provoke, to breach the codes that cloak many nominated and award-winning expressions of Africa's own voice. This is particularly significant as it allows one to locate uniquely creative 'minoritarian' paths within practice inclined to difference, often eclipsed by the spectacle of a single awards event. As discussed in Chapter 3, minoritarian paths involve the kind of intricate connections one makes in familiar territory, to repeat or map the world, and problem differently. It is connections of *agencement*, where each repetition and connection opens new terrain, de-coding habit, avoiding tracing to unveil other sets of solutions and questions. Stated otherwise, the formalised processes of receiving entries, selecting finalists and then staging a one-day celebration seem to reduce a wealth of multiple ideas, thought, and practices proposing African solutions, to a single winning entry. So, even though those processes ultimately serve the function of affirming African practitioners' telling their own story to Africans, the boxing of these into a one-day competition promises disappointment, in the way it fails to show the intensities, the magnitude of the events/occurrences, incited by some of the entries.

This refers to how the winners are mentioned and a synopsis of their work is provided, and the rest are simply listed. The awards body neither conducts a pre-show, nor a follow-up with

extended presentations of the winner's and the nominees' other bodies of work – some of which are powerful, although not intended for the competition. Thus Anas's and Mwangi's more powerful works which have shaken their societies have not featured in the awards. Yet they generate more attention than the event of the awards, an event which ironically also, remains largely unfamiliar inside Africa except among practitioners.

Still, this mapping of the awards system focuses on Anas and Mwangi to affirm that the practitioners nominated as finalists are those who bring greater possibilities for Africa to speak differently to and for itself. This is despite the plausible argument that these journalists practice within a largely formulaic mode, which exists as an implicit prerequisite for nominations and adjudication of what makes a winning journalistic product. This presents a moment for introducing a necessary paradox around the kind of difference presented about the works and practice of Anas and Mwangi, if one is to appreciate the context in which their work expresses difference. Briefly, since both Anas's and Mwangi's work and practice must be regarded as part of a collective of finalists striving for recognition during the 23-year life of the competition, then it is without question that everyone adheres to certain verdicts/coding of universal norms of practice, but still presents those very African issues which are addressed by all competitors, with the hope of receiving recognition for uniqueness. In this way Anas and Mwangi are occasionally territorialised through the rules of their practice. That is why their treatments of collectively-shared themes in some of their ground-breaking and shocking works, must necessarily fall into the currently-recognised award categories for formal recognition and adjudication among peers called African journalists, in a formalised field called African journalism. This is discussed later, in relation to the perceptible struggle by both Anas and Mwangi to keep their activism in line with rules of practice, especially in moments of tense confrontation in the field.

On the other hand, because their works have always shocked and strained the boundaries of practice, especially when that very activist immersion in the story provokes the irritation of the political elite, then most award-winning presentations in this award system fall short in proposing different African solutions in comparison to Anas's and Mwangi's work. One need only look at the nominations appearing in same categories as Anas's and Mwangi's over the past two decades: for example the award-winning documentaries on killing of albinos, on corruption, and images on electoral or police violence from across Africa. Most nominations show patterned, if not formulaic, vocabularies of organising prose, images and film, lacking in power to unsettle and force difficult conversations for Africa. Thus despite this paradox, the ground for difference in Anas's and Mwangi's work and practice resides in their activist component, pushing them to exceed the prerequisites of standard practice. As already stated, this activist practice demonstrates difference of enunciations, in processes of entangling with diverse fields of media production, politics, social justice, and law.

Entanglements: The material West, technologies, and the world

Notably, Anas's and Mwangi's practice is profoundly set apart by what the technique of mapping defines as the material/machinic dimension. The material consists of physical, concrete tangible things, buildings and technological objects which interconnect with the dimension of expressions, communicational language, gestures, and text to enable the production of representations and discourses, about the many ongoing processes of that reality. This overall process of interconnecting describes the workings of an assemblage, and life. As Mbembe asserts, disclosing Africa extends beyond realms of representation and discourse, to the material.⁵⁶⁵ Firstly then, it is important to reflect on the fact that the most eminent journalism award in the continent was inaugurated and remains heavily sponsored by a media company located in North America, which has over the years been accused of misrepresenting Africa.

⁵⁶⁵ Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, 6.

For Anas the entanglements are far-reaching too, because some of his most renowned work is done for *Africa Investigates*, a program produced by the Qatar-based Al Jazeera Network.⁵⁶⁶ As for Mwangi, his photography and civic education exhibitions continue to receive sponsorship from European and American NGOs. Thus like Rake and other founders of the *New African*, CNN and Al Jazeera materially enable the authors of African awards to build a platform upon which Africa can be spoken and respected by itself.

Secondly, it must be acknowledged that Anas and Mwangi adapt technologies in partnership with companies located all over the world for their unique journalistic products. For instance Anas's props, disguises and surveillance equipment are always custom-made for a story, and these are sourced from Europe. This has enabled him to go undercover in very convincing disguise, both across the continent and outside of Africa in pursuit of extreme cases that African governments have either ignored, or lack the means to address. One such incident involved Anas's visit to Malaysian prisons disguised as a catholic priest, to expose the living conditions of Africans detained without trial. In his turn, Mwangi, in an interview with Canon Europe, provides a detailed explanation of how he has adapted certain models of camera equipment to meet his maxim of a powerful image, on behalf of social justice.⁵⁶⁷ As he says, "The camera is like a relationship; it's an extension of your life", adding that "[i]t's so easy to miss a moment in this day and age, because when photographers think they have got a nice shot, they look at it on the camera screen. And then they miss a moment...they are too busy reviewing their photos or grabbing the moment without thinking".⁵⁶⁸ In terms of Deleuzian difference, what Mwangi

⁵⁶⁶ In the interview with Moses Mutabaruka (*The African Perspective*, 2016), Anas explains that the *Africa Investigates* series transmitted by Al Jazeera was coordinated by an organisation called *Inside News* in the UK, as part of an initiative where African practitioners across the continent come together in support of each other, to tell their own stories.

⁵⁶⁷ Boniface Mwangi, "Activism, Photography and Making a Difference", Interview with Canon Europa N.V. and Canon Europe Ltd 2002-2017. Available at http://cpn.canon-europe.com/content/interviews/boniface_mwangi_on_photo_activism.do. Accessed August 17, 2017.

⁵⁶⁸ Ibid.

alludes to here is the argument about the nature of virtual and actual interconnections among elements of a reality, such that the camera is not simply a tool, an object to be acted upon, but rather co-creates events in that reality. This particular issue of difference opens another problem, which for Africa often lends itself to deficient analyses based on representational thought and binaries. The problem comes in the question: what distinguishes the African authenticity of this kind of co-creation, when moving images or film produced by Anas or Mwangi as practitioners of African descent, evoke similar reactions to those produced by Euro-American practitioners and activists? This is because the latter often attract the charge of misrepresenting or appropriating Africa's misery to bolster their careers.

To return to the issue of critique of the award-winning entries of the CNN Multichoice awards: these could quite easily be considered or argued as constituting pathologisations of Africa, were these not told/created by Africans themselves. They would be accused of fuelling what Jere-Malanda called PIDIC – poverty, illiteracy, disease, and corruption. This is especially important due to the power of immediacy, generally associated with audio-visual representations over text. As Mwangi notes: “Human beings are very visual. When you look at an image you might feel love, or you might feel hate; but you feel something. There is an emotional connection between a human being and an image”.⁵⁶⁹ Indeed, what Mwangi voices here, echoes what Deleuzian scholar Massumi calls the voluminousness, or *events*:⁵⁷⁰ the incalculable magnitude of sense and thought, provoked by images. This can be strongly argued as true of the productions nominated for the awards, given that the most renowned entries and contested categories are those which involve audio and visual materials by African practitioners who have experienced personally, the realities which they capture; or by African practitioners who commit time to apprehend these realities, along with the complex histories and competing

⁵⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁰ Massumi, *Semblance and Event*, 42.

discourses that seek to give explanations, before representing them on media. This is evident from the number of overall winners following Jacques Pauw and Adil Bradlow receipt of the top award in 2000 for *Child Soldiers*, a two-part documentary on former Sierra Leonean rebel leader Foday Sanko.⁵⁷¹ Pauw, a South African journalist, has over the years produced difficult stories on Africa, on the strength of time spent in grasping the underlying issues in the contexts covered. These include the killings in Rwanda and conflict in South Sudan.

Other top winners since then have included Susan Purén's documentary *China* on a Ugandan child girl-soldier in 2002, Peter Murimi's documentary *Walk to Womanhood* on female genital mutilation in 2004, Zimbabwean photographer Desmond Kwande's images of the many who were left homeless following operation Murambatsvina (urban clean up) in Zimbabwe in 2006, Sam Rogers's *Curse of the Nobody People* on the plight of albinos in Tanzania in 2010, Tom Mboya and Evanson Nyaga's *The African Tribe in India*, a documentary on long-forgotten Africans in India in 2012, and Joseph Mathenge's Mohammed Amin Photography trophy on the terror attacks that occurred in a Nairobi Mall in 2014.⁵⁷²

However, while these images and sounds were accepted as excellent, and while their 'voluminousness' triggered reactions among audiences that are important to Africa finding its own solutions, these reactions stand in stark contrast to the outrage that followed documentaries like *Kony 2012*.⁵⁷³ Instead of being seen as provoking "ethical obligation" to stand in solidarity with the human subjects in question, *Kony 2012* was accused of offering grossly patronising misrepresentations of Africa, particularly of Africa as a still-brutal, dark continent that needs

⁵⁷¹ "Sierra Leone Children of War" Part 1 and 2, *Special Assignment*, filmed in 2000 by Jacques Pauw and Adil Bradlow, Youtube Videos 07:33 and 09:11, posted by Adil Bradlow, June 2009. Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PugaQJcAn64>, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=merqFueI-o>.

⁵⁷² All these winners are listed on CNN Multichoice Journalist Awards website, under "Finalists". Available at <https://africa.cnnjournalistaward.com/en/finalists/>. Accessed March 15, 2016.

⁵⁷³ *Kony 2012*, directed by Jason Russel, Invisible Children Inc. YouTube, Video, 29:58, posted by Invisible Children, March 2012. Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y4MnpzG5Sqc>.

saving. To provide a brief synopsis: *Kony 2012*⁵⁷⁴ is a story by an American student, Jason Russel, about a group of children in Northern Uganda whose lives have been severely disrupted by fear of abduction by Joseph Kony's Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). The story focuses on the life of one child, Jacob, who together with a group of children in his village, endured a daily routine that involved a long, early-morning walk to school at their village, and a late-night walk back to the church which had become their sleeping ground. Although the story generated massive support in social media campaigns, and also drew the attention of key political heads to the threat of the LRA, most critics focused on the nationality and race of the filmmaker, using a representational lens that immediately linked Russel to notions of appropriating Africa's problems, with poor representations on Africa in the Conradian darkest Africa plot, while excluding the film's meaningful representation of the lives of the children. Similar sentiments followed Anderson Cooper's CBS 60 Minutes documentary *War Against Women*,⁵⁷⁵ which highlights the torment experienced by women and little girls who have been violently raped by soldiers in the Congo. In light of this, the question arises as to what makes Anas's, Mwangi's, and other similar accounts by African award winners, uniquely African and legitimate, such that they do not draw critics' wrath as did the work of Cooper and Russel?

⁵⁷⁴ Extensive information about this campaign is available at <https://invisiblechildren.com/>.

⁵⁷⁵ CBS 60 Minutes, directed by Anderson Cooper, January 13, 2008, YouTube Video, posted January 21, 2009. Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=izTzCv4480k>.

Figure 7.⁵⁷⁶

Figure 8.



The above are the two main covers/posters associated with the short film *Kony 2012*. As discussed below, Figure 7 drew a lot of criticism to the film director, for naivety, and lack of insight to historically deep-seated issues of dehumanisation of the African and ‘white messianism’, colonialism, and America’s post-new world order politics of sovereignty and saving Africa. Figure 8 seems to reinforce the idea of saving the world from a select kind of political malefactor, as defined in American politics.

Despite the noble intentions behind *Kony 2012* – inspired by maxims such as “our liberty is bound together”, and “join the revolution” – it is evident why there was already great difficulty to overcome the suggestions made through the documentary’s cover images. By using an image of the two mascots associated with two main political parties in the United States, namely an elephant for the Republicans and a donkey for Democrats – along with the tag “one thing we can all agree on”, the message, in Hountondji’s account, was instantly “extraverted”. That is, through this representation the film detaches its message from Africa, likely because its intended audience was American. Moreover, unwittingly or not, this image and accompanying

⁵⁷⁶ “The Invisible Children”, *Kony 2012*, Youtube Video. Available at <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt2294697/>. Accessed May 20, 2018.

tag affirm the indictments of the director as harbouring a paternal attitude when it comes to solutions to African problems. This issue speaks directly to and gives credence to Anas's disapproval of "parachute journalists" – dropping into African issues with little regard for the continent itself. This explains why the idea of the indigeneity and legitimate disruption of Anas's and Mwangi's works arises. It hinges on the argument that *Africarise* productions seeking to articulate African solutions ought to be activist media practices committed to different thought and action for Africa itself, and immersed in Africa.

Anas: Subterfuge for African solutions⁵⁷⁷

Figure 9.⁵⁷⁸ This is an image of Anas during his TED Talk presentation in 2013, wearing his most familiar mask.



As described by most commentators, Anas is Ghana's most prominent or "best known but least recognisable journalist".⁵⁷⁹ As a custom, Anas begins all his presentations with the disclaimer that he cannot show his face. He must safeguard his anonymity as it is an important weapon for his work. The other important reason for this gesture, as he stated at the beginning of his TED talk in 2013, is that "bad guys will come at me". Over the years, his use of different disguises has not only generated an air of mysticism around his person, but has also produced a sense of

⁵⁷⁷ Anas, "How I Named, Shamed and Jailed", *Justice!*, directed by Philip Clothier and Paul Sapin, 2015. Available at <https://insighttwi.com/films/justice>, and *The Spell of the Albino*.

⁵⁷⁸ See Anas's official website, which is available at <http://anasaremeyawanas.org/bio/>. Accessed June 20, 2018.

