

Sankofa: From andragogy to mathetegogy in Christian higher education

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Cultural perspectives: Background: from worldview to world-sense, to relationally contextualised existential intuitions; African-Western distinctions

Oyewumi rejects a similarly visualist mechanism at work in African societies. Her key claim is that unlike Europe, African cultures are not and have not historically been ordered according to a logic of vision, but rather through other senses. In this way, she suggests that the notion of a “worldview” is only appropriate to the European context. She proposes that “worldsense” better matches the African way of knowing. At base, Oyewumi contests the idea that a western categorical schema for understanding society and social dynamics can simply be exported elsewhere. For Oyewumi, students of Africa must recognise that a greater degree of conceptual sensitivity is necessary in order to understand non-western social structures. More specifically, she claims that in the Yoruba context, a different structuring principle is in operation and needs to be theorised. (Bakare-Yusuf, 2002, pp. 1–2)

Ontology: An African understanding of being; holistic, metaphysical being in the world

This early discourse of African epistemology attempted to link the African mode of knowledge with African ontology. In other words both are intimately related making it inconceivable to understand one without a prior knowledge of the other. Onyewuenyi, an African philosopher from Nigeria and defender of African epistemology, argues that African theory of knowledge follows closely upon ontology (Onyewuenyi, 1976, p. 525). He goes further by saying that True wisdom, according to Tempels, who pioneered the discourse of African epistemology, lies in ontological knowledge, it is the intelligence of forces, of their hierarchy, their cohesion and their interaction (Ibid). It is in this direction that Tempels' (1959, p. 21) explication of Bantu philosophy and ontology, where he attempted to show that reality in Africa is invested with “life or vital-force” features prominently in the formulation of African epistemology. This view tends to suggest that an understanding of the African mode of knowledge should pay due attention to the background of African spiritualistic and dynamic metaphysics. Perhaps this is what John Mbiti (1969, p. 1) had in mind when he made the now discredited statement that “Africans are notoriously religious” because of their extreme emotional and mystical disposition, and also by virtue of their insertion into an organic environment. (Udefi, 2014, pp. 108–109)

Epistemology: Relationality, sensuality, and psycho-epistemological priorities

A factor linked to culture and upbringing that influences our level of trust has been called ‘psycho-epistemological priorities’, a ranking system proposed in the 1960s that we use to evaluate truth-declaring sources. These priorities develop within and vary across, families, neighborhoods, sub-cultures, and cultures and in our model these psycho-epistemological priorities moderate the degree of trust we place on the perceived source of knowledge. Royce and Smith (1964) suggested there are four fundamental ways by which we approach reality as potential truth and that control the strength of our belief:

Rationalism: Faith in evidence provided by reason or cognitive processes

Empiricism: Faith in evidence provided by the senses

Intuitionism: Faith in evidence provided by feeling, including revelation such as divine revelation, dreams, etc.

Authoritarianism: Faith in the authority of an individual or individuals in positions of influence

Western perspective – “science” (knowledge) as a religion that we dare not challenge!

Western epistemology is seriously flawed and is not biblically grounded.

African gnoseology” Relationality, sensual epistemology, holistic, embedded, includes intuitions and instincts.

But “all truth is God’s truth” but has been sequestered. It must be reclaimed through re-storying.

Pedagogy and andragogy: Western and African distinctions

The author gives the meaning of Andragogy by drawing from Greek terms: *andros* (adult man), *ago* (I guide). So andragogy is a new field of human sciences which deals with principles which can make adults learn effectively in their own terms and not as children. The discussion advances by endorsing that humanity is moving towards liberation which will bring about the complete human potential. So this trend according to Zymeyov needs the adult learner not to be passive, but active in the learning process alongside his teacher. At this section the author does not elaborate further how can the teacher stoop low to reach the level of the adult learner and also how can the adult learner find confidence to rise high to the level of the teacher who is more informed in the subject matter The effect [of the ideas of Malcom Knowles, the so-called, father of andragogy] in [the] Tanzania system of education are yet to be fully realized. Because most of our scholars have learned these ideas not as a full academic programme but as a course or a topic. As a result adults in formal, non-formal and informal settings are taught in subject centered approaches and not in problem centered approach. Moreover adult learning approaches have been ‘reduced’ to literacy. This happened was back in 1967 when truly the country had low literacy rates. But for almost four decades later, this definition has refused to change in the minds of people. This reality shows how much need to be done to improve the current situation (Mhando, 2012). (Muneja, 2015, pp. 55, 60)

