Some reflections on the Africanisation of higher education curricula: A South African case study

Paul Prinsloo[1]

Abstract

Higher education is often celebrated as the 'powerhouse' and 'engine' for development in Africa. Central to this mandate is the 'esign and function of curricula in Higher Education Institutions in Africa. As the development discourse has moved away from a sole emphasis on economic development to human development, the content and the purpose of curricula in African higher education are contested. While higher education in Africa will continue to produce graduates who can contribute to the economic development of Africa, the critical move to emphasise human development requires higher education to produce critical graduates suited to finding solutions to the unique challenges on the African continent. Critical graduates in an African context however, also means students who can formulate and question accepted Western canons of knowledge; discover, validate and celebrate the contributions of indigenous knowledge systems, and negotiate an African identity in its multiple intersectionality with gender, race, location, language, religion and cultural markers. This article will critically explore the Africanisation of higher education curricula in the context of the University of South Africa (UNISA). I will interrogate Africanisation as legitimate counter-narrative and the quest for an African identity and culture, propose a rationale for a critical African scholarship, and finally provide some pointers for the development of African curricula.

It is, of course, true that the African identity is still in the making. There isn't a final identity that is African. But at the same time, there *is* an identity coming into existence. And it has certain context and a certain meaning. Because if somebody meets me, say, in a shop in Cambridge, he says 'Are you from Africa?' Which means that Africa means something to some people. Each of these tags has a meaning, and a penalty and a responsibility.

(Chinua Achebe, in an interview with Kwame Anthony Appiah [1995, 103]).

Keywords: Africanisation, curricula, development, higher education, identity, UNISA

1   INTRODUCTION

Higher education is seen as a key driver in the development of Africa. The relation between development and higher education is however, complex and often paradoxical. As the number of unemployed graduates increases, and the qualities of graduates become suspect, the direct relationship between higher education and development seems to be more complex than previously presumed. In the nexus of the relationship between education and development is the content and purpose of higher education curricula.

Curricula in higher education in Africa are not only seen as vehicles for addressing the acute skills shortages that many developing world economies face. Curricula are also envisaged to provide counter-narratives to colonial and Eurocentric canons of knowledge by celebrating African indigenous knowledge systems, values and cultures. As higher education increasingly faces demands from employers, regulatory bodies, national mandates and students' expectations, curricula are highly contested and a contestable aspect of education.

The University of South Africa (UNISA), with approximately 300 000 students is the only comprehensive distance higher education provider in South Africa, and the biggest on the African continent. As one of the 10 biggest universities in the world, UNISA has the potential to contribute significantly to the need for critical graduates in South Africa and on the African continent. The vision of UNISA is furthermore '[t]owards *the* African university in the service of humanity'. With this vision, UNISA commits itself not only to serving the interests of broader humanity, but specifically to being *the* African university. The Africanness of UNISA does not only refer to a specific geo-political location, but also to a commitment to the Africanisation of curricula and being a specifically African higher education institution.

Although Africanisation is central to the identity of UNISA and its curricula, the exact parameters of Africanness are not necessarily clear. This paper will interrogate the notion of Africanisation at UNISA as a socio-political construct that can be understood as a specific reaction within the broader context of the postcolonial discourse. Within the context of the postcolonial discourse, Africanisation is a necessary counter-narrative to the historical and continuing hegemony of Western epistemological and ontological canons in African and specifically, South African higher education. The celebration of Africanisation as counter-narrative, though necessary, should however not be supported or promoted uncritically or unconditionally.

2   HIGHER EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Outside the specific context of policy pronouncements, there is very little empirical or theoretical work, which contributes to a critical academic understanding of the relationship between higher education and development (Naidoo 2008, 248). The relationship between development and higher education has developed from early neglect to centre stage (Comim 2007). Comim (2007, 88) further postulates that it is impossible to have a proper understanding of current trends in development 'without a proper account of the role of education in the promotion of human flourishing'. This paper does not explore the different phases in the relationship between development and higher education (e.g., Comim 2007) – it only points to the broad development from the *instrumental* value of education in the context of economic development to the *constitutive* value of education in human development (Comim 2007:

88–98). Benavot (1989, 15–16) plots the development in the relationship between education and development from an emphasis on education as human *capital* investment to transforming individuals' *values, beliefs and behaviour*. Benavot (1989, 16) concludes that the 'effects of education on economic development were far more problematic and contradictory than earlier theories had assumed' and that approaches to explain and predict the 'presumed positive economic impact of education' have become more 'cautious and sceptical'.