⁵⁷⁹ *Justice!*

awe among ordinary citizens especially when investigations expose powerful entities previously deemed untouchable. At the same time, his insistence on anonymity and use of undercover surveillance methods have been viewed as a blight by some journalists, especially those who have been in the profession for many years. As Kwesi Pratt Junour says, “journalists are not supposed act as intelligence agents...our role is substantially different...we investigate but our methods are different”.⁵⁸⁰ This argument, though, is largely unpersuasive to many who have lost confidence in government institutions; the latter’s multiple failures remained beyond the reach (and address) of most media prior to Anas’s arrival. As former Secretary General of the United Nations Kofi Anan explains, “sometimes it takes a spark, just a spark and Anas has provided that spark”.⁵⁸¹ This is echoed by Anas’s co-editor Kweku Baako Jr., who observed that for over a decade politicians and government functionaries who have no respect for principles and public morality, and who rape the country and cause poverty, continue to hunt down Anas to silence him for rightfully exposing them.⁵⁸²

Despite being merely a finalist in the 2009 CNN African Journalist of the Year award, Anas stands out as the most decorated African journalist of our time. Some of the awards include Hero Acting to End Modern-day Slavery, given by the United States government for exposing modern-day human trafficking rings in West Africa. The renowned publication *Foreign Policy* named Anas one of 2015’s leading thinkers in the world, an honour previously granted to former American President Barack Obama and Pope Benedict XVI.⁵⁸³ He delivered a keynote speech at Harvard law school at the 7th Annual African Development Conference in 2016, which was

⁵⁸⁰ Kwesi Pratt Junour is a long-serving senior journalist at *The Insight* newspaper; he is interviewed in the documentary *Chameleon*, directed by Ryan Mullins (USA, 2015).

⁵⁸¹ Former Secretary General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, giving his comment on Anas’s two-year investigation into corruption in Ghana’s judiciary, in the documentary *Justice!*

⁵⁸² Kweku Baako Jr. is Anas’s co-editor-in-chief at the *New Crusade Guide*, and was interviewed in the documentary *Chameleon*.

⁵⁸³ Anas, “Why I Name, Shame and Jail”.

also addressed by Achille Mbembe.⁵⁸⁴ Anas also received awards for the Most Influential Young Person in Ghana in 2016, and the African Hero of the Year Award in 2016, from Ohio State University.

As an individual, Anas is entangled with a diversity of media production practices, performative roles as an African, as well as fields such as law. Along with his audio-visual reports as lead investigator for Al Jazeera's *Africa Investigates*, Anas has remained co-publisher and was acting editor-in-chief for the *New Crusade Guide* newspaper. After training at the Ghana Institute for Journalism, he worked as a journalist for a few years. But because he struggled to capture sufficiently, and then frame the intricate details complex nature of major crimes for his publications, Anas decided to pursue a law qualification. He graduated with a LLB (Hon) at the University of Ghana. It is through the coming together of these fields that he was able to push the thresholds of journalistic investigations, in terms of which Anas strives to keep evidence-gathering processes within accepted prescripts, while also involving law enforcement agencies in his surveillance strategies.

In terms of difference and finding concrete African solutions to Africa's problems, Anas's stretching of limits involves direct involvement in some extremely dangerous situations. As described in Chapter 3, such is the process of locating degrees of expansion, of intensities contained in local data, within the immediate terrain. Among the many exposés conducted by Anas, this study focuses on four cases for the sake of illustrating and mapping Anas's processes of producing difference. These are filmed undercover investigations into *Nsawan Prison* – an exposé on the state of Ghana's penitentiary system, *Ghana In the Eyes of God* – a two-year

⁵⁸⁴ This was at the 7th African Development Conference at Harvard. See <https://www.harvardadc.com/2016-highlights/> and <https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/Anas-delivers-keynote-speech-at-Harvard-law-school-422869>.

investigation into corruption in Ghana's judiciary, *Spirit Child*⁵⁸⁵ – an exposé focusing on sacrificial deaths of children born with disabilities by traditional medicine men, and *The Spell of the Albino* – an exposé on the killing and harvesting of albino people's body parts in Tanzania. Further, these have been selected based on the reasons introduced in Chapters 1 and 2 regarding forms of violence meted out in the postcolony, by the state apparatus and on the basis of certain social practices or beliefs. These kinds of violence are complex. They are characterised by *commandment* – an arbitrary right to destroy life conveyed in a tone that suggests a right to demand by centres of social authority, and carried out in inexplicably ugly means of cheapening human bodies.⁵⁸⁶ Yet, tragically, while situations involving such violences should be totally expunged for Africa to rise, one must acknowledge their persistent presence as fluid, powerful things linked to Africa's violent episodes of slavery and colonial power, when Africans and their traditional ways collided with the sensibilities of Western modernity and associated politico-economic interests.

As shown in Chapter 3, black Africans were reduced to the category of animal assets, albeit the (emotionally) relatable kind as would be the case with domesticated stock. As Mbembe describes it, “[t]hey could be destroyed, as one may kill an animal, cut it up, cook it, and, if need be, eat it”.⁵⁸⁷ Now, similar dynamics form part of Africa's post-independence capitalist dynamics of oppression. This can be seen in the inconceivable financial motivations behind the killing of children with disabilities and the harvesting of albino parts for traditional medicines, which are thought to attract wealth. That is why Anas and Mwangi turn to the extreme practice of forcing Africa to openly confront those burdens, and to think solutions to such destructions, irrespective of the actors' presumed levels of ignorance or willingness.

⁵⁸⁵ *Spirit Child*, directed by Anas Aremeyaw Anas, filmed 2013, YouTube Video, 25:00, posted by Anas Aremeyaw Anas, January 10, 2013. Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vPJvNJL-XY>.

⁵⁸⁶ Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, 26.

⁵⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 26-27.

Among his notable acts is Anas's exposé on the poor state of the prison system in Ghana which required Anas to live inside Nsawan Prison, described in his TED presentation.⁵⁸⁸ He captured what Mbembe describes as the “grotesque”, “vulgarity”, ugliness of the routinised, and even the predictable abuse of power that buttresses official as well as implied formal authorities in the postcolony. These allow those associated with official power to arbitrarily get away with anything.⁵⁸⁹ Anas captured on film, bodies of dead inmates piled in a room, where these corpses lay uncollected for lengthy periods of time. The extent of dilapidation of the prison infrastructure is such that only a few walls remain intact. Audiences are shown the highly unhygienic ablution system where inmates relieve themselves in the open, in full sight of each other. Additionally, overcrowded living quarters are shown to be adjacent to huge overflowing garbage bins. Anas categorises it as among the most horrifying things he has experienced as a human being, something exacerbated by the state's attitude towards its responsibilities and its people. The sense of gross injustice aroused by this case was further intensified by Anas's most prominent investigation up to now. As already introduced, *Ghana In the Eyes of God* was a two-year investigation into judicial corruption in Ghana, which is now considered the biggest undercover sting operation ever to have been carried out in Africa. Owing to the negative associations of Africa with the subject of corruption and usual reluctance by African journalists to face up to and thematise these linkages, this exposé both elevated Anas to the global stage, and incited impassioned debates among Africans.

Briefly put, Anas with his team exposed corrupt acts by 34 judges and 146 judicial staff, with some of the occurrences even caught on camera. The aftermath of this exposé was daunting. Anas not only released the finding to the media, but proceeded to brief the President of Ghana about the process and findings. Thereafter, in his campaign to name, shame and jail, Anas

⁵⁸⁸ Anas, “How I Named, Shamed and Jailed”,

⁵⁸⁹ Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, 40-42.

sought to stage public viewings of the film due to the strong public outrage that this exposé provoked. As expected, some judges resigned, while others were suspended; some even interdicted the planned public viewings of the investigation. The content and public reception of the journalistic product resulted in increased threats on Anas's life, to the point that his family had to be evacuated to safety outside Ghana. Also, as the film shows, his public movements and appearances in court wearing his disguise, became a matter of great spectacle which would have plunged his family into an even more difficult, and potentially also dangerous, situation.

Although Anas's exposés on Nsawan prison and judicial corruption were lauded for innovative bravery in the service of social justice, those images at first glance seemed to reinforce Africa's dysfunctionality. This was particularly so in the case of the corruption story, with some critics questioning Anas's sense of respect, insofar as he had entrapped the judges. Among the prominent detractors in this regard, were Martin A. B. K. Amidu, former Attorney General and Minister of Justice, and Captain (rtd) Nkrabea Effah-Dartey who criticised Anas of gross unethical conduct in enticing judges with money.⁵⁹⁰ Additionally, the media fraternity accused Anas of self-indulgent vigilantism masquerading as investigative journalism. Anas's response to this was that he does not grasp what apostles of ethics mean when they talk disapprovingly about his work. Especially, given the fact that his work was widely celebrated in the streets, and continued to attract leading media institutions like CNN, with requests for partnerships concerning investigations in Africa.

⁵⁹⁰ Captain (rtd) Nkrabea Effah-Dartey, interview with Ade Akye Abia, *Okay FM*, Ghana, October 2015.. Available at <https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/Judge-s-lawyer-threatens-Anas-You-will-regret-386212>. Accessed June 6, 2018.

Mwangi: A creative scourge to power⁵⁹¹

Figure 10.⁵⁹² Mwangi the revolutionary, and Occupy Parliament.



Figure 11.⁵⁹³ Occupy parliament demonstrations.



The title to the *New African*'s interview in March 2015 with Boniface Mwangi, was "Kenya's Rising Firebrand".⁵⁹⁴ And as the article so aptly articulated it, Mwangi's photo-activism, accompanied by a dogged and critically-engaged social activism, has not only made the youth listen and find their voice; it has also provoked the ire of Kenya's political class. Mwangi won

⁵⁹¹ Mwangi's work and his profile can be found at <https://www.bonifacemwangi.com>. Accessed May 15, 2016.

⁵⁹² On the extreme left: African Photo Magazine, Boniface Mwangi. Available at <http://www.africanphotomag.co.ke/boniface-mwangi/>. Accessed May 15, 2018. On the extreme right: Standard digital entertainment, "The New Leading Activists in Nairobi". Available at <https://www.sde.co.ke/pulse/article/2000111948/the-new-leading-activists-in-nairobi>. Accessed August 16, 2016.

⁵⁹³ On the extreme left: Boniface Mwangi, "The Day I was Shot", Boniface Mwangi.com. Available at <https://www.bonifacemwangi.com/the-day-i-was-shot/the-day-i-was-shot-2/>. Accessed August 16, 2017. On the extreme right: Boniface Mwangi, "Nice Nice' Will Get You Nowhere", Boniface Mwangi.com. Available at <https://www.bonifacemwangi.com/?s=occupy+parliament>. Accessed August 16, 2016.

⁵⁹⁴ Meffe, "Boniface Mwangi", 52-53.

the CNN Africa Journalist of the Year award – Mohammed Amin Award for Photography – in both 2008 and 2010. And indeed, in his own words, he was inspired to follow in the footsteps of Mohammed Amin, whose was known for his style of capturing graphic images, especially those associated with politically-motivated violence. As Mwangi stated in an interview with David Corfield – editor for Canon Photography Network (CPN) magazine – “Mohamed Amin’s work on the Ethiopian famine of 1983-1985 really moved me...and I saw for myself the positive power of photography”.⁵⁹⁵

Notably, unlike Anas, Mwangi did not receive any formal training as a journalist. He started as an apprentice photographer with the *Standard Newspaper* in Nairobi. Mwangi grew up poor in a broken home, and did not complete his high school education. He was sent to a state-run “Approved school” – correctional institutional for underage offenders – due to his nonconforming behaviour. And he was let go from that institution as well. Still, at the age of fifteen he got his first camera and began to practice. He adds that at the age of twenty, he was enrolled at a Bible training institute, and that is where he was introduced to Mohammed Amin’s photography.

Despite these obstacles he faced, Mwangi rose to fame both in Kenya and globally, and this rising involved an intersecting of style of photography and political activism in two memorable events. As he narrates in a TED presentation,⁵⁹⁶ the first such event was the 2007-2008 Kenyan post-election violence, where he captured very unforgiving up-close images, which left him struggling with depression. He was angered by the insensitivity of the politicians who had provoked the inter-ethnic killings in their clamour for power. Once they had reached a power-sharing accord, they moved on to forgetting the thousands of traumatised people, who were

⁵⁹⁵ Corfield, “Boniface Mwangi”.

⁵⁹⁶ “The Day I Stood Alone”, TED Talk, filmed by TEDGlobal October 2014, Video, 14:58, posted by TEDGlobal April 2, 2015. Available at, https://www.ted.com/talks/boniface_mwangi_boniface_mwangi_the_day_i_stood_up_alone.

now displaced and without homes. Even worse for Mwangi, was the indifference of most Kenyans, who also moved on without holding the political heads to account for the killings and the resulting destitution. It is largely in response to this event that Mwangi quit his job as a journalist photographer and decided to begin his photo-activism. In turn, the second event grew from the activism triggered by the first. This was during the June 2009 national holiday celebration, when Mwangi stood up and interrupted then President Mwai Kibaki's speech to protest a culture of impunity among the political class in their continued incitement of ethno-tribal antagonisms with no consequence, and lack of accountability for corrupt practices. Over and above an angry president openly calling him "*pumbavu*" (fool), Mwangi was hauled away from the event very roughly by the police, and severely beaten. Still, given the severity of persistent ethno-tribal political violence and unrelenting cases of corruption, Mwangi did not stop. The immensity of his spectre in Kenyan socio-political life is illustrated in the way both his detractors and supporters find it difficult to disagree with some of his opinions – a case in point being this Facebook statement: "Kenya is 51 years old and [for] 27 of those we have had 3 Kikuyu presidents. The other 24 years we had a Kalenjin president. In 2017, vote for development not tribe. Tribalism will destroy us".⁵⁹⁷ This statement reflects the uncontestably-shared sentiment among Kenyans, despite their political affiliations. This is mainly due to the haunting memories of death and pain that followed the 2007 and 2013 general elections as shown in the upcoming photographs taken by Mwangi.

To date, Mwangi's activism has led him to launch a political party *Ukweli Party* (the Truth Party), that is configured as a grassroots political movement, rather than a more integrated structure for passage to the corridors of power. Other initiatives relating to his activism, include Picha Mtaani (photography in the street), a youth-led program for reconciliation and peace, and

⁵⁹⁷ Boniface Mwangi's Facebook post, February 12, 2015. Available at https://web.facebook.com/BonifaceMwangiBM/posts/945564472130118?_rdc=1&_rdr. Accessed August 16, 2017.

a political resistance movement called *Kenya ni Kwetu* (Kenya is our home). The most notable, and probably the most polarising, movement in Kenya's contemporary politics is PAWA254. This is a creative hub of graffiti artists, photographers, journalists and political activists which organised *Occupy Parliament* in 2013 (as seen in the images of Figures 16 and 17 below). Most importantly, as Mwangi's short documentary *A Patriot* and his TED presentation show, he is involved in civic education campaigns entailing public exhibition of his images, precisely to persuade ordinary people to shun ethnic violence and demand accountability from politicians. As one viewer in the post-electoral violence exhibition urged: "anyone who has seen these pictures, and is holding on to a machete, will be compelled to throw it away...they will even decide to use a spoon to cut meat".

The following images (Figures 12, 13, 14 and 15), were taken during the 2007 post-election violence in Kenya. These are catalogued in his book *The Price of Tribal Politics: The Story of Kenya's Post-election Violence Through the Lens of a Photo Journalist*.⁵⁹⁸ Nine years after the ethno-tribal political violence, very little had been done to support the victims, and the accused perpetrators of the violence (including Kenya's incumbent president Uhuru Kenyatta) had fought for their case at the ICC to be dropped. So Mwangi re-posted the very images in his twitter message to President Kenyatta, urging him to set up a memorial for the forgotten victims.