Globalisation: Globalised higher education contexts

What the adjective ‘African’ articulates is an acknowledgement and affirmation of Africa’s unique epistemological position within the increasingly globalized “regimes of truth” that constitute the conditions which make successful, i.e. powerful, research and graduate studies possible throughout the world today. Thus, to invoke an ‘African’ location within these regimes is to commit oneself to the project of “detaching the power of truth [and knowledge] from the forms of hegemony, social, economic, and cultural, within which it operates at the present time” (Foucault, 1984: 75). (p. 30)

Colonisation: Hegemonic colonisation of African education systems

For Mignolo, the epistemic effects of colonialism are among its most damaging, far-reaching, and least understood. (Alcoff, 2007, p. 80)

From Quijano, Mignolo has taken up the idea of a colonality refer to the system that organized the distribution of epistemic, aesthetic resources in a way that both reflects and reproduces empire (Quijano 1998). The concept of colonality of power allows us

to think how the colonized were subjected not simply to a rapacious exploitation all their resources but also to a hegemony of Eurocentric knowledge systems. (Alcoff, 2007, p. 84)

African Higher Education: Challenges of cultural accommodation in African higher education

For developing regions like Africa, higher education is an important instrument for socioeconomic development, and one of the strategies to improve and qualify higher education is internationalisation. In spite of various attempts to enhance the benefits of internationalisation, African higher education has continued to be peripheral, with relationships remaining asymmetrical, unethical and unequal. Along with some positive benefits, internationalisation has brought complicated implications and new challenges, such as the brain drain, cultural values, the commodification of higher education, the persistence of inequality between global north-south universities, and so on. (Alemu, 2014, p. 71)

The internationalisation of higher education can be understood from six major approaches: the activity approach (involving discreet activities), the competency approach (the development of skills, knowledge, attitudes and values), the ethos approach (fostering a campus-based culture of internationalisation), the process approach (the integration of an international dimension into teaching, research and services) (Knight, 1999), the business approach (an emphasis on student fees for income), and the market approach (stress on competition, market domination and deregulation) (Meek, 2007). Based on these approaches, the internationalisation of higher education is defined as “the process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education” (Knight, 2003). (Alemu, 2014, pp. 73–74)

African andragogy: Distinctives; culturally determined, teleological perspectives

All the views discussed in this paper are groundbreaking in the field of adult education. It is noteworthy that these views were born in the western contexts. Where the learning environment is optimally sufficient in terms of infrastructure; the teachers are adequately trained; the environment is also peaceful. But in Tanzania and the rest of sub-Saharan Africa, things are different. The infrastructure in both rural and urban are typically below the world class standards; some teachers are employed either without training or are trained in poor environments and also to make it critical, there is a rising wave of terrorist events such as those done by Al Qaeda, Al- Shabab and Boko- Haram. In such settings one may wish to ask how African scholars can apply Malcom Knowles ideas? How can African Scholars apply constructivism ideas? And how can African Scholars apply Neo-Piagetian ideas. (Muneja, 2015, p. 60)

[Comment: Why would they need to?]