Another author who is sceptical about the contribution of education to development is Naidoo (2008, 248), who questions the underlying assumptions and unintended consequences of celebrating higher education as the 'powerhouse for development'. In the early 1990s powerful governments and international organisations like the World Bank saw higher education 'as an incubator for social and economic change', and in service of 'decreasing the disparity between rich and poor nations' (Naidoo 2008, 248). A powerful assumption was that 'increasing and improving higher education will automatically lead to social and economic development' (Naidoo 2008, 249). This assumption underestimated the 'multifaceted and historically constituted social, political and economic difficulties faced by developing countries' (Naidoo 2008, 249). Naidoo (2008, 250) continues to question the direct link between the reliance on a skilled population as 'a motor for development'. While Naidoo (2008) questions the notion of higher education as the powerhouse of development, Comim (2007, 92) critiques the assumptions underlying the emphasis on *economic* development including the sole emphasis on economic growth; the skilling of a workforce for specific markets; wellbeing assessed as GDP per capita; and performativity in teaching and assessment. In contrast to the instrumental value of education in service of economic growth, Comim (2007, 92–100) explores the constitutive value of education in the service of human development. In her conclusions Comim (2007, 99–100) alludes to the fact that education in the service of human development should inherently address *human wellness* in a very broad sense to include 'emotional dependence and alienation that follows from the state of deprivation' resulting from a critical consciousness as proposed by Freire (1973).

If education (and in particular higher education) has to contribute to the flourishing of humankind, more than just *economic* wellbeing and employment is at stake. Dei (2007) and others describe a critical consciousness as essential to the project of human development. Dei (2007, 106) proposes an anti-colonial approach which 'recognizes the importance of locally produced knowledge emanating from cultural history and daily human experiences and social interactions'. An anti-colonial approach

…is a theorisation of issues emerging from colonial relations. It deals with the implications of imperial/colonial structures of knowledge production and (in) validation, the understanding of local indigenousness and the recourse to agency and resistance (Dei 2007, 106).

In the context of schooling in Ghana, Dei (2007) contests the emphasis on nation-building, while ignoring *difference* as a constitutive element of Ghanaian society. After engaging with socioeconomic status, ethnicity, language and religious differences in the context of school education in Ghana, Dei (2007, 118) criticises the Ghanaian emphases on nation-building, the creation of a common citizenry and the promotion of social integration and cohesion. These emphases result in a neglect of *difference* as an integral part of Ghanaian society. The current emphasis on sameness ignores social constructs like religion, ethnicities and the resultant material – and political effects (Dei 2007, 119).

If higher education is to contribute to the flourishing of humankind and not only to its economic wellbeing (as proposed by Comim 2007 and others), the question remains: *How* should higher

education in Africa respond to the human development needs of the continent? Hountondji (2000, 40) reproaches higher education in Africa by pointing out that '[m]ost universities in Africa today have become huge factories of product unknown fifteen years ago: the unemployment of cadres of learned people'. While Hountondji (2000, 40) bemoans the fact that job markets demand different types of graduates, others point out the still Eurocentric nature of much of the higher education curricula in Africa (Pityana 2007).

In the light of the above, higher education and its curricula are highly contested and contestable discourses as different stakeholders bet their claims for different purposes (Prinsloo 2007). While acknowledging the existence of these different claims, this paper deals specifically with the claim to *Africanise* higher education curricula. The next section explores how one institution of higher education (UNISA), addresses the Africanisation of the institution and curricula.

3   AFRICANISATION IN THE CONTEXT OF UNISA

UNISA has committed itself in its *2015 Strategic Plan – An agenda for transformation* (University of South Africa 2007, 5; hereafter referred to as SP) to 'promote[s] African thought, philosophy, interests and epistemology'. The purpose of this promotion is 'to address the legacy of neglected and marginalised issues relevant to South Africa and the rest of Africa' (SP 2007, 5). The strategic plan states that the commitment to become '*the* African university', does not mean that UNISA is interested in 'taking over or colonising Africa', but that the emphasis is being 'part of Africa' and '100% African' (SP 2007, 6). As such, as well as being located and rooted in the African context', UNISA will strive for and promote 'critical scholarship from an African perspective' so that it 'becomes an authentic part of the global knowledge enterprise' (SP 2007, 6).

The SP (2007, 6) continues to state that 'our intention is that African knowledge and knowledge systems should be developed in their own right and that they should mitigate the dominance of western canons. Through such a scholarship, we intend to contribute to a multiplicity of voices, alternative canons, and diversity in thought' (SP 2007, 6). The strategic plan also identifies the African renaissance as an opportunity to serve the specific needs of Africa through collaboration and research (SP 2007, 6).