⁵⁹⁸ Boniface Mwangi, *The Price of Tribal Politics: The Story of Kenya's Post-election Violence Through the Lens of a Photo Journalist* (www.pichamtaani.org, 2010). This catalogue is also available for free at <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/kubmegflis8g3tm/AACvrL7dqn3hMU1KqGXIBFBWa?dl=0>.

Figure 12.⁵⁹⁹



Figure 13.⁶⁰⁰



⁵⁹⁹ Mwangi, *The Price of Tribal Politics*, 50, and Twitter post, October 6, 2014, 3:38 a.m. Available at <https://twitter.com/bonifacemwangi/status/519074140905832448>.

⁶⁰⁰ Mwangi, *The Price of Tribal Politics*, 12.

Figure 14.⁶⁰¹ Mwangi titled this image “Neighbours turned against each other”. He further observes that he met this man’s wife, who intimated to him that this man died soon after this ordeal.



Figure 15.⁶⁰²



⁶⁰¹ Ibid., 16. Mwangi’s explanation of this image is found in a Twitter post, July 4, 2014, 3:32 a.m. Available at <https://twitter.com/bonifacemwangi/status/485008315551076352>.

⁶⁰² Mwangi, *The Price of Tribal Politics*, 56.

In turn, the below images (Figures 16 and 17), highlight another focus area of Mwangi's activism; that is, the abuse of power by the state, especially against the poor. At an immediate level, this concerns him as an activist, making commentary on the post-independence state's intolerance of criticism.

Figure 16.⁶⁰³ Police operation at Kosovo slum.



This image of scared schoolchildren walking past a police dog was taken at Kosovo slum in Nairobi. It was at the height of a crackdown on the Mungiki sect, a fraternity primarily consisting of the Agikuyu people. While adherents to the sect claimed their association as one motivated by traditional practices of the Agikuyu, there was growing evidence of militarisation of the group by politicians, as contestations increasingly assumed ethno-lingual form. The police crackdown on the group was largely indiscriminate in its brutalisation of the broader community.

⁶⁰³ Corfield, "Boniface Mwangi".

Figure 17.⁶⁰⁴ Police sent in to keep order in the post-election violence.



Along with the strident criticism of politicians for inciting electoral violence, the following images – Figures 18 to 19 – highlight Mwangi’s confrontations with the political elites when they fail in their obligations, many of whom attain office through blood and death. In the images below, taken in May 2014, Mwangi leads other activists in a protest inspired by George Orwell’s *Animal Farm*. They used the allegory of Orwell’s predatory pig oligarchy to indict Kenyan parliamentarians, on a day that they sought to increase their monthly salaries to a rate that was 131 times Kenya’s minimum wage.⁶⁰⁵ The chant “MPigs”, next to piglets covered in blood symbolised the voracity of Kenyan parliamentarians that feed off the blood of the subjects.

⁶⁰⁴ Mwangi, *The Price of Tribal Politics*, 49.

⁶⁰⁵ Kamal Kaur, “For the Love of the Bacon? I Think Not”, *The Star Kenya*, May 17, 2013. Available at https://www.the-star.co.ke/news/2013/05/17/for-the-love-of-bacon-i-think-not_c775406. Accessed August 15, 2017.

Figure 18.⁶⁰⁶ Mwangi with other activists outside Parliament, May 2013.



Figure 19.⁶⁰⁷ Mwangi igniting a bonfire outside Parliament.



⁶⁰⁶ Chrispinus Wekesa and Elizabeth Were, "Police Break Up 'Occupy Parliament' Demonstration", *The Star*, May 15, 2013. Available at https://www.the-star.co.ke/news/2013/05/15/police-break-up-occupy-parliament-demonstration_c774664. Accessed July 15, 2016.

⁶⁰⁷ Karen Frances, "TED Fellow Boniface Mwangi. Risking My Life for Justice in Kenya", *TED Blog*, February 27, 2015. Available at <https://blog.ted.com/ted-fellow-boniface-mwangi-on-risking-his-life-for-justice-in-kenya/>. Accessed June 6, 2018.

Figure 20.⁶⁰⁸ The public exhibition of Mwangi's post-election images. The government shut down one of the main exhibitions in 2012, claiming it was causing tension.



Mwangi's activism using photography is bolstered by his writings. Most readers pay attention to his social media commentary in Twitter, Facebook and blogs. In addition, though, he is a regular columnist in one of Kenya's daily newspapers, *The Standard*. Mwangi's audacious articles have consistently focused on failures on the part of the political oligarchy, which he accuses of securing and sustaining its power through brazen weaponising of ethnic identity. Other key themes in his writings include the abuse of power by the executive and law enforcement, and corruption and wastage of public resources. Some of his recent articles

⁶⁰⁸ Images provided by Picha Mtaani, and featured in The Observers, "Kenyan Police Shut Down Exhibit Showing Graphic Photos of Post-election Violence", *France 24*, January 8, 2012. Available at <http://observers.france24.com/en/20120801-kenyan-police-shut-down-exhibit-showing-graphic-photos-post-election-violence-presidential-clashes-naivasha-icc>. Accessed June 6, 2018.

include “Election Period Is Kenya’s Official Hate Season”,⁶⁰⁹ “Kenya Police Hate Educated People”,⁶¹⁰ “Some Kyuks Think Kenya Is Their Goat”,⁶¹¹ and “Police and Criminals Are Thick As Thieves”.⁶¹² Overall, and as suggested in even the titles of these contributions of his, Mwangi’s message remains uncompromising in criticising the African subject for failing to uphold and enable the humanity of his/her fellow Africans in the post-independence.

Anas and Mwangi: Obligated indigenes confronting power inside community

Now, to consider ‘difference’ and African solutions: the ‘objectivist’ representational idea that Anas’s and Mwangi’s work may in some instances operate to reinforce Africa’s dysfunction (or the idea of Africa as dysfunctional), and gain reward and fame in the process, is concurrently countered by broad public expressions of gratitude. Those expressions of gratitude contain reassurances that retribution will come when justice is hollowed out and sold. The dynamic involved in such judgments of Mwangi and Anas actually finds fitting explanation by way of Mafeje’s observations regarding the role of the Imbongi – deceptively reduced to a ‘praise singer’ – as well as the Griot in traditional Africa. For Mafeje,⁶¹³ the institution of the Imbongi constitutes a form of engaged media in African traditional cultures, a medium which laid bare the dirty linen of the culture’s and community’s own people and the failures of authority figures,

⁶⁰⁹ Boniface Mwangi, “Election Period Is Kenya’s Official Hate Season”, Boniface Mwangi.com. Available at <https://www.bonifacemwangi.com/election-period-is-kenyas-official-hate-season/election-period-is-kenyas-official-hate-season-2/>. Accessed May 2, 2018.

⁶¹⁰ Boniface Mwangi, “Kenya Police Hate Educated People”, *The Standard*. Available at <https://www.sde.co.ke/thenairobi/article/2001274221/boniface-mwangi-kenya-police-hate-educated-people>. Accessed April 18, 2018.

⁶¹¹ *Kyuks* is a street moniker for the Agikuyu/Kikuyu people. Mwangi criticises a tendency within this community to privilege their role in Kenya’s struggle for independence. In the latter respect, they cite their large numbers in the Mau Mau rebellion as proof of their instrumental/key role. Boniface Mwangi, “Some Kyuks Think Kenya Is Their Goat”, *The Standard*, March 2, 2018. Available at <https://www.sde.co.ke/thenairobi/article/2001271742/boniface-mwangi-some-kyuks-think-kenya-is-their-goat>. Accessed May 2, 2018.

⁶¹² Boniface Mwangi, “Police and Criminals Are Thick As Thieves”, *The Standard*, February 18, 2018. Available at <https://www.sde.co.ke/thenairobi/article/2001270189/boniface-mwangi-police-and-criminals-are-thick-as-thieves>. Accessed April 8, 2018.

⁶¹³ Mafeje, “The Role of the Bard in a Contemporary African Community”, 192, 194.

on behalf of the subjects who conferred that authority. The Imbongis did so with stinging words, in poem and song, using metaphors in a manner that allowed them to continue subsisting within that very community of which they had been members since birth. They did not walk away, but rather spoke inside all situations and contexts, including during ugly times. Secondly, with regard to receiving rewards and recognition from both the powerful and ordinary folk, an Imbongi remained cautious of undermining his role as mediator between these sides, by throwing his weight with the people, regardless of the rewards that accrued from their service. In a similar vein, then, within contemporary political settings where both Anas and Mwangi receive attention and accolades, accusing them of approaching their work in the manner that they do for personal gain and to the detriment of Africa as a whole, might be highly seductive to some. After all, Anas and Mwangi have enjoyed rewards such as meetings with senior politicians and prominent organisations in the West. Yet, both have persistently defended their actions against such accusation of being influenced by international ‘neo-imperialist’ organisations with vested interests in Africa. This is seen in Anas’s response to Captain (rtd) Nkrabea Effah-Dartey on his exposé of judicial corruption, that he chooses his own issues to investigate. In his turn, Mwangi in his documentary *The Patriot*, insists that although he has been to the centre of Western power as an invited guest of powerful figures like the former US Secretary of State John Kerry, he remains a patriot.

Besides focussing on political power, Anas devotes particular attention to what he sees as illogical backwardness associated with mystical/religious power: that is, the traditional beliefs that demand the high cost of human life for meagre monetary gains. This issue can be aptly described by way of Cornel West’s articulation of the intransigent existential problematic of Africans whose bodies are deemed to be a problem.⁶¹⁴ Of pertinence to this study is the fact

⁶¹⁴ *Xakhubasa: The White Pride*, directed by Tassyn Munro and Robyn Perros, filmed 2013, Youtube Video, 24:01, posted by RUTV Journalism, Rhodes University, October 2013. Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aaIwwdjhEno>.

that, although awareness campaigns have been brought forward by advocacy groups as cases of attacks on albinos in Africa increase, there remains undeniable silence, both in society and in formal structures of bureaucracy, on how to engage persons with physical disabilities. On the one hand, it is plausible that such silence is not unique to Africa, as normative notions of being human are part of a complex of largely problematic yet unexamined, and quietly accepted, prejudices. However, as Anas and award-winner Samantha Rogers show, this issue demands unambiguous response from Africa, particularly given its history of brutal (slavery- and colony-related) dehumanisations which were mainly based on skin colour. This is because the issue seems to be caught in narrow and contradictory notions of African personhood, especially those based on the body. Put explicitly, the issue, entails common descriptions of indigeneity, which remain mired in problematic, contested views, around equal belonging, notions of primitiveness associated with mystical power, as well as fear of ill fortune. Altogether, they point to an enigma of contemporary African life, which may not be entirely attributable to ‘colonial manufacture.’ This contemporary enigma, where belonging among black Africans is determined through skin colour, is what is aptly captured in the title of Rogers’s documentary on albinos, *Curse of the Nobody People*.⁶¹⁵

This kind of relegating of Africans to “cursed” nobodies is clearly disclosed in interviews with the albino community in the South African film *Xakhubasa: The White Pride*. As summarised by one participant: “when you turn you back, they remind [you that] you are not black, you are an albino”. Those reminders come in labels such as *Letswafi*, *Lekgowa* (white person), or *Nkoa* (ghost). As another participant says, “they just think you are not human.” The bad experiences of being treated as abnormal are “purely based on skin colour...how people look at you. Skin

⁶¹⁵ *Curse of the Nobody People*, directed by Samantha Rogers, filmed 2009, YouTube Video, 05:27, posted by ETV, July 5, 2010. Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=96jwCLXHH-M>.

is more talkative...it decides who is superior to another person...and who is inferior to another person.”

The distinctiveness of Anas’s address of these kinds of denigrations can be discerned on another two levels. Namely, that of:

- An African using his own vocabulary of journalism to assert the humanity of Africans, by aggressively confronting African beliefs in a manner that would otherwise be considered disrespectful.
- Allowing the use of appropriate languages of clarification to emerge.

This is demonstrated in the difference in method between Rogers’s documentary and Anas’s exposés in *Spirit Child* and *The Spell of the Albino*. While the scenes in Rogers’s film are accompanied by solemn narration around the slaughter of young albino children – the “nobodies” – Anas employs action, where all parties concerned, including victims, are engaged directly, as he aggressively confronts the perpetrators. For Anas it is necessary to be vigorous in exposing these violences, as other methods have failed. Ultimately, given the magnitude of the brutalities exposed, and the unforgiving and unapologetic approach used by Anas, his investigations have received great acclaim. However, when it comes to the need for critical discussion on African solutions, the key premise of Anas’s exposé, namely development/progress versus backwardness, emerges as problematic given how it specifies this difficult issue. That is (and as will be discussed later), a concern arises that Anas effects a high degree of unwitting pathologisation of the contemporary African subject who chooses to uphold African traditional and spiritual beliefs. This is most clearly shown in his relentless pursuit of the Christian community in Mentukwa Mission.

In the story *Spirit Child*, Anas goes undercover to investigate a group of diviners in rural Ghana who were sacrificing children born with disabilities in order to cleanse their families. This was

done for payment. The process, which involved giving poison to these toddlers during a supposed mystical ritual, is captured in an elaborate sting operation in which Anas involves the police in the area, and uses props, including a human-sized rubber doll. In his words, he sought to stop the charlatans and their destructive outdated beliefs. The final scene is, however, one of tragedy as one of the participants in the ritual, an old man, is seen holding the rubber doll in his hands, dumbstruck, while the police interrogate him. These participants are very poor and the paradoxical entwinement between persisting traditional beliefs and contemporary neoliberal demands – which pushes them to justify these violent acts – remains unaddressed. This is the same issue raised in the earlier discussion in Chapter 4 on Agbetu and Wiredu, regarding notions of development and modernity versus the persistent, at-times-unexamined beliefs with which Africans nevertheless continue to coexist. Not as primitive beings, but as subjects who make choices because these beliefs are also based on deep humanising convictions.

A similar scenario, albeit more disturbing due to the images presented, unfolds with the investigation *The Spell of the Albino*. Anas travels to Tanzania with the *Al Jazeera Investigates* team, to assist Isaac Timothy, who suffers from albinism, to expose the cause of recent cases of attacks on albinos in his area. While the story lends itself to several layers of critique with regard especially to notions of dignity of the African subject, this study will focus on the importance of Anas's success in uncovering the heart of the problem, while yet leaving unanswered pertinent contemporary questions concerning poverty and mysticism especially as these are connected to the violence of neoliberal capitalism.

Anas's approach in this story presents a powerful mode of practice, in the way that he allows the victims and protagonists to be heard. Given that this was an international assignment, Anas departs from the universal mode of 'parachute journalism,' where the importance of the role of language in understanding Africa is often diminished by common-sense practices of translation.