Négritude as philosophy and epistemology: Features and implications of a metaphysically embedded *Négritude* philosophy and resulting epistemologies

Tempels was a Belgian Franciscan priest who went to the Congo as a missionary. He had the view that in order to be more efficient preaching the Gospel to the Bantu people he had first to understand the principles underlying their belief system, their customary law, their cultural habits, and so on. He explained that he came to realize that one could and should go beyond mere ethnographical description of those characteristics of the people's lives and dig out a set of ontological principles on which

they were founded. In other words that there existed a Bantu philosophy of being underlying their laws, behaviors, beliefs, politics, etc. (Césaire, 1987, p. 6)

Diagne (2018) describes Négritude as being “the self-affirmation of black peoples, or the affirmation of the values of civilization of something defined as ‘the black world’ as an answer to the question ‘what are we in this white world?’” (Diagne, 2018, p. 1).

So to coin and claim the word “Négritude” . . . as the expression of the value of “blackness” was a way for Césaire, Senghor and Damas of defiantly turning “nègre” against the white supremacists who used it as a slur. In sum the word was and has continued to be an irritant. Indeed the “fathers” of the movement themselves would often confess how irritated they were too by the word. Thus, Césaire declared at the beginning of a lecture he gave on February 26, 1987, at the International University of Florida in Miami: “I confess that I do not always like the word Négritude even if I am the one, with the complicity of a few others, who contributed to its invention and its launching” adding that, still, “it corresponds to an evident reality and, in any case to a need that appears to be a deep one” (Césaire, 2004, 80). (Diagne, 2018, p. 3)

Ubuntu: Relational contexts of “I am because we are”; African communalism contrasted with collectivism and also Western individualism and Western conceptualisations of community

Archbishop Desmond Tutu (1999) noted that *ubuntu* is very difficult to render into a western language other than to say it is “my humanity is caught up, is inextricably bound up, in what is yours”. Archbishop Tutu’s (1999) comment that “you know when *ubuntu* is there, and it is obvious when it is absent. It has to do with what it means to be truly human, to know that you are bound up with others in the bundle of life”. He sees *ubuntu* as “the essence of being human, and that it is part of the gift that Africa will give the world”. His approach to *ubuntu* suggests that his (or my) humanity is caught up and is inextricably bound up 2 in yours. “I am human because I belong. It speaks about wholeness. It speaks about compassion” (Tutu 2004). (Hailey, 2008, p. 1)

Ubuntu epistemology and gnoseology: An African lifelong education telos

Ubuntu epistemology does not look like epistemology to Westerners. They look for individualised meaning for propositions, verifiability, proof, etc. And the idea of holism in community does not correspond.

Gnoseology (Nguyen, 2018; Mignolo, 2012; Jennings, 2010; Eikland, 2007; Holcolm, 2005) goes further than episteme or doxa to the study of intuitions and instincts. This was expanded by Jennings and Holcolm to “participatory gnoseology” which is a broader epistemology—one not centred on empiricism and rationalism but also taking in the aesthetic, the spiritual, the relationality of all. Mignolo used the term to include both episteme and doxa and noted that “Gnoseology refers to a kind of knowledge that is not available to sense experience—knowledge either attained by mystic contemplation or by pure logical and mathematical reasoning . . . Gnoseology in the early modern colonial world became a term to refer to knowledge in general, while epistemology became restricted to analytical philosophy and the philosophy of sciences.” (Mignolo, 2012, p. 10).

Teaching the Ubuntu way: The potential incorporation of *ubuntu* philosophy into higher education; epistemology/gnoseology differentiations

“A key point is that technical and vocational education and training can help promote progress only if they are not considered void of culture, but rather are located within [a] Ubuntu-centered value system” (Takyi-Amoako & Assié-Lumumba, 2018, p. 14).

[Takyi-Amoako] “argues that a thoughtful consciousness of and sensitivity to people’s inter-connectedness, interdependence, shared humanity, and membership of a community, which nurtures the shared benefit of society and holds humanness as an essential pre-requisite of human development” (Takyi-Amoako & Assié-Lumumba, 2018, p. 15).

Takyi-Amoako and Assié-Lumumba (2018) call for the essential adoption of a new philosophy of education as articulated in the Ubuntu paradigm.