In the *Institutional Operational Plan 2008 to 2010* (2008, hereafter referred to as the IOP), UNISA commits itself to 'reach a common understanding of the appropriate ways in which our programme offerings and organisational culture and practices should be specifically shaped by an African identity and context' (IOP 2008, 5). The IOP (2008) does not provide further clarification of what exactly this will entail and who will be responsible to provide leadership within UNISA in order to reach such a common understanding. There is reference to the forging of 'further strategic partnerships and alliances with selected institutions and governments in Africa to promote Africanness' (IOP 2008, 13). The IOP (2008, 15) commits UNISA to the promotion of academic discourse 'by inviting African and international scholars to present lectures on relevant higher education issues' (IOP 2008, 16) It can be deduced that the commitment to employment equity (EE) targets (IOP 2008, 11, 21) and the development of a cohort of 'black, young and women researchers' (IOP 2008, 15) are expected to contribute to making UNISA '100% African'.

In a Founder's Lecture at UNISA, the Vice-Chancellor, Prof N. B. Pityana refers to the fact that 'higher education policies after apartheid [have failed] to provide alternative frameworks of knowledge

production to those provided by [the] dominant Western knowledge system' (Pityana 2007, 4). It is important to notice that Pityana does not promote a new hegemony, but rather an opening up of 'spaces for interplay between diverse knowledge systems'. As a way forward, Pityana (2007, 6–8) proposes that indigenous African knowledge systems be rehabilitated; the walls between knowledge silos be broken down; the adoption by African educators of 'innovative and creative ideas for curriculum reform (2007, 6); research expertise be shared by the setting up of networks between African scholars; and lastly that there should be a new generation of academic leadership. Pityana (2007, 12) concludes by stating that South African 'higher education institutions … remain largely unreconstructed … [and that] there pervades an ingrained elitism and a dominance of western cultural and intellectual hegemony'. It is therefore necessary to 'open up at least a possibility of Africa becoming a producer of knowledge rather than a faithful reproducer of Western forms of knowledge' (Pityana 2007, 12).

Africanisation, as envisaged by UNISA, therefore addresses the following four foci:

- **Africanisation as a legitimate counter-narrative**

There is a need for an African higher education counter-narrative, which would address the elitism and dominance of the Western canon and celebrate alternative frameworks of African indigenous knowledge systems, thoughts, philosophies and ways of interpreting meaning.

- **The quest for an African identity and culture**

This refers to the promotion of a specific Africanness in curricula, organisational culture and identity.

- **A critical African scholarship**

This encompasses a critical scholarship from an African perspective, which does not seek to become a new hegemony, but will provide for a dynamic interplay between knowledge systems, epistemologies and ontologies.

- **The development of African curricula**

This counter-narrative should also address specific 'neglected and marginalised issues relevant to South Africa and the rest of Africa'.

Below is the critical interrogation of the four aspects of Africanisation in the broader context of the postcolonial and identity discourses.

4   AFRICANISATION AS LEGITIMATE COUNTER-NARRATIVE

Africanisation is a powerful and necessary counter-narrative, aimed at decentring Western descriptions of African identity. Loomba (1998, 57) states that colonialism shaped knowledge and knowledge production in profound ways and that 'no branch of learning was left untouched by the colonial experience' (Loomba 1998, 57). As colonial powers interacted with 'the rest of the world', the boundaries between myths, definitions of the 'other', stereotypes, images and ideas and 'scientific' and canonised knowledge blurred and often became extinct (see for example Loomba 1998, 57–69). 'Over time, colour, hair type, skulls shape and size, facial angles or brain size were variously taken up by the scientific discourses as the most accurate indexes of racial differences' (Loomba 1998, 63).

Large portions of world history were edited, discarded and reshaped to fit European and North American epistemologies and ontological beliefs. The official Western canons of knowledge resulted

in structured features of 'social formation', consisting of a 'set of material practices maintained by relations of power' affecting every aspect of the 'other's' existence, self-definition and self-worth (Brah 1996, 53). Through Africanisation, Africans counter-describe themselves, interrupting normative descriptions as 'the other' (Fanon 1967, 1986; Bhabha 1994). Postcolonialism (like many other 'isms') is however, not a homogeneous phenomenon (Loomba 1998; Young 2001). Africanisation, from a postmodern perspective, can be understood and located as a mixture of cultural, political, economic, social, ontological and epistemological initiatives to celebrate the local, the particular, the distinctiveness of being African and being-in-Africa/from-Africa. Like feminism, anti-racism and queer studies, which questioned meta-narratives of patriarchy and heteronormativity (see for example Brah 1996; Flannery and Hays 2001; Malinowitz 1992), Africanisation interrogates the colonial meta-narratives and replaces these universal meta-narratives with affirmative self-descriptions and small local narratives (Lyotard 1979).

In an attempt to value the '*self as African*', the discovery of traditions and ways of meaning-making, indigenous knowledge systems, religions and erased histories of civilisation occupy an important place in Africanisation as curriculum projects (to which we will later return).