Of course, the video employs subtitles for translation as universal practice expects, but still the voices of the participants lead all conversations, with a second layer of clarification offered by a locally-based practitioner. Thus, Anas adopts a background role, and allows the protagonists to express themselves in Kiswahili, with additional translation provided by seasoned Tanzanian journalist Richard Magamba. Of the three main storylines, the case of young Adam is most revealing. This is especially because the attack on Adam, which involved the chopping off of three of his fingers, and the severe cutting of his upper body with a machete, was facilitated by his own father. As Adam narrates, the attack occurred after they had had dinner with the person who turned out to be the attacker. The reason that his father sold Adam's fingers was witchcraft. This phenomenon can be attributed mainly to extreme poverty in the area. As Timothy explains, as the suffering caused by poverty intensified, so did the attacks, related to the growth in gold mining activity in the area. This is because consuming albino parts was thought to improve chances of striking significant gold ore.

However, for Timothy, for the albino community, as well as for Magamba, the bigger question was the puzzling loss of humanity which is a result of this poverty. As Timothy says, "*sijui ni umaskini, na kama nu umaskini, ni umaskini wa jinsi gani wa kufika mahali mtu anachukia mtoto wake?* (probably it is poverty, and if it is poverty, what kind of poverty oppresses someone to the extent of hating their own child?).⁶¹⁶ Such sentiments are also expressed by the police commander in charge of the case, who was baffled by the fact that the attacker sat at the same table, broke bread with Adam and his father, and thereafter proceeded to maim the child. For Magamba, it was disappointing that such outdated belief in witchcraft was still accepted. He was quoting a survey that showed that 95% of respondents in the capital city admitted to using witchcraft. This is confirmed later on in the investigation, when Anas and Magamba visit

⁶¹⁶ A Tanzanian with the skin pigment disorder, albinism, giving his reflections on a case of a boy suffering from this disorder, whose father allowed someone to chop off parts of his son's body for a fee. These parts were intended for divination rituals and were removed while the child was awake.

an informal gold-mining operation. The respondent is asked whether miners use albino parts, and whether he would use them. The respondent confirms that miners buy powdered albino parts because they believe that such parts possess “*kismet fulani*” (concealed good fortune), to help them succeed. However, for Anas, this was a simple matter of charlatanism and the perpetrators had to be shamed and jailed. In typical Anas fashion, he set up a sting operation to sell a rubber arm to a local witchdoctor who was trading in albino parts. And unlike Rogers, Anas does not hold back. He aggressively confronts the person, thrusting the rubber part towards him while shouting “take it!” In universal investigative practice, such direct involvement by journalists is not accepted.

Critique of Anas’s and Mwangi’s extreme practice

As already described in Chapter 4 in relation to the importance of Ankomah, the process of locating difference itself cautions against condensing a phenomenon, an issue or being to any one aspect, a prominent or recognisable feature, over the processes and other parts of which it consists. Conceptually, this observes Deleuze’s idea of an organ within a large body, and thinking process of creative destruction. This organ consists of its own interconnecting parts, and it moves to connect with other organs which are constituted similarly, in order to solve a problem within this one body. However, these connections can only offer part solutions to the problem at any given moment, because the processes of connection unveil that the organs and their movements attend to aspects to the problem, thus requiring them to move and connect differently, in order to address those other aspects of the problem which arise with the prior solutions. Such is Deleuze’s process of “creative destruction;” it opens sets of solutions, while opening the problem further. Thus, while affirming the tendency to constantly deterritorialise the *Africanise* enunciation in Anas’s and Mwangi’s practice, it is crucial to note also, that the contradictions and collisions which are produced give rise to new problems concerning the idea of African solutions. This refers to those difficult but necessary things that processes of self-

formulation must incite, to force open distinct ways of thinking Africanity in its own terms. In this context, this entails uncomfortable, but generative, criticisms of the awards systems as well as of Anas and Mwangi themselves. I do this, consciously aware of my relative position: that of a scholar engaged at a distance from the real-world situations that have been changed by their processes.

One of the contradictions that emerge in relation to Anas's extreme and provocative practices, is that instead of being regarded as a political and social activist, some have assigned to him the very mystical supernatural authority that others had associated with the charlatans whom he derides and exposes. Examined closely, this contradiction has two main implications. On the one hand, this mystical impression draws admiration and simultaneously strikes anxiety among the masses, especially for those involved in the kinds of organised offenses which Anas investigates. And notably, Anas knowingly accepts its usefulness. On the other hand, it seems to authorise a strong sense of moral correctness, which transcends legal bounds. On the latter point: this seems to be an unintended result of Anas's success, as a frustrated society has lost trust in formal state institutions and draws a cathartic sense of justice from his work. Both of these points are revealed in the documentary *Chameleon*, the story of Anas by Canadian filmmaker Ryan Mullins.

On the first point: the admiration and fear of Anas is revealed in interviews conducted in the street with members of the public. Due to his strict code of anonymity, and a consistent use of different disguises for undercover roles in successful investigations, society has remained enthralled with the idea of seeing the hidden face. This is captured in the comments of one person who says: "people don't know what he looks like. I've never seen him. I don't know if he is white or black." Another says: "Some people will say he's not a human being, he can vanish at any time...he flies." Anas too, admits that people believe it. He narrates how after one

investigation, in which they exposed a doctor performing illegal abortions, stories reached him saying that he disappeared from the scene through the wall. At this moment Ryan Mullins asks Anas if he thinks that these tales work to his advantage? Anas responds that they do, when people associate him and his work with mysticism.

The second point is revealed in the events surrounding the exposure and arrests of followers in a Christian camp, the Mentukwa Mission. In the film, it is described as a sect that was using threats to dissuade followers from leaving. The main concern for Anas was that children were being held against their will, and possibly whipped into remaining pliant. The extent to which Anas pursued this case, and its eventual unfolding, raised questions around miscarriage of ethical and legal edicts with his actions, even by his own standards of straining ethical bounds for a good cause. In this case, although the investigation reveals some degree of coercion of members to remain in the camp, as well as demands for ascetic subsistence through fear, there was no unassailable proof of assault or massive human trafficking which Anas sought. This point was raised by a state prosecutor who cautioned Anas against bending the case towards a preferred result due to his detest for such beliefs. In the end, with a substantive amount of video footage collected in the camp, and interviews with some members who had left, Anas was able to show law enforcement how the Mission married off some of the young girls without their consent, after denying them any education. He also showed how people were indoctrinated and oppressed. Law enforcement then decided to raid the camp, primarily to release the children.

However, during the operation in which Anas was present, the police went ahead to demolish and torch some of the buildings after they smashed kitchen wares. This happened following the arrest of some of the Mission's leaders. Anas found himself in legal difficulty due to this wanton destruction of private property which had occurred on the strength of his investigation, and plausibly also, his celebrity. On camera, he struggles to explain the events, fearful of

incriminating himself. He is seen as contradicting himself, saying: “I saw it from a distance...no I don't recall seeing it. I didn't see it.” In this instance, Anas comes to a critical encounter with his own celebrity and convictions, which become sources of destructive authority in his usual course of dispensing justice. Put another way, Anas is forced to baulk at how his processes – the typical vigour and dogged pursuit of justice – show a great degree of self-authorising assurance, and in this case, a licence to destroy for the community. He sees how acting on the strength of previous success, permitted him to act as an infallible barometer for justice. Eventually, the government intervened in the matter in order to bring the released congregants to good health. However, the congregants continue to struggle as most members remain bound to their beliefs. That is something that could not be denied them due to the democratic right of freedom of worship.

While their activism and methods certainly cause society to face up to its failures and the complex issues it is challenged with, certain acts both in front of camera and away from it, raise the question of whether both Mwangi and Anas quietly endeavour to simultaneously position their practice and products for accolades. This is not easy to determine. However, looking at both their TED presentations and the degree of intensity that they exhibit in some of their physical confrontations in the field, it is not difficult to arrive at such a conclusion. Some of those clashes can even be characterised as intractable oppositionism, which invariably conjures a clear separation between them and the events they cover, and at times needlessly so. For instance, in the investigations into Mentukwa Mission as seen in the documentary *Chameleon*, as well as in the *The Spell of the Albino*, Anas seemed to pursue a specific course of outcomes due to his actions in certain instances.

With regard to the Mentukwa Mission as discussed above, he seemed to be pushing for a clear human trafficking case, whereas on the albino story, some of the translations for the

international audience, which are put in subtitle text, are inaccurate at very crucial points. That is, some of the translations skew or flatten nuanced meanings of the Kiswahili expressions, in a manner that veers the overall narrative to a severer description of the particular issue in question. This is seen in the interview with the informal miner regarding the acquisition and use of albino parts by the mining fraternity. A question is posed by the interpreter Magamba, about whether miners use albino parts. The verbal question is: “*ukigundua kama hiyo inaleta mali utanunua.*” This closely translates to: “if you discovered that such parts do attract wealth would you buy?” But then the subtitle text read: “and so if it brings luck, if it was brought to you would you buy?” Both legally and ethically, a mistranslation of such a complex societal issue is quite problematic, because what is insinuated or even left out can be construed as intentional in order to incriminate the speaker. And even if not intentional, the structure of the question would invariably invite an incriminating response. This is particularly so for one viewing the entire documentary, as it would seem to advance the overall theme of the story by making easy direct connections between such attacks and simple consumptive gratifications. Yet, in a very key section earlier on in the documentary, the police commander expresses the difficulty felt by the whole community, pondering, “*Huwezi kutegemea kama baba anaweza auze kweli kiungo cha mtoto wake?*” (You cannot expect [believe] that a father can indeed sell a body part of their own child?)

In his turn, Mwangi seems to push the idea of his activist persona packaged in celebrity form, especially in those instances when he needlessly provokes situations to underline his point. This almost can be argued as becoming a form of self-indulgence on the part of a self-advancing hero seeking publicity. This is not a personal opinion; rather, Mwangi has been roundly criticised by significant sections of Kenyan society for what they perceive as excessively

aggressive postures adopted by him in many confrontations with the political elite.⁶¹⁷ For instance, in a video filmed by an ordinary onlooker, Mwangi blocks the road in front of a parliamentarian who was driving his car in the incorrect lane of Parliament Road in Nairobi to evade traffic.⁶¹⁸ This action exacerbates the holdup, as he stubbornly tells the parliamentarian to return to the correct side of the road like everyone else. Then, in a recent tweet, he baits the Kenyan president:

Hey President Uhuru Kenyatta it's 7:50pm and I have spotted your motorcade on Mombasa Road en route to statehouse, 38 cars in total. The road was closed so your motorcade could pass and I counted 37 FREAKING CARS escorting you. Drop the groupies or do a mix tape!⁶¹⁹

While such events fit the ideas of a fight for equality and of enhancing respect for democratic rule, Mwangi continues to attract criticism for picking minor, if not personal, inconsequential fights to draw attention to himself and to his products. With regard to Deleuzian difference, any action taken by both Anas and Mwangi in the course of activism, whether it be self-regarding or not, it produces *events*. That is, it does something. That is why Deleuze shows that creative movements and connections can also be destructive to the assemblage, depending on the kind of processes and paths/connections affirmed. If contextualised with Mbembe, what Anas's and Mwangi's actions seem to display are some of those problematic elements which preside over relations of conviviality in the contemporary African postcolony. That is, in their extreme methods, they reveal the same capacity to exert violence in the process of pushing back, in almost similar modes as those in power, the very people they rebuke consistently. The irony,

⁶¹⁷ Some of such criticism can be seen in the public reactions to the tweet in which Mwangi baited the Kenyan president regarding his large motorcade.

⁶¹⁸ Mwangi is joined by Nation TV reporter Larry Madowo to block a Member of Parliament along Parliament Road. YouTube Video, 02:54, posted by *The Star Kenya*, December 2016. Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qrCrzPDuguI>.

⁶¹⁹ Boniface Mwangi, Twitter post, April 2, 2018, 9:55 a.m. Available at <https://twitter.com/bonifacemwangi/status/980851176131452928>.

however, is that Mwangi and Anas are spurred on by the legitimacy they receive from the African masses, whose human dignity they passionately seek to sustain.

Conclusion

How does *Africanise*, in award-winning journalism in the mould of Anas and Mwangi, repeat the enunciation of African solutions differently? A response takes us back to Hosseini's comment, already discussed in Chapter 1, that thought and action that bring difference in itself require commitment to deep connections with tangible agitating acts of activism, languages and cultural ideas within the immediate community. In this case, such connections involve the creative destruction brought about by Anas's and Mwangi's necessary and suitably extreme methods and processes, entwined with practices and processes of social production performed individually, in extremely radical transgressive acts grounded in everyday life. These surpass ideas produced in scholarly discourse. In relation to established practice, they express a distinctiveness that provokes ideas for African solutions, something intertwined with the scandal of small actions, some that might be considered excessive or hedonistic. Yet, despite the disquiet that their practice incites and its apparent unacceptability, such uneasiness and inimitability are not paralysing. Rather, if regarded closely, Anas and Mwangi offer creative ways through which thought and actions can formulate ways to continually recreate useable African solutions, despite reversals, contradictions and minor changes inside everyday African life. These ways, also articulated in Ankomah's Africanist practice, are explored with the concept *our way* in the upcoming chapter.

Do not let thinking Africa happen on your behalf, be in it, always.

(Mutinda Nzioki)

Chapter 6: Concluding Reflections on Getting Africa, *Our Way*

To conclude I must return to the beginning. The main point of entry to this study, as part of a conversation on Africa-purposed scholarship, was framed in reference to three main questions:

1. Just who does get Africa right?
2. Is there even such a thing as getting Africa right?
3. Should Africa still commit to notions of African solutions to African problems?

This last question was expanded upon further, through the sub-question: if *Africarise* does indeed apprehend the complexities around African ‘dysfunctions’, how does its enunciation articulate African solutions differently? Certainly, as shown in Chapter 3 on methodological reflections, as well as in the subsequent analyses of the enunciation of *Africarise* with Ankomah, the *New African*, and Anas and Mwangi, it is possible to validly speak of getting Africa right *without* condensing Africa and Africans to an unproblematic, packaged, finally-known entity. This is revealed at various levels. For example, through idioms, Africans demonstrate the sharp capacity of a people exercising thought and language to apprehend contingencies of their immediate world, in a manner that corresponds to universally-acclaimed modes of theorising life. At a practical level, Ankomah, Anas, and Mwangi, unveil incisive and creative actions, provoked by unending struggles by Africans to affirm their humanity, in the reality that the African person is forced to encounter and formulate difficult solutions against and in the face of severe everyday domestic problems including, those of political and economic insufficiency. Those problems are intensified by the burden of a universalised neoliberal capitalist cynicism, which continually feeds philosophical, epistemological and material conceptions of Africa’s deficits, and indeed invisibility.

