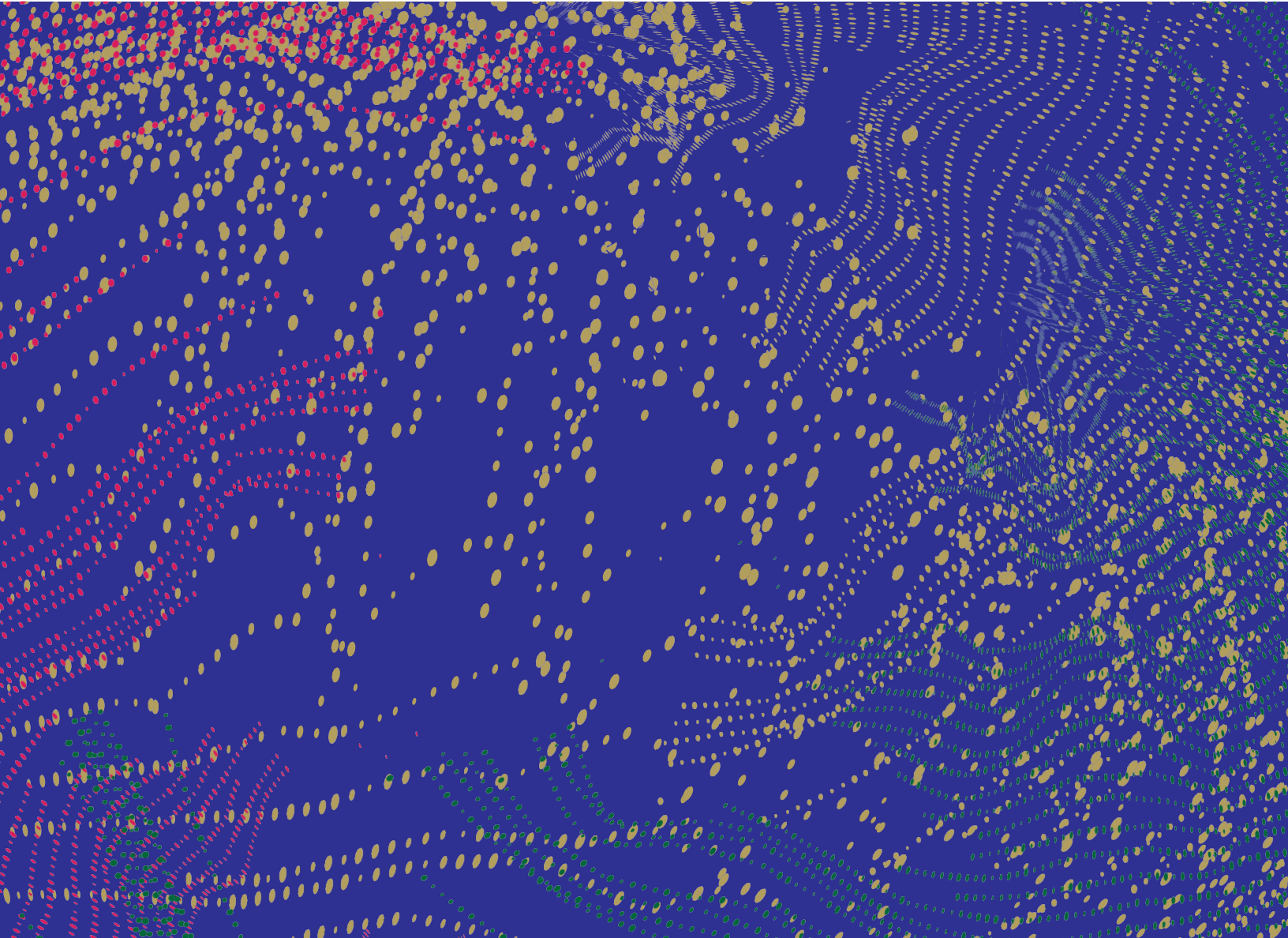


The World Humanities Report

# The Humanities in Africa: A Cautious Bibliographic Note

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Ari Sitas



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# The Humanities in Africa: A Cautious Bibliographic Note