5 THE QUEST FOR AN AFRICAN IDENTITY AND CULTURE

In searching for the parameters of an African identity, there are a number of options. The first option is to claim that there is something like an quintessential African identity (as proposed by Senghor 1993) or an 'irreducible Africanness' (Oloruntoba-Oju 2007). Senghor (1993, 27–31) for example proposes that there is an 'African personality', 'a cultural black world', and an African ontology (also see Van Wyk and Higgs 2004). Mensah (2007, 59) is more critical of such a construct and asks, 'Can we really say that there is a pure, unadulterated African culture that is being destabilised by globalisation'?

The search for a quintessential African identity and culture is an archa*e*ological project that searches for, and falls back on archives of identity and belonging (Bhatti 2009). Such an archaeological approach to identity often results in searching for long-hidden or previously-erased sources and traditions, longing for what existed once, and have since been lost. Wilmsen and McAllister (1996) have illustrated that identities are not only shaped by memories and discoveries, but that identities and particularities are also often invented and *re*-invented. Appiah (1995, 105) suggests 'Invented histories, invented biologies, invented cultural affinities come with every identity; each is a kind of role that has to be scripted, structured by conventions of narrative, to which the world never quite manages to conform'. Appiah (1995, 105) continues to warn that while these identities are 'invented' they are not less 'real'. Appiah (1995, 106) warns that in identity politics the participants should seriously take note of the 'attendant mystifications … and mythologies'. This approach necessitates epistemologies of perpetual longing for the glorious past that may never have existed. Brah (1996, 101–102) in the context of the homogenisation debate in India warns that [p]re-colonial India was a heterogeneous entity, and that people were much more likely to define themselves in terms of their regional, linguistic or religious affiliation than as Hindustanis. Indeed, it may be possible to argue that 'Indian identity' as a set of identifications with a nation-state was the outcome of resistance and struggle against colonialism, rather than something that existed prior to this period.

In contrast to an archaeological approach to defining an African identity, a palimpsest approach involves not the deconstruction and de-layering of the different gestalts of an identity in order to

discover the 'original,' but to take the *present* gestalt at face value and see it as a point of departure for defining identity as dynamically constructed and fluid at a specific time and place, as proposed by Brah (1996):

> identities are marked by the multiplicity of subject positions that constitute the subject. Hence, identity is neither fixed nor singular; rather it is a constantly-changing relational multiplicity. However, during the course of this flux identities do assume specific patterns, as in a kaleidoscope, against particular sets of personal, social and historical circumstances. Indeed, identity may be understood *as that very process by which the multiplicity, contradiction, and instability of subjectivity is signified as having coherence, continuity, stability; as having a core – a continually changing core but the sense of a core nonetheless – that at any given moment is enunciated as the "I"* (Brah 1996, 123–124; italics in the original).

Kowalczyk and Popkewitz (2005, 423) question national and continental identities as 'natural, uninterrupted homogeneity', and instead propose identity as an 'evolving heterogeneity', a 'palimpsest or constellation' of identities and citizenships (2005, 425; see also Brah 1996; Britzman 1995; Sumara and Davis 1999). Difference is therefore, the result of a multiplicity of factors in any given time and context, with each temporal or more permanent gestalt (such as gender or race) having socioeconomic, political and interpersonal ramifications. Boellstorff (2005) points out that many elements in an individual's identity can actually be *incommensurable* in a specific context, for example being Indonesian, male, Muslim and gay. In an African context, Epprecht (1998, 2002) and Nyong'o (2007) explore the incommensurability of being African *and* gay. This multidimensionality of identity in the intersections of geopolitical and social locations is often countered by the freezing of identity in fundamentalist ways, whether it is one's own identity or the 'other's' (Bhatti 2009).

The above insights enrich the debates around Africanisation and the African identity of UNISA by foregrounding the complex relationships that impact on how identity is produced, reproduced, legitimised and normalised. Identity, like sexuality, is not a stable category (Sumara and Davis 1999, 204) and identity as marked by a 'multiplicity of subject positions', is 'neither fixed nor singular' (Brah 1996, 123). The act of describing ourselves as Africans, as feminists (as queer discourses have shown), is however not a simple process disembedded from racial, class and socioeconomic realities and structures.

We have so far already posited Africanisation as a legitimate counter-narrative of self-description and affirmation, grounded in an understanding that the African identity is multidimensional and dynamic. We have also accepted the value of the discovery of negated and often-erased knowledge systems and ways of making meaning. We have acknowledged that even when some of these new histories and cultural gestalts are invented, with no real historical basis, they are nonetheless 'real'. Higher education should also interrogate the different claims made by the Africanisation project and expose the hierarchisation and rehierarchisation (Kowalczyk and Popkewitz 2005) resulting from Africanisation as a cultural project. In the next section the paper will therefore, posit the need for critical African scholarship as a non-negotiable part of Africanisation.