The African philosopher Uchenna Okeja explains this struggle aptly with the simple example of the African passport document.⁶²⁰ The sight of this document provokes a certain diffident contempt, which delivers a quiet humiliation. The latter is what Mazrui in his turn describes as the “most exasperating” kind of humiliation, because the African crossing into the West is often uncertain whether it is happening and why, bearing in mind the extensive catalogue of lingering historical factors that prop up anti-black prejudice.⁶²¹ Worse still, this kind of humiliation is increasingly being exhibited in post-independence contemporary Africa, where the considerably flourishing countries target fellow African nations and their African inhabitants as lacking. At a deeper level, the agony of this struggle is laid bare by the precarity and ‘anxieties’ surrounding African lives unapologetically seeking to lift themselves out of economic hardship, by risking death in attempts to cross to the West “to become somebody”. That is how Victory – a returnee Nigerian migrant – put it, following a brutalising experience as a slave in Libya⁶²² subsequent to a failed attempt to get to Europe. Thus, quite rightly, for Okeja, Africa and Africans, especially those in positions of influence, bear the obligation of finding development solutions, because development failures have become untenable. There is a need to transform African societies such that Africans do not need to seek to ‘flee’ to Europe or the West. This certainly needs to be done, but then the next question is, how?

As already discussed in Chapter 1, the question “how?” as a concept of organising thought processes, may appear to be counterintuitive to this study’s ontology of difference, as it may

⁶²⁰ Uchenna Okeja, “On the Question of Development: A Philosophical Inquiry”, in *Law, Governance and Development*, Essays in Honor of Ieanyi Ugwuanyi, Governor, Enugu State Nigeria, ed. Agu Gab Agu, Ike Oluka and Ife Ogbonna (Enugu: Snap Press, 2016), 431- 451.

⁶²¹ Ali Mazrui, “The Cross of Humiliation” (Lecture 2, Reith Series on The African Condition, BBC Radio 4, London, November 14, 1979).

⁶²² Victory was among a number of migrating Nigerians who in the past two years were detained by traffickers in Libya, and then sold into slavery. He was released after his family paid ransom to the cartel. Lillian Leposo and Domonique Van Heerden, “After Finding Freedom, This Former Slave is Now Homeless and Hungry”, CNN, March 1, 2018. Available at <https://edition.cnn.com/2018/03/01/africa/nigeria-freed-slave-libya-intl/index.html>. Accessed March 5, 2018.

infer a simple, expected, answer. That is why this study postulates that the how of getting Africa right is primarily a matter of the appropriate ontological commitments or the ground, and the method by which Africa is entered. That is to say, how one allows oneself to affirm processes of thinking in difference, to reveal paths or sets of solutions – some which are already familiar to Africans. In this case, ‘how’ proposes the concept of *our way* – also discussed in Chapter 1 – as the ground, the *idea*, for thinking and methods that can get Africa right. As the elaboration on African idioms in Chapter 3 aimed to demonstrate, such a method entails thinking creatively, by connecting anew with existing African ideas and those in the ‘street’, quite accepting of, or untroubled by, the fact that this might well lead them to connecting with universally-useful concepts. Mbembe describes this as involving processes of an evolving African subject using other “languages of life”, a subject committed to apprehending Africa in itself. These languages are those learned and shared by a people compelled to formulate themselves (and by implication their humanity) through relatable pasts – *longue durée* – in address of the contemporary adversities of their *age*.⁶²³

Overall, because it constitutes the concluding chapter to this study, this discussion seeks not only to consolidate the conceptual premise of difference in itself as a useful method for enabling African thought. Perhaps more importantly, it places emphasis on the exhortation offered in the introduction to this study, that more reawakenings can be conceived. However, what this requires of African scholarship is to connect, repurpose and affirm, or, to give speed/velocity to already-existing African expressions, scholarly and in the street by a newer generation of Africans.

⁶²³ Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, 15.

Explaining ontological commitments

The concept ontology is largely spoken of in terms of that area of philosophy that deals with the nature of being, or what it is to be something, and is raised through such questions as what is being human, what is being an animal, what is being free. However, the process involved in responding to those and other such questions cannot be confined to the discipline of philosophy alone. This process describes the act and place of beginning a reflective search, or speculative thinking aimed at a deep scrutiny of reality, for anyone who is so inclined. Such a process not only seeks to know “what beings, things, ideas, objects and realities that populate one’s world”; most importantly, it also seeks to grasp those things, which one pledges “to assert and affirm as existing, and important to life, one’s thoughts, and reality”.⁶²⁴ Given that this study seeks a partial re-opening of space in African scholarship and thought in relation to the ontology of difference in itself and becoming, then apprehending Africa ought to be grounded in affirming the following key basics as illustrated in three readings of Mbeki’s question “Who will define Africa?”⁶²⁵

First, the concept of what thinking is, and thought about Africa and Africanity, must not be imprisoned. Rather, thinking Africa ought to involve a commitment to continually think differently. This draws on the key arguments of this study in Chapter 3, where Deleuze criticises the notion that thinking as a commonly available good sense, built on certain universal rules, which are authorised by prominent scholarly disciplines; and Mbembe’s related warning that thinking Africa will suffer as these rules present a distorted Africa, one that is strange to itself. And so, with Deleuze and Mbembe, this study asserts that thinking remains an activity, and a capacity of the mind to encounter life in Africa, and it should not be regarded as a ‘known’

⁶²⁴ “Manuel Delanda, Metaphysics as Ontology: Aristotle and Deleuze’s Realism”, filmed October 2011, YouTube Video, 1:31:48, posted by European Graduate School Video Lectures, October 13, 2011. Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1ZjMKGTYfK4>.

⁶²⁵ Mbeki, “Who Will Define Africa?”, 24-27.

thing; that is, as a dominant format, specified by prominent scholarly disciplines or social practices. As the philosopher Richard Rorty put it, this assertion involves irony, a creative destruction where one carries radical continuing doubts about the “final vocabularies” employed in one’s world, as one encounters contingencies within immediate realities. That process opens other impressive vocabularies with which one can affirm certain ideas as most fitting for grasping reality. But at the same time, because of persistent awareness of contingent transformations, irony denies one the certainty that this fitting vocabulary is the final truth.⁶²⁶ That is to say, if ideas on what it is to think are either based on a general assumption that everybody knows what thinking is, or (relatedly) conform to a dominant format of how one should think about Africa, it matters less whether a discourse or practice is external to Africa or considered to be African. By confining thought to such dominant moulds without accounting for other modes and processes of reflection, most particularly that of the individual within the situation itself, then whatever Africa is producing by way of identifying its problems and proposing notions of solutions, will remain severely inadequate and programmed. In mapping, this infers encoded thinking, which would offer an ‘Africa package’, fitted with existing paths presenting a range of problems and solutions for all Africans. In such a condition, thinking as a capacity to respond to those things of African life which the mind encounters, is impeded each time it attempts to act outside the range specified in such ‘Africa packages’.

On grounding Africa, Mbembe has described a two-fold problematic.⁶²⁷ Firstly, there exists a tendency of recourse to a fraught discourse on Africa: one of negativity, of an Africa perpetually caught in absolute otherness, and always explained on the basis of an arche-writing, an initial identity it never possessed, without opening space for the continent to manifest its self-presence. Secondly, there is the issue of presentism: a discourse of the gap or lack, between what the

⁶²⁶ Richard Rorty, *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 73-75.

⁶²⁷ Mbembe, “On the Postcolony”, 147.

continent is, and what is told about what the continent ought to be. That is why, as already shown in Chapters 3 and 4, each time a well-defined package or essential representation of a thing is given, including of Africa, it is always incomplete. This is because it excludes the minor yet necessarily significant components which retain autonomous power to do something that will reconfigure the entire thing in itself, in the immediate world.

Thinking Africa with Mbeki's "who?"

The first reading Mbeki's question "who shall define Africa?" specifies Africa in terms of Mbembe's first form of problematic, where getting Africa right is packaged as thinking by an African, anti-Western mind, based in Africa, and grounded solely in ancient African ideals. Examples include Afrocentric enunciations in Ankomah's *New African*, and in the extreme, Chinweizu's Egypto-thoughts for uniquely Afrocentric renaissance media. Altogether, they bring an understandable response to particular racist chauvinism that affronts the dignity the African, a chauvinism expressed within Euro-American media ever since the "imperialist media" of the colonial era.⁶²⁸ Considering that the conclusions to Mbeki's, Chinweizu's and Ankomah's argument is that Africa – or rather Africans – must learn to tell their own stories, the pronoun "Who" seems to compress diverse processes of producing African social reality in media to a unified Africanity or African thought, based on geographical location and marked by certain permanent truths. That is why Mbeki's article – which bears this question who will define Africa? as its title – indicts major publications like *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* for pathologising Africa using dominant frames that consistently focus on incurable diseases. For Chinweizu, the petition for Africa's rising through an absolutely Afrocentric media practice and scholarship, proposes the adoption of the Ten Commandments

⁶²⁸ Chinweizu, "Towards the African Renaissance Media", 371-373.

listed in *The Teachings of Ptahhotep*, a book of circa 3200 BC.⁶²⁹ The basic rules are: discover truth accurately and humanely; exercise fairness and at the sight of profit; remember what is right; exercise wisdom without inflaming; give warning without inciting; and importantly, be Afrocentric and thereby stay loyal to African civilisation.

In view of the Ten Commandments themselves, and particularly the above-listed basic rules, Anas and Mwangi in their uncompromising, lay-it-bare exposés motivated by the desire for Africa to act differently, fail this African test. Conceptually, this definition of “who” (un)wittingly falls into simplifications of Aristotelian ground, which explains complex things by packaging them into neat pre-determined categories based on simple physically-observable traits like skin colour and region. In this case, race and geography condense Africa and African issues to unusual non-Western things. Surely then, Chinweizu’s Ten Commandments cannot guarantee markedly different treatments of Africa, any more than the universally-advocated elements of journalism can, irrespective of who is reporting. As media researchers Bill Kovach and Tom Rosenstiel outline, for a media practice, including journalism, to fulfil its purpose it must observe some key obligations: pursue truth; allocate first loyalty to citizens; maintain independence from those one covers; and keep news proportional and relevant.⁶³⁰

To turn attention to the second ground or arche-narrative of gap/lack: if “who” is not confined to the limited categories of race, nationality and/or geographical region, and is instead conceived as anyone whose practice and discourse strictly adheres to universal principles of objective practice, then thinking Africa differently for itself also fails. This second ground describes a more surreptitious, yet intractable, problem due to the supremacy of supposedly infallible common sense, or universal reason. Put simply, it entails a Euro-American libertarian

⁶²⁹ Ptahhotep is the name of an Egyptian regarded as counsellor (*vizier*) to the Pharaoh, who wrote some of the oldest books in world history. See for instance, <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/museums-static/digitalegypt/Welcome.html>.

⁶³⁰ Bill Kovach and Tom Rosenstiel, *The Elements of Journalism* (London: Guardian Books, 2003), 12.

ideal of detached objectivity in relation to any experience. It manifests as an undisputable standard of gauging representations of social truths, in any situation, within modern (neo)liberal democracies. Accordingly, it is generally taken as a given that for media practice this approximates a best practice. Conceptually, this infers the Platonic *Idea*: a process of laying true ground, or foundation, to unveil a thing itself by relating it to “the One”, an ‘original’ based on an analogy of the ‘ideal/best one’. So, while the idea of emulating a best model/best practice of media expression can be generative, insistence on matching ‘the One’ as the ultimate goal, imposes debilitating and superfluous demands to thinking and writing Africa differently (because of a mythical ideal of media processes that never cedes its perfection in actuality). Such ground noiselessly forecloses other possibilities and ideas that can offer authoritative and inventive ways of encountering Africa differently. Thus, attachment to universal best practice within African productions will battle to shed perceptions that the productions are ‘poor copies’, if they remain fixated on how to adjust towards that elusive best, which is always absent. This partly explains why discussions on media treatments of Africa and solutions to its problems, provoke debates around the moral legitimacy of proposing solutions, based on how closely objectivity as best practice has been employed. This is evident at a period when descriptions of progress (‘correct’ modernity) magnify Africa’s dysfunctions in relation to analogies of ‘best’, first-world civilisations – a conception reinforced precisely by the rise in the number of Africans migrants attempting to enter Western countries. And so Robert Guest, Paul Foster, and those others who wrote narratives concerning “the hopeless continent”, will be deemed more credible in proposing solutions, than Ankomah who is seen to undermine his claim for best solutions due to his apparent lack of ‘objectivity’.

Our Way: Thinking Africa for itself

As argued above, the inadequacies around thinking Africa in these readings of Mbeki’s “who” are attributable to the foundational *Ideas* adopted or countered, invariably producing abnormal

and/or inferior proposals for unreachable ideal solutions. So, then, what other positions remain for getting Africa right? Owomoyela's conceptualisation of *our way* opens a path of possibilities by disclosing another ground, one that exposes an ontological gap in these two aforementioned grounds. As shown in the upcoming discussion, this path connects *our way* to Deleuze's idea of "irony", or creative-destruction, which is caused by tension in the question-problem complex. However, before I delve into this argument, it is important to state why this study adopts Owomoyela's thought, especially when it seems to vilify invaluable contributions to African thought and Africanness by a number of revered African luminaries who are referenced in the preceding chapters. These are Valentin-Yves Mudimbe and Paulin Hountondji, as well as Anthony Appiah. Firstly, in adopting and repurposing *our way*, this study remains consistent with its ontological commitment as outlined in its framework, to connect with ideas in movements of *agencement*. That is, connections of creative-destruction which open new thinking for solutions to existing problems, rendering key parts of the problems clearer while unveiling certain difficulties which cannot be resolved with any finality, but rather demand more creative connections with more ideas to increase the degree of clarity in relation to the same problem. Put differently, this means connecting anew with incisive African ideas in affirmative ways, in order to give them new speed, or the intensity necessary for encountering contemporary questions. As such, it is not a matter of according greater loyalty to Owomoyela as an African scholar, over those other luminaries whose ideas have also enriched this study. Secondly, Owomoyela's criticism of these scholars ought to be read against a specific context, and it must also be remembered that those he criticised shifted their philosophical positions over time. But yet, the most contentious issues criticised by Owomoyela and as will be discussed below, still persist to the present. In short, Owomoyela's criticism came at a time when African studies, African philosophy, and literature were grappling with the issue of finding a unique epistemological identity, against the overwhelming influence of Western epistemology on African knowledge production after independence. Thus, Owomoyela does

not in any way seek to diminish the invaluable contributions to African thought made by these scholars, especially regarding the need to develop modes of rigorous rational questioning in African scholarly endeavour, and recording those individual and collective thought engagements in order to develop sharply, a body of knowledge that can help in meeting Africa's aspirations for scientific and economic development over time. Rather, his criticism forms part of a broader critique by African thinkers, which raises concerns over the positions adopted by African professional scholars – particularly African philosophers – in devaluing some African traditional modes of knowing, in a way that inadvertently reinforces Africa as grotesque, as represented in the very Western epistemology they critique. The main concern is the tendency towards forceful dismissal of traditional modes of knowing, which are deemed ill-equipped to elevate Africa to meet the challenge of modern development, due to what they regard as irreducible notions of African culture, unanimity, and a proclivity for recidivism to an essential Africa.