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There is no need to minimize the importance and endurance of the humanities and social sciences on the African continent.<sup>1</sup> Despite considerable funding and resource constraints and other problems sketched out below, scholars in and of Africa have and are continuing to produce compelling research at high levels in a wide variety of fields. With this short contribution, I insist on two things: that remarkable work on Africa, in Africa, and by Africans continues to be done; and that the continent is not the exemplar of a static and ahistorical “traditionalism” but is very much in the world and has been since ancient times. The idea (still with us) that African academics should be adjuncts to well-funded research programs from more developed knowledge systems is now highly outdated. Whoever thinks otherwise is encouraged to learn more about the continent, beginning with the UNESCO-sponsored multivolume history of Africa, first published over four decades ago,<sup>2</sup> and then moving slowly toward the present, with this brief essay as a guide.

The weight of the responsibility carried by the humanities and the social sciences in Africa is great because of the responsibility scholars and writers have in order to build robust academic institutions of learning and teaching that have national, Pan-African, and global relevance; and because of pressing social problems, divisions, and conflict, and the need to be relevant to communities “out there.” Fred Hendricks and his team clearly articulate these challenges in *The State of Research Leadership Capacity Development in the Humanities, Social*

<sup>1</sup> The danger with a piece like this is what it leaves out, as well as the upset that those inevitable omissions might cause. One is limited by one’s exposure to other scholars, one’s disciplinary or interdisciplinary training, and the limited time available for an overview. This piece must be read as a beginning in compiling a more comprehensive report.

<sup>2</sup> *General History of Africa*, 8 vols. (Paris: UNESCO; London: Heinemann Educational Books; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981–93). For more information, see “General History of Africa,” UNESCO, <https://www.unesco.org/en/general-history-africa>.

*Sciences and Arts in Africa*.<sup>3</sup> Commissioned by the African Academy of Sciences, the report is part of the effort to create the African Humanities Association ([africanhumanitiesassociation.org](http://africanhumanitiesassociation.org)), whose official launch took place in November 2023 with support from the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS), the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA), and the National Institute for the Humanities and Social Sciences in South Africa (NIHSS). CODESRIA and the NIHSS have been active for five years now creating an African Pathways Programme that provides for mobility and scholarships for postgraduate students.<sup>4</sup> This bibliographic note needs to be read alongside the above African Humanities Report, which pinpoints the latest reflections of the disciplines, their regional spread, the dilemmas faced, and the need to bolster both academic and resource capacity.

The humanities in Africa face multiple challenges. Much that is problematic in the development of the humanities in Africa is due to colonial divisions that created different pathways to the West's academies, linguistic distortions, and new patterns of internationalization that isolate contemporary researchers from each other. For example, scholars study the threats to a singular ocean, the so-called Indian Ocean, in Réunion, Madagascar, Mozambique, Kenya, Tanzania, and South Africa, but they all work with different institutions in the West and rarely with each other. There is also the problem of the legacy of a continuous discontinuity, as new academic fashions from far afield overtake whatever has been developed or asserted. For example, South Africa has seen the publication of serious books on race, but none of them talks to each other; instead, they address different scholarly networks elsewhere. Another problem is the tension between the development of disciplinary fields on the continent and the attraction of African studies as an important area studies field in the North. Yet, vast movements and migrations of people should encourage cross-border cooperation, because the boundaries of nation-states in Africa are recent and the result of European foraging, settlement, and colonization, providing plenty of energy points. Furthermore, we lack an institutionalized infrastructure of narratives

<sup>3</sup> Fred Hendricks, Dominica Dipio, Carlos Fernandes, et al., *The State of Research Leadership Capacity Development in the Humanities, Social Sciences and Arts in Africa: crafting appropriate intervention strategies* (African Academy of Sciences, African Humanities Association, 2021).

<sup>4</sup> Following the South African example of 2011, Adama Samassékou spearheaded an attempt to launch a continent-wide charter for the humanities and social sciences after an inaugural meeting in Bamako in 2017 in anticipation of his presidency of the International Council for Philosophy and Humanistic Studies. The overthrow of the government of Mali, however, set that process back.

and documents (physical or digital) that could provide a basis for research that exceeds the colonial archive. Then there is the question of scale: Does the term “African” refer to a geographical entity on the familiar map, or is its meaning broader and more sociological, referring both to the domain of that geographical space and to its diasporic communities? Is there a foundational ontology and spiritual unity that is Africa, or is it a space of diverse philosophical, aesthetic, and ritual traditions?