Interdependence, communalism, sensitivity towards others and caring for others are all aspects of ubuntu as a philosophy of life (Le Roux, 2000, p. 43). The community and belonging to a community is part of the essence of traditional African life. Philosophy of life and Philosophy of Education, thus, go together, because a philosophy of life helps to identify the goals and purposes that a particular society holds dear. (Venter, 2004, p. 149)

From this perspective the *ubuntu* worldview addresses researchers from all worlds to see themselves first as related and connected by the same goals of commitment to build harmony among communities they study; to reciprocate by giving back to communities for what they take; and to strive for truth, justice, fairness, and inclusiveness in the construction of knowledge. A research approach informed by an *ubuntu* worldview requires researchers to contextualize conventional research methods and ethical principles, taking into consideration the history of colonization and its effects on the formally colonized; the culture of the African people based on Ma’at and Nommo and the seven cardinal principles of truth, justice, rightness, propriety, harmony, order and balance, and reciprocity that emanate from Ma’at, and contemporary African theorizing on Africanization and Ubuntu. (Chilisa, 2012, pp. 188–189)

- **Shared meaning in community:** Education and intuition development as cultural inculcation

In other words, many spaces within the university do not recognize the knowledge and cultural capital that first generation students bring with them to the university as valid forms of knowledge and as valid forms of cultural capital. Fricker (2007) refers to such unequal participation in the legitimated system of shared meanings that constitutes culture as instances of ‘hermeneutical injustice’. (Morreira, 2017, p. 6)

- **Translanguaging:** The incorporation of a dialogical interface between indigenous and coloniser languages

English linguistic imperialism is altering South African classroom dynamics. Teachers can no longer use “English-only” teaching strategies in multilingual classrooms and still expect success. The multicultural and multilingual nature of South African classrooms demands the decolonisation of imperialist linguistic teaching strategies. The implementation of dynamic bilingual or multilingual teaching strategies such as “translanguaging”, a

teaching strategy built on the importance of mother-tongue education, should be considered. (West, 2018, para 6)

Translanguaging is a dynamic and flexible approach that helps learners make sense of their multilingual environment by centring around flexible bi-/multilingual practices and teaching strategies, and not on languages themselves. Translanguaging promotes the idea of using any or all language(s) available to a learner, as their linguistic repertoire, to help develop and grow their concept-building in more than one language. (West, 2018, para 9)

In effect, the translanguaging approach fits in well with the African worldview of ubuntu, which propagates a communal orientation and continuum of social, linguistic and interconnectedness of all human existence...This people-centred ubuntu lens recognises the wealth of multilingualism, the linguistic continuum of African languages and debunks the old ways of teaching African languages that were borrowed wholesale from monolingual approaches. (Makalela, 2014, p. 101)

- **Ubuntugogy:** African academics' suggestions for practical teaching/learning frameworks in higher education settings

The salvation for Africans hinges upon employing indigenous African educational paradigms which can be subsumed under the rubric of ubuntugogy, which I define as the art and science of teaching and learning undergirded by humanity towards others. Therefore, ubuntugogy transcends pedagogy (the art and science of teaching), andragogy (the art and science of helping adults learn), ergonagy (the art and science of helping people learn to work), and heutagogy (the study of self-determined learning). (Bangura, 2005, p. 13)

Consequently, a new culture has emerged; it is a mixture of the African culture and the European culture. It is to this new culture that ubuntugogy as an African educational paradigm can respond to positively. (Bangura, 2005, p. 26)