Returning to my use of Owomoyela, the idea of irony or the question-problem complex, means that any ground purporting to offer a final solution to a problem encountered by different individuals, finds itself turning into a source for new ground, which incites multiple responses and processes to hidden solutions, that is, many cases for problems yet to be solved.⁶³¹ As will be seen in the next section, Owomoyela's critique of Africanist practice unveils how entering into and reacting to such grounds – that is, arche-narratives of Africa as absolute other and of gap/lack – impose conceptual cul-de-sacs, regardless of one's earnest intentions. However, by opening the ontological gap in creative-destruction, *our way* shows how affirmations of certain processes in that very ground can yield other meaningful and sharper understandings of the very problems and situations they seek to uncover and address. Furthermore, and of great importance to this study, *our way* allows one to repurpose Mbembe's idea of an evolving African subject's

⁶³¹ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 62-63.

“other languages of life” – ways of knowing and doing – as repositories for inventive responses, more suitable African solutions to immediate problems. These include cultural lingual expressions and practices, modes of thought and knowledges, as well as artistic performances, which are relatable among diverse Africans within contemporary situations. These languages concomitantly reflect and can work to *produce* new social relations, modes of questioning, and other unfamiliar or ‘unideal’ responses. Affirming these languages can enable intimate understandings of Africa and Africanity, albeit with moments of contradictions – bearing in mind that contradiction to the extent that it is tied to difference, is highly generative.

In the article titled “With friends like these...A Critique of Pervasive Anti-Africanisms in Current African Studies Epistemology and Methodology”,⁶³² Owomoyela criticises both professional Africanists (full-time scholars of Africa attached to knowledge institutions), and non-African Africanists, for patronal⁶³³ attitudes towards the African continent, its people, its cultures and its future. For him, although Africanist practice sets out to respond to Africa with good intentions, a number of reputable Africanists routinely fabricate an Africa that was never really in existence; in other words, ‘the One’, without the gap/lack – how it ‘ought’ to be. This tendency signals discrepancies between the methodologies of African studies, and the important, well-known relational principles that inform interpersonal engagements within African cultures, which emphasise attentiveness to the human dignity of others, in all aspects of life.⁶³⁴ This view accords with Nyamnjoh’s caution against the adoption of academically-useful methods that at the same time show indifference to ideas of African personhood. To return to Owomoyela: in his view, a proper Africanist practice ought to first commit to being

⁶³² Owomoyela “With Friends Like These...”, 77-101.

⁶³³ Owomoyela’s use of the term “patronal” is not clear. If fixated upon, it can cause difficulty in reading his critiques. On the one hand, the term may refer to these luminary Africanists as exhibiting a sainthood, an authority to speak with good intention as defenders of Africa, regardless of flaws in their ideas. At the same time, it can be read as indicating condescension, given the unintended negative effects of their ideas offered with authority.

⁶³⁴Owomoyela, “With Friends Like These...”, 77.

pro-African, or, Africa-purposed. That means, thinking Africa for itself, grounded in a spirit or attitude that commits to producing and enabling better African life and humanity. But, crucially, this requires that Africanists disengage from attempts at sanitising the above-discussed problematic conceptual grounds. This is because when these grounds are openly entered, thinking processes and thinking Africa become knotted inescapably. Subsequently, these Africanists are compelled towards aggressive moves to erase or negate those very concepts/ground, upon seeing the kind of difficult questions their ideas might provoke.

To offer a few examples of Owomoyela's critique: he begins with criticising Valentin-Yves Mudimbe's idea of the "invention of Africa".⁶³⁵ He shows how Mudimbe somehow reproduces Africa "the land of the grotesque", comparable to the one produced by the very colonialist attitudes Mudimbe sets out to negate. For Owomoyela, dwelling on the discourse of inventions makes Mudimbe's practice one of de-Africanising Africa and expunging African experience, as it takes those representations of grotesqueness – of ugly inferior creatures – as the dominant reference on Africa. This comes in Mudimbe's plea to Africans to shun some of their own physical and cultural traits, simply because of ill-intentioned descriptions, which he deemed to be the dominant or sole reference on Africa, adopted by Africans themselves. Thus, Mudimbe inadvertently becomes an agent of a discourse which affirms a notion of 'ideal beings'.⁶³⁶ Relatedly, on Africa as pathology, Owomoyela criticises Africanist texts which acknowledge African ways while simultaneously deriding Africans for their religions, customs, and expressions of spirituality through employment of terms such as "mystical ecstasy". As seen in Chapter 5, this criticism implicates Anas, as well as Tanzanian journalist Richard Magamba, for their uncritical description of some African traditions beliefs using labels connoting kinds of backwardness and primitiveness that can only be associated with charlatans.

⁶³⁵ Ibid., 77-78.

⁶³⁶ Ibid., 78-79.

In turn, on literacy and non-literary traditions of Africa, Owomoyela offers sharp criticism of Henry Louis Gates, and the African philosophers Paulin Hountondji and Anthony Kwame Appiah. At the time, these latter three principally concurred with a European ‘elitist’ (Kantian/Hegelian) view on progress in world history,⁶³⁷ one which proposed that without written languages, or in the absence of texts to prove capacity for speculative thought, there could be no ordered repetition of memory and thus no intellectual development and progress. Simply put, it was held that progress for most societies is only possible with written philosophy, history and science. Although these thinkers did not deny the possible existence of intellectual enterprise in pre-colonial Africa, they saw exclusively oral traditions as disadvantageous with regard to the incremental yet sustained building of strong civilisations. In relation to this position, while Owomoyela agrees with the necessity to record, he concurs with philosopher Henry Odera Oruka in rejecting the overemphasising of the literacy thesis, particularly because such emphasis on literacy inordinately conflates reading and writing ability with intellect, or considers it, even, as a precondition for rational thought and scientific curiosity.⁶³⁸ Such conflation unwittingly reinforces the notion of an inferior ‘African mind’. As Oruka cautioned, “literacy is not a necessary condition for philosophical reflection and exposition”.⁶³⁹ Notably, Deleuze offers a similar observation when he argues that thinking does not only happen through philosophy and neither does philosophical thought, even though philosophy as an academic enterprise requires certain tools, including literacy, to produce concepts through which it can guide different modes of philosophical thought.⁶⁴⁰

⁶³⁷ Ibid., 79-80.

⁶³⁸ Henry Odera Oruka, “Sagacity in African Philosophy”, *International Philosophical Quarterly* 23 no. 4 (1983): 385-386, 390-391.

⁶³⁹ Ibid., 391.

⁶⁴⁰ Deleuze, *Two Regimes of Madness*, 176.

Other criticisms important to this discussion include Afrocentrism and objective ethnographic observations. Owomoyela understands the good intentions of Afrocentricity insofar as its advancing of the African subject as equally human, and of Africa as being capable of greatness like all other civilisations, are concerned. However, he does criticise the immense effort applied by Afrocentrists to reclaim Egypt and Egyptian history as ground for the ‘essential’ Africa and Africanness. According to him, such moves offer sufficient justification for the movement to be called Egyptocentrism instead, because “it is in effect Afrocentricity without Africa”.⁶⁴¹ Lastly, and related to literacy, Owomoyela also criticises the notion of objective ethnography; that is, self-authorising observations the legitimacy of which is based on the notion of objective detachment. Commonly, such observations rely on certain privileged modes of social production, drawing on the often-uncontested ‘bourgeois’ concepts used for explaining any key social issue; for instance those pertaining to slavery, patriarchy, poverty, as well as good governance.⁶⁴² Owomoyela argues that this method of ‘objective’ ethnography entails a patronising attitude that grows from idea of ‘best practice’, one that claims possession of neutral tools capable of grasping Africa and its modes of interpersonal relations in detachment from its history. For Owomoyela, the failure in this method becomes obvious, especially its deficiency in reading an enabling ethos in African interpersonal relations, which seeks ways of sustaining community even through frictions. Accordingly, treatments of African issues with such a detached bearing, for example, on authority, gender relations, or wealth, tend to be framed in typically exploitative and predatory terms. Even more spitefully, attempts to innovate and counter such ‘professional’ approaches, through for example, use of alternative registers such as African proverbs, have often invited scorn. This has occurred when Africans seeking to demonstrate the importance of being connected to their lived world, are ridiculed for relying on allegedly unscholarly, or outdated, knowledge.

⁶⁴¹ Owomoyela, “With Friends Like These...”, 94-95.

⁶⁴² *Ibid.*, 83-88, 90.

Our Way: Thinking Africa for itself

Owomoyela's main proposition for a scholarship committed to Africa itself is for Africanist practice to be infused with attitudes and an ethos which articulate African familial, or relational discourses – as Nyerere described it, *Ujamaa*.⁶⁴³ Owomoyela explains this proposition with the Yoruba saying, *Ìjèsà tó j́su lójà, ara wa kó; Ìjèsà tó kó petéèsì, ara wa ni*. This translates as: *the ijesa person who steals yams in the market is not one of us; the ijesa person who builds a highrise house is one of us*.⁶⁴⁴ This perspective on Owomoyela's part arises from his interrogation of Appiah's arguments against any biological essence of race whereby he rejects the biologisation of African culture through racialism. To sum up, although race has no genetic basis, aside from it being a European construct for determining hierarchies among diverse people in a single area based on the accident of skin colour, its function remains powerful in other respects as well. So, despite the power of Appiah's argument against race essentialism, Owomoyela finds no compelling reason for the adoption of non-racialism in relation to Africinity, or reasons for abolishing tribe as a notion akin to race.

In his view, Africinity does not place emphasis on the accidents of genes and skin colour, nor on contingent human events (even those irrefutably painful like slavery), which are associated with a diversity of people who find themselves coalesced in one place. After all, those events are now irreversible. So instead, Africinity concerns those principles, institutions, and practices, along with philosophical and theological rationalisations, that sustain these people. And all these are (or at least should be) underpinned by the principles of upholding familial

⁶⁴³ A distinction should be made between the idea of *Jamaa*-family, as nurturing family relations entailing the practice of power and the dispensing of authority, and the commonly-known concept of *Ujamaa*, which is a political ideology or strategy of African socialism that presupposes rural egalitarian communalism. Although the latter failed, Nyerere often asked society to think about and treat all neighbours as family who should not be exploited. See for example: Julius Nyerere, "Leaders Must Not Be Masters", in *African Philosophy: An Anthology*, ed. Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1998), 77-80.

⁶⁴⁴ Owomoyela, "With Friends Like These...", 81-82.

relations, and being human. Owomoyela draws on African scholar Kweyi Armah's idea of *our way*, to argue that Africanity implies a certain way, a learned way in which people relate to one another, to the environment, and to the universe: yet one that is not necessarily beyond the capacity of other people.⁶⁴⁵ However, most importantly, this *way* is one that Africans have historically embraced. That is why when claims like “blood is thicker than water” are used by Africans, they simply articulate the significance of certain *obligations* that primarily uphold familial bonds, and these extend to engagements with other members of the community in this shared space. This thickness and bonds have nothing to do with a mystical power in the blood. And so, the basis for belonging – *Ijesaness* – within this relationship as the proverb says, is consent, revolving around agreements and relatedly, obligation to affirm certain learned and shared principles which remain useful to African cultures and sustain the group in question. At the same time, within such agreements, belonging can be suspended, vacated or withdrawn temporarily, or even permanently.⁶⁴⁶ For instance, this can be activated both communally and individually, if a member strongly disagrees with ameliorative sanctions handed to “one who steals”, or one who by choice detaches from the weight of these obligations, as a pre-emptive tactic to avoid collisions.

Why *our way* and not simply *ubuntu*

On the surface, *our way* as described here appears to be a mirror cognate, as it were, of the commonly-held notion of *ubuntu*. The idea of *ubuntu* is especially compelling if one focuses on the fact that it ultimately seeks to elevate the African, with values that focus on the human being, their dignity and their character. South African philosopher Mogobe Ramose sums up the gist of *ubuntu* through voicing the proverb, “*Feta kgomo o tshware motho*”— ‘go past the cow and catch the human being’. In other words, in whatever situation a person finds

⁶⁴⁵ Ibid., 82-83.

⁶⁴⁶ Ibid.

themselves, they should always go past, or see beyond, the cow (understood as an object of wealth), and catch or apprehend the person, the human.⁶⁴⁷ A more satirical expression is given to such an injunction in the allegory of Ibrahim the teacher, a village wise man who causes a spectacle when he physically feeds his elegant gown noisily proclaiming “eat, o gown, eat”. This happens after Ibrahim returns to a village party dressed in this elegant gown; before this, the discomfited host had turned him away for entering the feasting hall with his usual garb which was deemed to be not ‘respectable’ for the occasion.⁶⁴⁸ Ibrahim refuses to let his personhood, his humanity be subordinated to an object, even one as necessary as a good attire for such an event. While this study acknowledges the resonance between *our way* and *ubuntu*, and indeed the power in the ethic of *ubuntu*, it moves away from promoting *ubuntu* in the main. Instead, it favours *our way*, which proposes a different ground for ontological commitments to African solutions, one that injects new speed into related African ideas, including those uncommon, thought-provoking aspects of *ubuntu* as delineated by philosopher Thaddeus Metz. In short, this study proposes looking beyond moral theory as applied ethics in politics, and connecting with other thought and processes that can enable African life, including activism for social justice, knowledge production, and popular commentary.

Returning to Metz for a moment, his discussion on *ubuntu* deserves further elaboration for the new thinking. Metz presents *ubuntu* as a powerful, applied, African moral ethic that rivals in dominance both Kantianism (right action as that which can be universal law), and Utilitarianism (right action as that which brings maximum benefit to the majority). In seeking to elevate human dignity in all situations, even specific, highly contextual ones, *ubuntu* allows for moderate partialism while remaining conscious of the necessity of the rules and laws in place to ensure

⁶⁴⁷ Mogobe B. Ramose, “The Death of Democracy and the Resurrection of Timocracy”, *Journal of Moral Education* 39 no. 3 (2010): 291.

⁶⁴⁸ Margery Ellen Thorp, *Ibrahim the Teacher, and Other Stories* (London: Longman, 1960).

total impartialism in dealings with the community as a whole.⁶⁴⁹ In *our way*, like in *ubuntu*, the moral value of an action is always placed on identifying and sharing a life with the other. Key to Metz's particular argument is that a partial action, for instance awarding a job to a friend, or to pre-preferred candidate, can be the right action for the benefit of community, if in such specific instances such choice enables human dignity and life of the many.⁶⁵⁰ This is despite the revered view that the efficacy of a social contract hinges on total impartiality. The above-described perspective helps to account for why Anas and Mwangi, who were discussed in Chapter 5, command an enormous degree of legitimacy as bringers of justice among the people, because their activist journalistic practice always teeters on unlawfulness in its commitment to enhance the human dignity of every person, and especially of the poor whom the system disregards. As Anas has said, when the system no longer works, one must side with the people.