6   A CRITICAL AFRICAN SCHOLARSHIP

No education system is ever neutral (Apple 2004). Education (like curricula) is always in the service of a particular ideology. Curricula flow from, and result in ways of seeing the world which find expression in material conditions and structures. The act of developing a curriculum is therefore, firstly an immense responsibility. Curricula impact on generations to come, as evidenced by the curricula Africa received from its colonial masters. Given the huge impact curricula have on generations to come, we should therefore, in developing curricula, be wary of the masters we serve. Africanisation, as a curriculum project, is also not neutral. It is *per se* oppositional as well as validatory and affirmative. Those who uphold Africanisation should, to the same extent, be critical of claims, assumptions and beliefs.

One example of the need for a critical African scholarship should suffice. Many authors celebrate *community* and *ubuntu* 'as the very fabric of traditional African life' (Van Wyk and Higgs 2004, 203) and as a (if not *the*) uniquely African contribution to South Africa and the world (e.g., Coertze 2001; Mbigi 1995; Teffo 1994; Tutu 1994). There are also some critical voices regarding not only the empirical foundations of *ubuntu,* but also its use and function in the legitimising discourses of South African nation-building. Nkomo (2006, 13), for example, states that '[m]uch of the writing on *Ubuntu* is prescriptive and largely lacks research depth'. Marx (2002, 52), for example, states that although *ubuntu* has become

> … the main signifier[s] of African identity, there is significantly no historical evidence [that] has been produced to substantiate this alleged community value. … in this way, the various power structures, different forms of political rule, repression, and the exploitation of women, slaves and clients are left out of the picture.

Other researchers are cautious about the term and its currency in the discourse of nation-building and reconciliation in South Africa (e.g., Maluleke 1997; 2001; Marx 2002). Maluleke (1997, 343) states that 'the notion of ubuntu has now become fashionable'. Marx (2002, 53) warns that the use of *ubuntu* in the nation-building rhetoric 'emerges as a formula that at one and the same time excludes and includes, integrates and rejects. On the goal of unity and harmony, the practice of exclusion and separation follows inevitably, because identity can only be established through difference'. The discourse on *ubuntu,* in the context of nation-building, is one that needs critical debate and deconstruction. It would seem as if *ubuntu* is part of a campaign to romanticise an 'idealised, ahistorical, pre-colonial Africa' (Marx 2002, 60). The use of the term *ubuntu* and the notion of community as legitimising constructs in service of a new elite has to be critically interrogated, as proposed by *inter alia,* Chisholm (2005), Jansen (1990; 1999; 2000) and Weiler (1990). Hoppers (2000) for example, has pointed to the way in which notions of aid and development function as 'discourses of concealment'. To what extent does *ubuntu* and community function as discourses of concealment in the service of the notion of a universal African? The celebration of 'communal values' resembles what Jansen (2004) calls a 'politics of salvation' (Jansen 2004). Surely higher education has a role to play in nation-building (as Higgs (2002) proposes) – but certainly a more critical interrogation is required?

Ubuntu and the selective celebration of the function of communal life in Africa disregard the fact that communities not only include, but also exclude (Biesta 2004). The acts and processes of inclusion and exclusion have always been done according to criteria, whether it was gender, race, ethnicity and/ or age. The acts of describing and establishing who fitted into the categories of inclusion *de facto*

determined those who did not fit. The descriptions and classification of who fitted and who did not fit stemmed from context-bound and established norms, stereotypes, folklore and perceptions. Many of these descriptions are however, defined overnight, as recent histories in Rwanda and Kenya and the xenophobic violence in South Africa during 2008 has shown. In a moment someone can become an 'other' by virtue of their race, ethnicity, gender, language, dress or nationality. In the blink of an eye someone can be excluded, excommunicated and exorcised according to seemingly arbitrarily chosen criteria.

In adopting a hermeneutics of suspicion, higher education should not only interrogate the Eurocentric canons but also question the new epistemologies of perpetual nostalgia for an Africa lost and found. As the African identity is being mapped, it is crucial for higher education to empower individuals with multiple intersecting and often incommensurable identities to negotiate their own and other individuals' trajectories in a polycentric word (as proposed by Bhatti 2009).

7 TOWARDS AN AFRICAN CURRICULUM

The exploration of the previous dimensions of the Africanisation project has laid the foundation for considering the notion of an African curriculum.