We can begin by acknowledging that a true African educational paradigm must first and foremost be built on a sound spiritual basis that highlights those aspects of African spiritual life that have enabled African people all over the world to survive as a human community throughout the centuries. It should go beyond European classical humanism with its class, socio-economic and geographical limitations based on Greece and the Athenian city-state, which was based on a system of slavery. Ubuntugogy must lead to "enlarged humanities" and recapture that original meaning of humanity which Western scholars, beginning with Plato, in their hollow and lopsided search for material progress, abandoned. By privileging "reason" above everything else and abandoning the spiritual aspects of life, including the idea of the immortal soul, Western scholarship embarked on a path that is increasingly bringing humanity to the brink of destruction through violence and ecological destruction. (Bangura, 2005, pp. 34–35)

Sankofa: "Returning to retrieve that which has been left behind"; revisiting and repurposing the worthwhile aspects of African learning cultures

Sankofa is an Akan term that literally means, "to go back and get it." One of the Adinkra symbols for Sankofa (seen on the left) depicts a mythical bird flying forward with its head turned backward. The egg in its mouth represents the "gems" or knowledge of the past upon which wisdom is based; it also signifies the generation to come that would benefit from that wisdom. This symbol often is associated with the proverb, "*Se wo were fi na wosankofa a yenkyi*," which translates to, "It is not wrong to go back for that which you have forgotten." The Akan believe that the past illuminates the present and that the search for knowledge is a life-long process. The pictograph illustrates the quest for knowledge, while the proverb suggests the rightness of such a quest as long as it is based on knowledge of the past. (University of Denver Center for Teaching and Learning, 2004, para. 4)

"The source is our culture, heritage and identity. It is the power that is within us. SANKOFA means that as we move forward into the future, we need to reach back into our past and take with us all that works and is positive." (Tedla, 1996, p. 1)

Sankofan education is not about returning to the past to relive the life of the ancestors. They lived and shaped their own life, and contemporary Africans must do the same for themselves Sankofan education means that in tackling the present day political, economic and educational problems facing the continent, Africans need (1) to rely on their legacy from the ancestors, and (2) to borrow prudently new ideas and technologies from outside the continent. (Tedla, 1996, p. 210)

Biblical perspectives: The biblically aligned African cultural distinctives that have been discarded by post-Enlightenment Western cultures

- ***Aletheia*: Knowledge** acquisition as the un hiding of God-owned truth

Another biblical consideration in research as truth seeking is the Koine Greek word for truth, *aletheia*, which is used often in the New Testament. This word is related to the verb 'to be hid'—and hence has the sense of 'un-hiding'. For those in New Testament times the implication was to make something visible. Today, in English, we may use the terms discover (to dis-cover), reveal (revelation), or realize (to make real for us). If research is described as 'the seeking of truth' then, whether we conceptualize it in terms of propositional truth or the personal, revealed *aletheia* (the Greek word for truth used by Jesus of Himself in John 14:6), we first need to acknowledge that all truth belongs to God. As the oft (mis)quoted Augustinian aphorism says, 'All truth is God's truth.' Augustine also referred to the sequestering of God's knowledge by others

who themselves did not create these things, but excavated them, as it were, from the mines of divine Providence, which is everywhere present, but they wickedly and unjustly misuse this treasure for the service of demons. When a Christian severs himself in spirit from a wretched association with these people, he ought to take these truths from them for the lawful service of preaching the Gospel. (Harmless, 2010 ,p. 183)

Seeking truth therefore becomes an uncovering of God's knowledge—the knowledge of Him, of His Creation, including His created human beings, their words and actions, and reclaiming knowledge that has been given a different, non-God origin, value and *telos* (purpose) by others. Research should become a profoundly theological activity as it sites itself within a Creation-Fall-Redemption-Fulfilment context and also, as it unmasks the ubiquitous, Fall-

induced horrors and inspires reverential awe of the One who has the power to restore perfection. Framing research in this way would change many things including our attitude towards it, our motivation for conducting it and the suggested, practical application of the research results. The problem or question under investigation in our research projects may possibly, if not always, focus on the question of ‘What is wrong?’ and this relates directly or indirectly to The Fall. The products of the research should naturally provide an obedient response to the greatest commandments as Jesus taught them (loving God and loving our neighbour, Matthew 22: 37–40) and an unselfish response to the prayer that His kingdom may come and His will be done on earth as it is in heaven (Matthew 6: 9–10). Also, the discovery of God, His person, His works and His kingdom purposes, in some degree should underwrite our research efforts as we use the knowledge of God, honest science and reflective aesthetics, as hermeneutics to interpret God’s revelation of Himself through His Creation (Romans 1:20). (Beech & Beech, 2016, pp. 7 & 8)