Connecting *Ijesaness* (belonging) and *ubuntu*

With the succeeding discussion in mind, it is posited here that *our way* expresses the following tenets:

- It holds that a collective dynamic for Africanity rests on firm ethical beliefs that count as African among variety of sub-Saharan peoples sharing one space. Such beliefs are have sustained them, even though not everyone will be aware of it. Examples include respect for the elderly, communal responsibility to promote good behaviour, and being subject to ameliorative justice since childhood, sharing even the least of food items without causing embarrassment to those in need.
- As a preferred philosophical interpretation of African values, *our way* places harmonious/friendly relations at the centre of right action.

⁶⁴⁹ Thaddeus Metz, "African Moral Theory and Public Governance: Nepotism, Preferential Hiring and Other Partiality", in *African Ethics: An Anthology of Comparative and Applied Ethics*, ed. Munyaradzi Felix Murove (Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2009), 336-339.

⁶⁵⁰ Metz, "African Moral Theory and Public Governance", 338.

- *Our way*, just like normative African ethics, requires agents to act for the well-being of others, by insisting on continued improvement of one's character as key to the development of better solutions for the community. In other words, it goes beyond the common view that the moral value of an action hinges largely on its long-term effects on quality of life (usually, through promoting the happiness of others – consequentialism) – with little attention paid to individual character-building.
- Most importantly, whereas the rightness of an individual utilitarian act expects that success in benefiting others must also necessarily benefit or protect that individual in some way, the African principle makes no such demand to elevating the self.⁶⁵¹ This says, while *our way* will reflect some utilitarian features, insofar as individual belonging to this community implies that one's actions also rest on agreements intended to assist life for the long term, *Ijesaness* (belonging) on the contrary, involves deliberate obligations to enable *others*, entered through processes of learning within that shared space. However, since belonging can also be vacated, right action will not expect that the individual extract some benefit or elevate themselves, even though the option to vacate may appear as self-preservation. Simply put, even when vacating, such action is done in awareness that enabling others remains the foremost objective.

A moving example of the above is taken from Anas's interview with a Tanzanian police superintendent, Paulo Kasebago, over the mutilating of the albino child Adam.⁶⁵² Kasebago's repulsed disbelief over the viciousness of this act centres on the extent to which the act betrays a number of African principles which concern the preservation the human being, family – *Jamaa* – and community. In his narration of the brutality of the acts committed against Adam,

⁶⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 343.

⁶⁵² See the relevant section in Anas's investigative documentary *Spell of the Albino*, 06:30-07:17.

by both Adam's father and the visitor who harvested Adam's body parts, Kasebago's expresses the following in Kiswahili:

Lakini wamekaa naye mpaka wakala ugali wa usiku, [pause], wamemkaribisha pale, wakala ugali. Na mtu huwezi kutegemea kama baba, anaweza auze kweli, kiungo cha mtoto wake. Inasikitisha.

(And they sat down with the visitor until they had *ugali*⁶⁵³ for dinner, [pause], they welcomed him for *ugali*. No one expects a father to sell a body part of his own child. This is agonising.)

In restating that the offenders, that is Adam's father and the buyer of the parts, had sat down at the same table for *ugali* with the victim, Kasebago is pointing at the inconceivable callousness entailed in treating Adam as cruelly as (if not more cruelly than) one would an animal "asset" being butchered.⁶⁵⁴ Such brutality crashes the value of fellowship that comes with sharing a meal. Above all, it is the impaired character of a father who will sacrifice the life and happiness of his own blood, for money, irrespective of the pressures imposed by poverty. This is best captured by another albino Patrick Timothy, mentioned in Chapter 5, who asks: "*ni umaskini wa aina gani?*" – what kind of poverty pushes one to kill their own blood? Ultimately, for this community, the failure in character on the part of both Adam's father and the buyer, is displayed in the brazen abuse of familial trust in the process of destroying the future of this community.

Africanity's difference: Mbeki's third "who?"

Conceptually, Owomoyela's above-mentioned proverb allows this study to begin the process of repurposing *our way* as ground for ontology of difference itself. If its sections, "who builds a highrise is one of us", and, "who steals yams is not one of us", are viewed through the lens of his subsequent proposition that Africanity is *open*, as it involves learned ways of belonging

⁶⁵³ *Ugali* is an African staple meal, made from ground maize, or mealie meal.

⁶⁵⁴ This is as described by Mbembe on relations of arbitrary violence in commandement. Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, 40-46.

through agreed-upon principles, philosophies and rationalisations embraced by Africans who find themselves sharing space, then one witnesses here a Deleuzian continual movement, as well as possible connections and multiple ways of coexisting. All these are features of processes of manufacturing difference. Together these two sections of the proverb point to creative possibilities for thinking and action for contemporary African solutions, due to the interconnections that can be achieved. However, as discussed below, that requires linking these parts of the proverb systematically with key ideas already presented by way of this study's conceptual framework, a task to which I now turn.

Firstly, *our way* dispenses with the tendency to rely on an image of thought that propounds a permanent and homogenous Africa and Africanity. This tendency is often provoked by a craving for certitude, one based in an essential identity of Africa and Africanity entirely distinct from all others. It is in critical recognition of the danger of essentialism that Owomoyela opens Africanity for difference with the following caveat: that it is possible to make valid general statements about Africa, Africans, and cultural habits, without implying an eternally unchanging uniformity through history. Relatedly, as Metz observes, such general statements rest largely on shared beliefs in the sub-Saharan region, even if not everyone is aware of them. As already noted, Africanity involves openly embracing certain learned processes and shared cultural understandings, institutions and principles that have sustained a people living in close proximity without requiring an 'original' grounding concept such as race.

In ontology of difference, this defines the very sense of being alive, where all thinking, learning, should begin inside, connected to life's immediate processes, while yet coexisting with and impacted by the past. Thus for Owomoyela, those are affirmed processes of human relations that have evolved through Africa's history: ranging from human respect across gender; shared senses of ethical responsibility; the dispensing of ameliorative justice; moral upbringing; and

spirituality – which can continually enable African life. If this argument is taken into the contemporary African postcolony, *our way* also speaks of Africa and Africanity as shared entanglements in the *longue durée*; of coexistence of various local pasts with the politico-economic concerns of the present neoliberal global order. Okeja's earlier-discussed example of the maligned African passport is instructive when it comes to grasping *our way*. This is because it captures the shared senses of Africa, Africans and Africanity today. Negativity towards such passports speaks of a sense of being historically downtrodden, of being an outsider to the world, constantly fighting for recognition as equally human. And so, the passport will stir, in varying intensities, shared anxieties over how it feels to be colonised, and also self-doubt relating to the worth of blackness, the constant economic struggle, and the conflict-ridden fact of ethno-tribal belonging.

Secondly, *our way* describes belonging in Africanity, *Ijesaness*, as being hinged on the capacity to learn, to create meanings of the world, and to reshape it. This says, *our way* involves connections of *agencement* entailing capacity to learn, create and affirm life. As Owomoyela puts it, to belong as one of us involves commitment to embraced, learned ways in the spirit of sustaining a people and the environment. At the same time, it can also be vacated, if one's character shows indifference or fails to enable relations and life, by "stealing yams" or by being one who "dumps manure" (faeces) on others. Examined closely, that capacity to learn, to enable, and to vacate, is captured in the postulates offered by Mbembe in defence of the equal human capacity of the African subject. For Mbembe, the African subject does not exist apart from acts that produce social reality, or the processes by which meanings are attached to such acts. Thus, the African subject engages in meaningful acts of producing Africanity, ones that might not make sense to everybody in the same way. In summary, the difference itself in *our way*, when the arguments offered above are taken together, manifests through Africanity as processes of continually productive connections and collisions among diverse thinking beings,

negotiating and finding moments of agreement to come up with and to sustain solutions within their assemblages (political, cultural, economic, and social) inside Africa.

Again, although agreements are needed for solutions, there are also problems and moments of disruption. However, Africanity emphasises openness to learn – the spirit of affirming those processes that enable the assemblages, and discouraging destructive connections by which human life is injured or lost. That said, and in keeping with the complexity of existence of which Deleuze and Mbembe are acutely aware, both the generative and the destructive will linger, to force new solutions through reversals/dysfunctions as well as through suspension of certain ideas to allow for new movement. As assemblage theory reminds us, such processes point the nature of world problems, where suspended capacity (in this case vacated *Ijesaness*) is not lost but rather remains unused.

Contributions of this study to Africa-purposed scholarship and *Africanise*

Firstly, this study as explained in the Introduction and in Chapter 3, is a work that has been developed through academic transversalism, so heeding Nyamnjoh's injunction that African scholarship co-theorise with methods that advance African personhood. As part of the academic transversal process, it also reinforces Owomoyela's warning that proper African scholarship ought to be infused with a pro-African spirit and attitude in research and method, supportive of those principles that enable African relations, or life itself. Approaching research in this way necessitates that one takes seriously great ideas as great actions or practices outside the academy to create holistic understanding of the immediate life conditions, in continual processes where scholarly ideas about such life conditions interact openly with insights offered by those on the ground. Failing to approach thinking in this way, risks the development of an idealism wholly detached from the material realities and solutions of the people on whose behalf academics purportedly speak. Furthermore, what augments the complexity involved any analysis of

contemporary situations is Africa's entanglement with a dominant hegemonic neoliberal order, one that it cannot wish away. So for Owomoyela, this state of affairs yields a situation in which Africanist practice cannot realistically be returned geographically to Africa, and rather can be returned epistemologically at any place.⁶⁵⁵ What is implied and asked for, here, is a form of academic and activist transversalism. That is, connecting and affirming through a process of "creolization",⁶⁵⁶ different languages, expressions and ideas closer to African everyday life, including those concerned with quests for material sustenance, issues of belonging or humanity, as well as anxieties over political leadership or authority. This way, African scholarship can practice and speak alongside other dominant ideas, in other geographical locales, in processes of open and creative "hybridization",⁶⁵⁷ while yet and precisely because of such interaction with ideas and thought from elsewhere, affirming its meanings for Africa in the 21st-century context of globality.

Put blatantly, in *our way*, if commitment to African scholarship, practice and the African spirit of enabling African life, is followed through within co-theorisation, then it is secure because it sustains its Africanity and affirms the efficacy of African ideas with newer languages of life. This has been proven by African luminaries like Owomoyela himself, along with Wiredu, Masolo, and others who likewise have continued to affirm Africanity while located inside epistemologically-dominant domains outside of Africa. But more importantly, *our way* entails the affirmation of Africanity in the contemporary material socio-political struggles, as articulated by Ankomah's *New African*, as well as through the journalistic activism of Anas and Mwangi. With regard to the *New African*: despite its location in the United Kingdom, and despite it being managed by Europeans for a long period of time, it has remained the premier Pan-African publication. Then, with Ankomah's editorship, its affirmation of Africa, Africans

⁶⁵⁵ Owomoyela, "With Friends Like These...", 96.

⁶⁵⁶ Hosseini, "Transversality in Diversity", 58.

⁶⁵⁷ Ibid.

and Africanity grew stronger as the discourse continually defended African cultural sensibilities, language, and political life, in a manner that captured the attention of both Africans and the Western world. In their turn, Anas and Mwangi have been supported by international organisations like CNN, to become unwavering defenders of justice for ordinary Africans – admonishing powerful Africans whose *Ijesaness* “dumps manure” on their ethical obligations to their communities.

Secondly, this study emphasises the philosophical importance of thinking reality with other grammars or vocabularies as Mbembe puts it. Since the African subject, like all other people, is capable of making meaning of their reality in their situation, it follows that the use of African expressions – idioms, traditional art forms, music, socio-cultural activisms, and other modes of encountering and explaining the world – ought to be regarded as a valid place to begin conceptualisations of experience. They require no further justification regarding their validity. A deeper explanation in this regard can be developed with Mbembe’s idea of the evolving African subject’s “languages of life”⁶⁵⁸ – those distinctive material things experienced, imaginations, signs, figures, superstitions and images – which at the same time unveil contradictions in the subject’s processes of encountering their world. In a way, as Okeja says, it is through the spoken and written word by the African, that one can reclaim one’s humanity. This view enfolds the broader position adopted by pioneering African scholars in their attempt to reclaim African humanity through intellectual creativity.⁶⁵⁹ As Oruka demonstrates, these scholars rejected traditions that privileged European languages – including artistic expressions like cinema, art, literary fictions, and of course academic products – as the primary vocabulary for ‘rational’ thought used to legitimise various forms of domination (including racial domination), both in formal discourse and in public culture.⁶⁶⁰ Those moves in effect offered a

⁶⁵⁸ Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, 15.

⁶⁵⁹ Okeja, “On the Question of Development”, 431.

⁶⁶⁰ Oruka, “Sagacity in African Philosophy”, 384-385.

profound critique of what Deleuze calls the function of power by a dominant linguistic group, which rests on the false notion of a homogeneous linguistic community. Affirming African idioms and other lingual vocabularies for African intellectual and philosophical enterprise, signals the connection that these processes have with the immediate world and the extent to which insistence on their inclusion or recuperation is necessary to avoid perpetuation of exploitive hierarchies of power, be they ideological, academic, social, or institutional.

Then a new question arises: what about the younger generation of Africans whose encounter with the world comes long after colonisation? Here, Africanity exists in especially close proximity with rest of the world, where encounters involve innovative technologies facilitating rapid exchanges of diverse cultural goods, modes of creative expression, and linguistic registers. So, given their unique context, this younger generation might not display a sufficient grasp of African languages and idiom as bases for mounting an Africanist scholastic response with similar or with the same vitality as their forerunners. Besides, the appeal of those vocabularies and discourses has waned as sources for calibrating contemporary social life. To clarify, beyond Okeja's reflection on affirming Africanity with the spoken and written word, the idea of an evolving subject's languages of life suggests there are other creative expressions, learned and shared, for apprehending the present. These include blogging, hacktivism, artistic paintings, video/cinematic images, sculptures, and non-verbal actions like dance and protests. Their novelty and power also lie in the modes of continual dissemination, through virtual technologies that facilitate relations traversing the spatio-temporal planes of old. Examples here include Anas's and Mwangi's work, which includes photographic images and videography to reclaim the human dignity of worn-out Africans, and to admonish those trampling familial responsibility. Moreover, despite the criticism that their work invites for chastising their elders openly, or for blurring lines of ethical practice, their language of finding African solutions in

their time retains legitimacy through the affirmations received from their own societies, and from those in other parts of Africa who are down-trodden.