Although it is accepted that Africanisation as a counter-narrative should address specific 'neglected and marginalised issues relevant to South Africa and the rest of Africa' (SP 2007, 5), Africanisation should also entail questioning and interrogating accepted (and promoted) taxonomies such as 'human rights', 'development', 'aid' and so on (Hoppers 2000, 284). As Hoppers (2000, 288) postulates, opposition to 'technologies of domination' by African scholars also entails 'reconstruction of truths from the discourses of concealment of violence', direct confrontations with these 'technologies of domination' and the 'documentation and analysis of the manner in which identities were legislated, and how the physical as well as mental spaces were regulated'. How will an African curriculum give expression to the interpenetration of indigenous, local, and global modern cultures as proposed by Mensah (2007, 63)? Mensah (2007, 67) posits that notions of Western academic imperialism underestimate the dynamic multidirectional traffic between the West and Africa.

The paper contends that the African curriculum has three dimensions:

(a) The African curriculum should in the first place arise from, and contribute to African canons of knowledge and praxis, not as exclusionary and opposing Western canons, but as equally worthy and scientifically rigorous and valid. How do curricula at UNISA encourage students to explore and celebrate indigenous sources and alternative canons of knowledge in juxtaposition to and/or additional to Western canons?

(b) There is also a need for the African curriculum to critically interrogate all knowledge claims and 'discourses of concealment' (Hoppers 2000), regardless of the locality of their origin. No education is neutral, and it is accepted that all education systems serve a particular ideology or meta-narrative. How does an African curriculum empower students to interrogate/decode/recode different knowledges and knowledge claims (Bernstein 1977; 1996)? How does the Africanisation project allow students to question and theorise specific African gestalts of oppression and inequality, such as female enslavement in the trokosi practice in Ghana (Ben-

Ari 2001), female genital mutilation in Kenya, the killing of albinos for traditional medicine practices, child soldiers in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and the practice of identifying old women and children as witches?

(c) The third and final dimension of an African curriculum has to do with the manner in which the curriculum encourages students to apply their learning to the unique challenges they face in their local communities impacted by global changes. How does an African curriculum allow students to use a language of possibilities (Freire 1989); growing out of cultures of blaming and dependencies to become active participants in pedagogies of rage and hope, critique and possibility? (Hoppers 2001; Giroux 2000[2]).

8   CONCLUSION

Africanisation, within the broader debates of describing and defining African epistemologies could benefit from a critical interrogation and a hermeneutics of faith and of suspicion (as proposed by Josselen 2004). Africanisation as counter-narrative does have a place and function in present-day African higher education. Feminist and queer theory discourses have posited that identity is always a relational construct and the total sum of complex and overlapping socioeconomic, historical and political interests. Identity always locates the bearer in broader systems of meaning. From the above exploration, I would like to postulate that the discourses on Africanisation could benefit scholars if it is premised from a more critical interrogation, which also explores the current debates as possible discourses of concealment and epistemologies of perpetual longing for a paradise lost. In following Barnett (2000) I propose that higher education, and UNISA in particular, should create heterotopic spaces (in the Foucaultian sense), celebrate heteroglossia (Bakhtin 1981 and as suggested by Pityana 2007) in a vibrant public sphere (as proposed by Habermas 1984, 1987), in which our graduates can (also) fulfil roles as public intellectuals (as proposed by West 1992 and Wood 2001).

I close this reflective exploration on Africanisation with a quotation from Appiah (1995, 108):

If an African identity is to empower us, so it seems to me, what is required is not so much that we throw out falsehood but that we acknowledge first that race and history and metaphysics do not enforce an identity: that we can choose, within broad limits set by ecological, political, and economic realities what it will mean to be African in the coming years.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

NOTE

1   Dr Paul Prinsloo, Education Consultant, Directorate for Curriculum and Learning Development (DCLD), Unisa
2   http://www.edb.utexas.edu/faculty/scheurich/proj3/giroux2 html (Accessed on 25 August 2008).

REFERENCES

Appiah, K. A. 1995. African identities. *Social postmodernism. Beyond identity politics*, edited by L. Nicholson & S. Seidman. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 103–115.

Apple, M. W. 2004. *Ideology and curriculum*. 3rd edition. New York: Routledge Falmer.

Bakhtin, M. M. 1981. *The dialogic imagination: Four essays.* Translated by M. Holquist and C. Emerson. Austin, Tex: University of Texas.

Barnett, R. 2000. Thinking the university, again. *Education Philosophy and Theory* 32(3):319–326.

Ben-Ari, N. 2001. Liberating girls from "trokosi": Campaign against ritual servitude in Ghana. *Africa Recovery* 15(4):26.

Benavot, A. 1989. Education, gender, and economic development: A cross-national study. *Sociology of Education* 62(1):14–32.