Much of the development of scholarship and PhD programs on the continent relies on donor funding, whether from foundations and philanthropic trusts, embassy-linked international research and aid funding, or a little funding from corporations and their social responsibility programs. Although very little national government support has trickled down to the humanities and the social sciences in support of robust research programs,<sup>5</sup> the little that has been provided has had good results.

CODESRIA (based in Dakar, Senegal) and the Organization of Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa (OSSREA; based in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia) have facilitated the production of many books and theses. Meanwhile, the most active geographical space in Africa for book publishing is in South Africa, which is the home to robust academic presses at the University of the Witwatersrand, the University of KwaZulu-Natal, and the University of South Africa. Nevertheless, still just 1 percent of the world’s academic journals are published in Africa. Recently, the African Humanities Association has ventured into publishing books on the continent’s challenges.

Despite the many difficulties faced, all fields in the humanities and social sciences by now have a robust published word-scape. I have already mentioned the UNESCO-sponsored eight-volume history (with more to come), which shattered the notion of an ahistorical continent. Labyrinthine pathways grew from there, as each author created further remarkable works and insights. From them, we are beginning to piece together how societies on this landmass rose and fell, what the main pathways within the continent were before European foraging, settlement, and colonization. Admittedly, archaeologists suffer from a lack of funds and academic posts, so that the remarkable networks around East African archaeology led by Felix Chami, among others, have been starved of

<sup>5</sup> For the South African side, see Academy of Science of South Africa, *Consensus Study on the State of the Humanities in South Africa: Status, Prospects and Strategies* (Pretoria: Department of Science and Technology, 2011); and *Higher Education, Science, Technology and Innovation Institutional Landscape (HESTIIL) Report* (Department of Higher Education, Science and Innovation, 2021).

resources. Meanwhile, success often comes with its own barbs, as in the case of Shadreck Chirikure and his students. Their work on Great Zimbabwe tells a remarkable story of agency and creativity,<sup>6</sup> but neither he nor his proteges could be kept on the continent by African (or, in this case, South African) institutions, and they have moved to better-resourced centers in the West.

Unavoidably, the “colonial” period and its consequences loom large in the reflections and research of humanities scholars, as do the varied anticolonial struggles and their postcolonial outcomes. The inspirations that led to the search for self-determination and continental unity were to be found in many emerging political figures, from Kwame Nkrumah to Julius Nyerere, Frantz Fanon, Eduardo Mondlane, Sol Plaatje, and Mahatma Gandhi—to name only a sprinkling of them. Their legacies are being debated and revalued all the time.

Nevertheless, if asked to develop a challenging, historically informed curriculum, I would start with a rather neglected classic such as Cheikh Anta Diop’s *The African Origin of Civilization: Myth or Reality*.<sup>7</sup> However flawed one might consider it,<sup>8</sup> it is no more or less flawed than Émile Durkheim’s *The Division of Labor in Society* or Max Weber’s *Sociology of Religion*. Similarly, the commentary on W. E. B. Du Bois’s 1930 pamphlet *Africa: Its Place in Modern History* receives scant attention.<sup>9</sup> What has been added to the conversation lately is the Rosa Amelia Plumelle-Urbe’s *White Ferocity: The Genocides of Non-Whites and Non-Aryans from 1492 to Date*.<sup>10</sup> This new work needs to be brought into conversation with Africanist historical scholarship, such as Jan Vansina’s *Oral Tradition as History* or his *How Societies Are Born: Governance in West Central Africa before 1600*.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Shadreck Chirikure, *Great Zimbabwe: Reclaiming a “Confiscated” Past* (London: Routledge, 2021).

<sup>7</sup> Cheikh Anta Diop, *The African Origin of Civilization: Myth or Reality*, trans. Mercer Cook (New York: Lawrence Hill Books, 1974).