- **Repurposing:** *Reclaiming* sequestered truth for godly purposes

As St Augustine has been quoted, “All truth is God’s truth.” To teach truth is to teach God’s truth. Interestingly, that applies to any teaching of God’s truth, whether it be undertaken by a Christian or an atheist. That is because *all* truth belongs to God and has its source in Him. This is why when one compares a Christian teaching a particular fact or concept with an atheist teaching the same material, there may appear on the surface to be no difference between the two. The point is not necessarily that the Christian should be looking at the truth differently but that the atheist needs to look at it differently. In Augustine’s terms, the atheist has, sequestered, or kidnapped, the truth for their purposes and it is our task as Christians to claim it back. (Beech, 2015, p. 87)

- **Mathetegogy:** Education as holistic discipling communally [Communal is not the same as community]

We are called to allegiance to Christ, to live in loving communality and in our teaching and learning, taking our example from Paul: “Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.” (1 Corinthians 11:1, NIV). Or, more literally from the Greek: “Become imitators of me just as I am of Christ.”

- **Transformation:** Transformative higher education: theological, philosophical, cultural, praxis; from “I am because we are” to “We are because I AM”

The literature pertaining to transformational or transformative andragogy examines the changes to meaning structures, perspectives and schemas—the broad predispositions we hold that result from our assumptions and which determine the extent of our expectations (Mezirow, 1991, 1997; Cranton, 2002). While Mezirow’s work has been well recognized in the literature, it does not emerge, however, from a biblically framed ontology, nor teleology, of imago Dei beings. God seeks transformation for His created beings in order for them to become more aligned with His purposes: acting and interacting in a manner coherent with His revealed will. The survey instrument used in this research was an attempt to assess this through the participants’ views on how the course modified the way they view themselves, challenged their firmly held ideas, and their practice, or

discovered things they had believed previously to be right (or considered to be “normal”) and which the course taught were not so (Kember et al., 2000).

Pre-theoretical assumptions, or worldview, (*Weltanschauung*) (Goheen & Bartholomew, 2014; Naugle, 2005; Sire, 1998), form the pre-conscious foundation of our beliefs and practices (Beech, 2015). Howard Gardner (2011) described a similar phenomenon as the “intuitive theories” of matter, life, mind and the human relations we develop, and said that they were resistant to change because of the sensory experience evidence base they have. Their power is seen in the significant role they play in automaticity with regard to many life factors such as motivation, judgment and decision making, leadership, and ethical behavior (Pratt & Crosina, 2106).

The ever-changing set of assumptions that we acquire grow daily simply out of our standing-in-the-middle-of-life (*Darinnenstehen im Leben*), to use the German philosopher Wilhelm Dilthey’s expression (Dilthey & Malsch, 2006). They are conditioned by everything within the reach of our experience and this includes postgraduate study. While world picture (*Weltbild*) assumptions (Heidegger, 1962) pertain to the perceived environment, the *Weltanschauung* assumptions considered in this research relate to the non-empirical: to the *big questions* of life. These are concerned with the human assumptions relating to a “normal” interpretation of life based on perceptions of ontology, teleology, theology, epistemology, hamartiology, soteriology, and so forth (Beech, 2015). These pre-theoretical assumptions may be considered to form interpretive lenses through which we view the world (Beech, 2015; Goheen & Bartholomew, 2014; Sire, 1998) and, hence, play an essential how we respond to the world through thoughts, words and actions. (Beech, 2018, p. n.a.)

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