Bernstein, B. 1977. *Class, codes and control,* vol 3. *Towards a theory of educational transmission*. 2nd edition. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

.............1996. *Pedagogy, symbolic control and identity: Theory, research, critique.* London: Taylor & Francis.

Bhabha, H. K. 1992. Postcolonial authority and postmodern guilt: *Cultural studies*, edited by l. Grossberg, C. Nelson & P. Treichler. London: Routledge, pp 56–68.

...............1994. *The location of culture.* London: Routledge.

Bhatti, A. 2009. Heterogeneity and homogeneity. On the tensions between religious nationalism and secular/ syncretic positions. Public lecture, 1 April, University of South Africa, Pretoria, South Africa.

Biesta, G. 2004. The community of those who have nothing in common: Education and the language of responsibility. *Interchange* 35(3):307–324.

Boellstorff, T. 2005. Between religion and desire: Being muslim and gay in Indonesia. *American Anthropologist* 107(4):575–585.

Brah, A. 1996. *Cartographies of diaspora: Contesting identities.* London and New York: Routledge.

Bridges, D., Jucevičienė, P., Jucevičius, R., McLaughlin, T and Stankevičiūtė, J (eds). 2007. *Higher education and national development. Universities and societies in transition.* London and New York: Routledge.

Britzman, D. 1995. What is this thing called love? Taboo: *The Journal of Cultural Studies and Education* 1(Spring):65–93.

Chisholm, L. 2005. The politics of curriculum review and revision in South Africa in regional context. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative Education* 35(1):79–100.

Coertze, R. D. 2001. Ubuntu and nation building in South Africa. *South African Journal of Ethnology* 24(4): 113–118.

Comim, F. 2007. Concepts of development. The role of education. *In* David Bridges, Palmira Jucevičienė, Robertas Jucevičius, Terence McLaughlin and Jolanta Stankevičiūtė (eds). 2007. *Higher education and national development. Universities and societies in transition.* London and New York: Routledge: 88–119.

Dei, G. S. 2007. Thinking and responding to difference: Pedagogical challenges for African education. *In* Ama Mazama, *Africa in the 21st century. Toward a new future*. New York & London: Routledge: pp. 99–130.

Epstein, D., Boden, R., Deem, R., Rizvi, F and Wright, S. (eds). 2008. *Geographies of knowledge, geometries of power: Framing the future of higher education.* New York and London.

Fanon, F. 1967. *The wretched of the earth.* Harmondsworth: Penguin.

.... 1986. *Black skin, white masks*. London: Pluto.

Flannery, D. D. and Hayes, E. 2001. Challenging adult learning: A feminist perspective. *Making space. Merging theory and practice in adult education,* edited by V. Sheared & P. A. Sissel. London: Bergin & Garvey, pp. 29–41.

Freire, P. 1973. *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

.... 1989. *Learning to question: A pedagogy of liberation*. New York: Continuum.

Grossberg, L., Nelson, C., and Treichler, P. 1992. (eds.). *Cultural studies*. London: Routledge.

Habermas, J. 1984. *The Theory of Communicative Action,* vol 1. Cambridge, Mass: Polity Press.

.... 1987. *The Theory of Communicative Action*, vol 2. Cambridge, Mass: Polity Press.

Herzfeld, B. 2002. Slavery and gender: Women's double exploitation. *Gender and Development* 1(1):50–55.

Higgs, P. 2002. Nation building and the role of the university: A critical reflection. *SAJHE/SATHO* 16(2): 11–17.

Hoppers, C. A. O. 2000. The centre-periphery in knowledge production in the twenty-first century. *Compare*, 30(3):283–291.

.... 2001. Poverty power and partnerships in educational development: A post-victimology perspective. *Compare*, 31(1):21–38.

Jansen, J. D. 1990. Curriculum policy as compensatory legitimation? A view from the periphery. *Oxford Review of Education* 16(1):29–38.

.... 1999. The school curriculum since apartheid: intersections of politics and policy in the South African transition. *Journal of Curriculum Studies* 31(1):57–67.

.... 2000. Rethinking education policy: Symbols of change, signals of conflict. *Tydskrif vir Opvoeding en Opleiding* 21(2):86–105.

.... 2004. The politics of salvation: Pushing the limits of the Rainbow curriculum. In *On becoming a democracy,* edited by C. Manganyi. Pretoria: UNISA Press.

Josselen, R. 2004. The hermeneutics of faith and the hermeneutics of suspicion. *Narrative Inquiry*, 14(1):1–28.

Kowalczyk, J. and Popkewitz, T. S. 2005. Multiculturalism, recognition and abjection: (Re)mapping Italian identity. *Policy Futures in Education* 3(4):423–435.

Loomba, A. 1998. *Colonialism/postcolonialism.* London & New York: Routledge.