Thirdly, the insights provided through this study, relating to the politics of knowledge production, have an important bearing in the conceptualisation of any attempts to rethink processes of knowledge production in Africa, including but certainly not limited to media practices. Journalism can be taken as a test case in the above regard. In relation to this, if Africanity speaks of a capacity to learn, by being alive to processes (activist engagement), and the principles that confer meaning of the African subject's world, then one can submit that journalism in Africa should be demoted from its current status as a *stand-alone* academic discipline taught at universities in the continent. Instead, grounded in the ontological commitments of *our way*, it should primarily be regarded as a practice – one that involves continuous processes of learning shared principles, philosophies which sustain a people, and an ethos of enabling Africans, who share problems relating to development, security, and political stability. If grounded in such learned ways, a practitioner will be able to encounter and explain Africa through exploratory writings, images and narration in the diverse situations, and so be able to suggest multiple solutions for such situations but without ever positing their own ideas as 'truth'. More importantly, the processes of learning could be entered into by anyone, in any academic discipline and also outside of the academy. In short, such learning is available to anyone who is inclined to listen and learn about those principles, ideas and institutions embraced by that group of Africans in their vicinity, on the basis of shared experience. Again, it is crucial to restate here, that those involved in these processes should be committed to observing and affirming principles of enabling relationships and humanity, even when they deliver what Owomoyela describes as “ameliorative chastisement” in the presence of their community.⁶⁶¹

⁶⁶¹ Owomoyela, “With Friends Like These...”, 96.

This line of argument has the potential of opening up philosophical debates about what African journalism describes. For instance, there is a dominant view which holds that African journalism designates journalistic work produced by Africans, as well as the academic discipline/program that facilitates entry into the practice. In this study, such debates are being shunned due to the kind of cyclic arguments that emerge around the advantages and flaws of tying such a practice of social production to race and geography. Admittedly, at a deep virtual/sense level (the powerful dimension of human reality consisting of feelings and memory), the designation African journalism can be seen as entailing nothing more than a facility for reaffirmations of national identity and local pride. In shifting focus in the way described above, it is possible to re-cognise the idea of Africanist journalistic practice as one that envisions every partaker – even the informal participant in the streets – committing to continual connections with processes of a different learning on Africa, in order to enable a more suitable form of Africanity. It pursues transversal connection with others and the issues faced in other parts of the world, in recognition that African nations are not islands but yet have a distinctive role to play in moving forward both themselves and the rest of the world. Again, the insistence here that any partaker can practice *our way* and participate in related processes of African journalistic practice, is premised on the fact that there is little compelling argument for or advantage in locking African journalism to skin colour or nationality (i.e. to black Africans). Especially considering that, as things stand, it is very difficult to attribute with ease, products showing dilapidation in Africa to either African or European producers. The language, processes, and ultimately, the products, are very much the same regardless of ethnic background. By the same token, the African subject is capable of creating their own meanings and interpretations in relation to all mediatised representations thrown at them, irrespective of who delivers these. That the mediatised repathologisation of Africa can be committed by both ‘Africans’ and ‘Europeans’ receives powerful corroboration in Owomoyela’s criticism of

Africanists who, in his view, have tied themselves into conceptual knots that unwittingly repathologise Africa.

An Africanist journalistic practice *our way*, is not an academic/college discipline. Here, I take as cases in point the activist practices of Mwangi and Anas, which are hugely different from the products of other award-winning practitioners in the African Journalism award system. What distinguishes their work, or, what deterritorialises their practice, is their development of deeply-connected process that have taken root outside of formal, journalistically ‘acceptable’, knowledge patterns. This way, Anas’s and Mwangi’s activist practice acquired a de-coded form. Because of this, it helps constitute an activist’s creative tools, which, as in the case of Anas and Mwangi, an activist uses to constructively and generatively unsettle situations. Deleuze’s eighth postulate on differentiation provides apt explanation of this idea of learning to think *in practice*. For Deleuze, there is general habit or error that involves subordinating culture to method, as well as learning to knowledge.⁶⁶² This habit is a manifestation of *Cogatio natura*, which presupposes a goodwill, that is, thinking as a commonly available pattern, model or method of knowing, which is naturally predisposed to good.

As Deleuze puts it, knowledge for practice most often comes grounded in common sense, or the dogmatic image of what thinking is, whereby what is learned is dominated by a preferred or permanent ritual of manipulating, organising and processing components of a system. That is to say, a problem is approached sidelong, and ‘solved’ outside its conditions, precisely because a ‘solution’ is assumed to pre-exist quite regardless of the unique circumstances and intensities of the problem which is (not) being faced.⁶⁶³ Therefore, it follows that a solution is regarded as an already pre-meditated decision on the part of the thinker, because thinking is

⁶⁶² Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 164-165.

⁶⁶³ *Ibid.*, 159, 161-162.

identified as knowledge or even at times as prior-to-knowledge.⁶⁶⁴ And at the level pedagogy, pursuit of knowledge becomes a manifestation of habit: involuntary movements in memory, established rules linked to a quest, in accord with sanctioned cultures or the permitted methods of fields or disciplines.

Importantly, with regard to the problems to be addressed, it creates an illusion of the possibility/feasibility of pre-meditated decision-making for solving the questions emerging from problems. It misses events, the multiple dimensions and intensities of these, and accordingly it forgoes the *sense* for many solutions that any one problem can incite. Instead, it suggests that problems have a pre-determined, preferred solution and that the approach to solving likewise can be pre-determined: that these already exist in a map somewhere, or that the best solution, or one similar to it, can be *traced*, can be found within already-memorised rules and methods. This describes, precisely, the reasons for Anas's major concern with what he identified as "parachute journalists" – here designating Robert Guest and his ilk – who could on the basis of the above-described habit of thought and assumptions about knowledge and solving problems summarily describe Africa as hopeless. They, together with likeminded Africans it must be stated, assume that reporting based on accepted rules and observation skills offer sufficient ground for authorising unproblematic commentary about everywhere.

Instead, for Deleuze, a thinking practice – or a discourse which unsettles the world – defies the habit of thinking, which holds that knowledge is a fixed catalogue of competencies and relatedly, an attainable final goal at which point the 'knowledgeable' person is deemed eternally qualified as expert. This way, a problem is not encountered in itself and so no new thinking is forced. When these concepts are applied to the Africanist journalistic practice, its process ought

⁶⁶⁴ Ibid., 165.

to be one of “learning to learn”, because one does not learn to know.⁶⁶⁵ The process of learning to learn entails subjective acts undertaken when one is immersed in a problem, where thinking and action with or without formal knowledge connects with the specific context. That is what can be described as being alive, or, the activist process of creative experimentation. As Anas, Mwangi, and Ankomah have demonstrated – something which sets both their work and their persons apart from many practitioners making commentary on Africa – they offer genuine African solutions, as their discourses and actions show commitment to causing change for Africa within Africa, and promise that Africans can find ways to solve their problems in cutting-edge, *different* ways that yet do not ‘Afrocentrise’ matters, or relatedly, fetishise something akin to an idealised, essentialised African subject. Their work is successful in facilitating difference and change despite, or rather precisely because of, the “horrible interventions” which their methods imply with regard to established rules of discipline. This is especially true of Mwangi, who never received any formal training. In light of the above, it is understandable why labels such as ‘subterfuge’ and ‘polarising’ have been attached to Anas and Mwangi. In terms of mapping, learning to learn involves what Deleuze calls “connecting and forgetting”. And so, insofar as while a discipline would offer a map with global, universal paths and coordinates, Anas’s and Mwangi’s, as well as Ankomah’s, learning creatively adds new sections to the map by being in touch with, and very much alive to, local events and their particular intensities. Moreover, the methods they introduced, including the use of proverbs in the case of Ankomah, and the candid photography and videography for social justice advocacy of Anas and Mwangi, all show the spirit and attitude of affirming *our way*, because their works traverse/transverse terrain, crossing over the African continent to engage other Africans openly on the problems of development and humanity.

⁶⁶⁵ Williams, *Gilles Deleuze’s Difference and Repetition*, 135.

With regard to a practical pedagogy, similar enabling activist ‘learning to learn’ approaches for media scholarship and practice should be encouraged. A good example to follow in this regard is the process being encouraged in South African video pedagogy by academic and filmmaker Subeshini Moodley. Drawing on the approach pioneered by the visual anthropologist Sarah Pink yet adapting this approach to the particular South African context, Moodley has honed an auto-ethnography process in terms of which stories and experiences of a community she was engaged with were developed by the community in her absence.⁶⁶⁶ In her case, the participants were supplied with recording tools (video cameras), and taught how to operate them. For analysis, she engaged with the participants and the films that they produced, for deeper understandings of the participants’ interpretations of the content, as well as other parts of their lives mentioned on film. This connected process guided the editing processes of those stories as well. A similar process is followed in many of Anas’s stories, including *The Spell of the Albino*.

It is a reality that mainstream journalism, as a field of producing news and information, faces the very real threat of obsolescence due to the considerable rise in information technologies facilitating the rapid exchange of information – information then interpreted by grouped social networks, creating never-before-seen transformative events such as the Arab Spring. Still, journalism’s role in supplying credible information, especially news, remains crucial. Yet, as discussed above, what is being advocated here is the need to review the idea of journalism as a stand-alone academic discipline in Africa. This is because it offers little space for thinking, for learning to learn, to would be commentators who receive their training mostly in class situations. This way journalistic training remains detached from both rigorous connections with the world as required for activist practice, and those academic fields dedicated to in-depth

⁶⁶⁶ Subeshini Moodley, “Narrative Possibilities in a Postcolonial Context: Exploring Self-Reflexive Film as a Critical Articulation of the Stories of South African Hindu Women” (PhD., University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg, 2015).

reflective discourses on social production. This problem is most pressing at junior/undergraduate levels of study where subjects generally are tailored to correspond to a certain area of social process. For instance, politics is linked with political reporting, basic economics with economic reporting, sports with sports reporting, and so on – with little to no transdisciplinary and transversal thinking stimulated.

Indeed, such offerings also only make tenuous connections with those focus areas to which they are intended to correspond. What comes across is journalistic practice kept in formalised unhelpful ground, such as ethnographic objectivity. The reason being, the amount of time allocated to learning skills of journalistic production during a three-year qualification, for example, pales in comparison with the actual learning or encounters with the specific discourses dedicated to Africa and Africanity in the study of history, critical theory, and philosophy. Even worse, less time is dedicated to actual immersion in the weight of socio-political reality, where social production happens and journalistic thinking skills could best be used. Put differently, trying to fit all these subject areas, for example, political reporting, economic reporting, health reporting, sports reporting, etc., into an already-compacted program intended for building journalistic technique, increases the risk of producing simple, mouth-piece reporters, with little capacity for critical interrogations of changes in observed reality. And mouth-piece reporting is not the home of critical, self-interrogatory, socially-critical, *our way* journalistic practice which encourages difference and change.

In this regard – and as already introduced in Chapter 1 – Deleuze provides critical insight into journalists' and journalism's important role of making connections and intersecting with scholarly, artistic and other fields of life, and thus becoming an authoritative intellectual voice of the public, and the leading point of reference to major events. This as he says, is a reversal of roles where journalists surpass academic intellectuals in the manner that they create their

own events. Here Deleuze refers to the work of Andre Scala to observe that “[j]ournalism has discovered an autonomous and sufficient thought within itself”.⁶⁶⁷ This is what is described by mediatisation of public culture, where media, like Deleuze’s book, has become a distinct dimension of everyday happenings, that co-creates and coevolves with the societal realities it coexists with. Deleuze goes ahead to criticise, later, philosophers and intellectuals for sacrificing their intellectual authority, by becoming “insolent, brilliant, hired clowns”,⁶⁶⁸ who instead of producing work that media can turn into many events, self-promote through media public relations campaigns, based on a simplistic view that journalists need to be handed ideas by scholars. Moreover, as more intellectuals realise the power of mediatised events, such scholars, among other journalists, adopt the “witness function”: that is, a detached mouth-piece, hear-say, desktop narration of difficult human events such as the holocaust, or Gulags, which in most instances advances one’s celebrity while obscuring and diminishing the actual voice of those events. This accords with what Anas called parachute journalism, which comes across as authoritative in its views but remains removed from that of which it speaks.

The argument to end the stand-alone discipline of journalism at African universities turns to Deleuze and the insights on *our way* to conclude as follows. Deleuze’s idea of learning to learn is reflected in what he calls the “producer function”.⁶⁶⁹ In this function, the scholar or journalist thinks and solves problems by encountering them in their conditions. This, as seen above, accords with *our way*, where unlike in the witness function or in the method of parachute journalism, one is obligated to connect with the situations of and for which one speaks, encountering the agreements made by those in the area, in order to fetch the human, as Ramose would say. And so, a journalistic practice for Africa ought to involve what Deleuze calls possibilities that can be found in interconnections with all academic fields and the street.⁶⁷⁰ And

⁶⁶⁷ Deleuze, *Two Regimes of Madness*, 142-147.

⁶⁶⁸ Ibid., 147.

⁶⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁷⁰ Ibid.

although anyone seeking to speak and write Africa can emerge from any of these arenas, they ought to observe those ethical practices, philosophies and knowings, shared by contemporary Africans struggling for economic and political sufficiency, with the aim of enabling familial relations and human dignity, *our way*.

Conclusion

Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, in his exhortations on *Ujamaa*, begins with the Kiswahili adage, “*Mgeni siku mbili, siku ya tatu mpatie jembe*” (one is only a visitor for two days, on the third day, hand them a hoe/rake). Put in the context of this study, it is possible to validly speak about getting Africa right, and achieving African solutions through Africa-purposed thinking, that is not based on the notion of genetic determinism or any claim to an essential ‘African mind’ or being. Anyone, even a visitor, who commits their mind to enabling Africa, can participate in finding African solutions. So where do we begin? First, it begins with ontological ground: that is, ontological commitments which reject dominant ideas about what the activity of thinking itself is, while affirming that anyone seeking to encounter and enable Africa and Africanity must be alive to think Africa by connecting openly with Africans and African situations. This is because Africans, just like everybody, do not think and exist detached from those events that imbue meaning to their reality; even when these do not fit universal sense. Second, thinking African solutions can be enhanced with Africa-purposed solidarities, agreements and obligations, in the production of continually responsive discourses in epistemology, social justice and human rights. This involves prospective developmental thinking, whereby African thinkers and their counterparts from any place in the world can enable better understandings of African problems, by opening to African vocabularies or expressions of encountering the diversity of African life. Lastly, thinking with these expressions obliges both affirmations of lingering sensibilities about difficult pasts, as well as the admonishing of those very expressions and sensibilities when they become destructive to human life.

It is in this spirit that this study engaged with the enduring question of Africa's rebirth, which remains nervously alive as Africa grapples with notions of dysfunctionality due to reversals in the continent's fortunes. In engaging with this question, the study could not simply remain a scholarly pulling together of academic voices on the matter. More had to be done. Motivated by the creative interconnection with ideas and practices which is characteristic of transversalism, the research brought Deleuzian *differenciation* to bear on the mediated assemblage of *Africarise* – at the same time allowing radical African voices into the conversation, including academics Mbembe, Nyamnjoh, Diagne, and Owomoyela, and media and social activists Ankomah, Anas and Mwangi. Through this process of co-theorsation and transversal connections with universal concepts and African ideas, the study sustains movements of creative-destruction which evade the impulse of erasure, and shun the seduction of seeking final solutions. Ultimately, it is such movements that encourage more openings for thinking Africanity otherwise.

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