Lyotard, J. F. 1979. *The postmodern condition: a report on knowledge.* Translated from French by G. Bennington & B. Massumi. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Malinowitz, H. 1992. Queer theory: Whose theory? *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*, 13(2):168–184.

Maluleke, T. N. 1997. Dealing lightly with the wound of my people? *Missionalia* 25(3):324–343.

.... 2001. Can lions and rabbits reconcile? The South African TRC as an instrument of peace-building. *The Ecumenical Review* 53:190–201.

Marx, C. 2002. Ubu and Ubuntu: On the dialectics of apartheid and nation building. *Politikon. South African Journal of Political Studies* 29(1):49–69.

Mazama, A. 2007. *Africa in the 21st century. Toward a new future*. New York & London: Routledge.

Mbigi, L. 1995. *Ubuntu: A rainbow celebration of cultural diversity*. Pretoria: Ubuntu School of Philosophy.

Mensah, J. 2007. Cultural dimensions of globalisation in Africa: A dialectical interpenetration of the local and the global. *Studies in Political Economy* 77 Spring:57–94.

Naidoo, R. 2008. Higher education: A powerhouse for development in a neo-liberal age? *In* Debbie Epstein, Rebecca Boden, Rosemary Deem, Fazal Rizvi and Susan Wright (eds). *Geographies of knowledge, geometries of power: framing the future of higher education.* New York and London: Routledge: pp. 249–265.

Nicholson, L and Seidman, S. 1995. *Social postmodernism. Beyond identity politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Nkomo, S. 2006. Images of "African leadership and management" in organisation studies: tensions, contradictions and re-visions. Unpublished manuscript. Inaugural lecture, University of South Africa, 7 March.

Nyong'o, T. 2007. 'I've got you under my skin'. Queer assemblages, lyrical nostalgia and the African diaspora. *Performance Research. A Journal of the Performing Arts,* 12(3):42–54.

Oloruntoba-Oju, T. 2007. Irreducible Africanness and Nigerian postcoloniality from drama to video. West Africa Review 11. Available online at: http://www.westafricareview.com/issue11/oloruntoba htm (accessed on 10 April 2009).

Pieterse, J. N. 1996. Varieties of ethnic politics and ethnicity discourse. In *The politics of difference: Ethnic premises in a world power,* edited by E. N. Wilmsen & P. McAllister. London: University of Chicago Press: 25–44.

Pityana, N. B. 2007. Pathways to excellence in higher education: Ten years of higher education reform in South Africa. Unpublished manuscript. Annual Founders' lecture, 10 September, UNISA.

Prinsloo, P. 2007. The curriculum as contested space: An inquiry. In *Contesting spaces: The curriculum in transition*. A monograph containing selected papers from the African Conference on Higher Education held in September 2006, Pretoria, Republic of South Africa. University of South Africa: 44–59.

Senghor, L. S. 1993. Negritude: A humanism of the twentieth century. *In* Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman (eds). *Colonial discourse and post-colonial theory. A reader*. New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf: pp. 27–35.

Sheared, V. and Sissel, P. A. 2001. *Making space. Merging theory and practice in adult education.* London: Bergin & Garvey.

Sumara, D. and Davis, B. 1999. Interrupting heteronormativity: Toward a queer curriculum theory. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 29(2):191–208.

Teffo, J. 1994. *The concept of Ubuntu as a cohesive moral value.* Pretoria: Ubuntu School of Philosophy.

Tutu, D. 1994. *The rainbow people of God*. London: Doubleday.

University of South Africa. 2007. *2015 Strategic plan – An agenda for transformation.* Pretoria: UNISA Press.

.... 2008. *Institutional operational plan 2008 to 2010.* Pretoria: UNISA Press.

Van Wyk, B and Higgs, P. 2004. Toward an African philosophy of higher education. *SAJHE/SATHO* 18(3):196–210.

Weiler, H. N. 1990. Curriculum reform and the legitimation of educational objectives: the case of the Federal Republic of Germany. *Oxford Review of Education* 16(1):15–27.

West, C. 1992. The postmodern crisis of the black intellectuals. *Cultural studies*, edited by l. Grossberg, C. Nelson & P. Treichler. London: Routledge: 689–705.

Wilmsen, E. N. 1996. Introduction: Premises of power in ethnic politics, In *The politics of difference: Ethnic premises in a world of power*, edited by E. N. Wilmsen & P McAllister. London: University of Chicago Press: 1–24.

Wilmsen, E. N. and McAllister, P. (Eds). 1996. *The politics of difference: Ethnic premises in a world of power*. London: University of Chicago Press.

Wood, M. D. 2001. Religious studies as critical organic practice. *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 69(1):129–162.

Young, R. J. C. 2001. *Postcolonialism. An historical introduction.* Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.