<sup>8</sup> See for instance, Amady Aly Dieng’s “Hommage à Cheikh Anta Diop, 1923–1986: Un bilan critique de l’oeuvre de Cheikh Anta Diop” [Homage to Cheikh Anta Diop, 1923–1986: A critical assessment of the work of Cheikh Anta Diop], *Canadian Journal of African Studies / Revue Canadienne des Études Africaines* 23, no. 1 (1989): 151–57.

<sup>9</sup> W. E. B. Du Bois, *Africa: Its Place in Modern History* (Girard, KS: Hadelman-Julius Publications, 1930).

<sup>10</sup> Rosa Amelia Plumelle-Urbe, *White Ferocity: The Genocides of Non-Whites and Non-Aryans from 1492 to Date* (Dakar: CODESRIA Books, 2020).

<sup>11</sup> Jan Vansina, *Oral Tradition as History* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985); *How Societies Are Born: Governance in West Central Africa before 1600* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2004).

Extensive research has been done on what decelerated the inherent dynamics of development from the seventh to the fifteenth centuries CE. Serious questions are being asked such as: What of those dynamics did trade, foraging, settlement, and later colonialism destroy? And, what might be recuperated from the knowledge systems, art, music, and creativity in those years? What can be gleaned beyond the colonial archive? Another world was possible, but what might have been its trajectories? A bias of emphasis toward the “coastline” of the continent continues, as opposed to a focus on the interior of the continent continues. Was it the coastline’s immersion in the world economy of the time, with its dhows and trade winds, that gave it its rhythms of development, or were there internal dynamics that trumped trade? In *Maps of Sorrow: Migration and Music in the Construction of Pre-colonial AfroAsia*, Sumangala Damodaran and I try to provide a balanced assessment of both sides of the bias, but further research and scholarship are needed.<sup>12</sup>

The closer one gets to the colonial period, the more plentiful the research and the writing gets. If one seeks a breath of fresh air outside the “colonial archive,” the work of Carolyn Hamilton would be a sterling beginning.<sup>13</sup>

Despite meager resources, remarkable work emerged in political economy, starting with Samir Amin’s center/periphery scholarship in the 1970s,<sup>14</sup> which focused on the reliance on raw materials and their export and the ravages of neocolonialism. The Dakar moment and the Tanzanian moment eventually broke open an understanding of the 1970s when scholars started analyzing the modalities of colonial rule. Walter Rodney’s *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, Thandika Mkandawire’s *The State and Development in Africa and Other Regions*, and Dambisa Moyo’s *Dead Aid: Aid Is Not Working and There Is a Better Way for Africa* are all solid provocations.<sup>15</sup> Tom Burgis adds a sinister look on what

<sup>12</sup> Ari Sitas and Sumangala Damodaran, *Maps of Sorrow: Migration and Music in the Construction of Pre-colonial AfroAsia* (Delhi: Tulika Press; New York: Columbia University Press, 2023).

<sup>13</sup> Carolyn Hamilton et al., eds. *Refiguring the Archive* (Cape Town: David Philip, 2001); Carolyn Hamilton and Nessa Leibhammer, “Tribing and Untribing the Archive,” in *Tribing and Untribing the Archive: Identity and the Material Record in Southern KwaZulu-Natal in the Late Independent and Colonial Periods*, ed. Carolyn Hamilton and Nessa Leibhammer (Pietermaritzburg, South Africa: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2016), 1:13–48. I have avoided reporting here on country-specific histories where South Africa is more than well-served.

<sup>14</sup> See Demba Moussa Dembélé, *Samir Amin: Intellectuel organique au service de l’émancipation du Sud* [Samir Amin: Organic intellectual serving the emancipation of the South] (Dakar: CODESRIA Books, 2013).

<sup>15</sup> Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (Washington, DC: Howard University Press, 1974); Thandika Mkandawire, *The State and Development in Africa and Other Regions*

is damaging Africa's development project in his 2015 *The Looting Machine*.<sup>16</sup> Emanuel Akyeampong, Robert H. Bates, Nathan Nunn, and James Robinson provide a sound historical contextualization in *Africa's Development in Historical Perspective*,<sup>17</sup> as do Jimi O. Adesina, Yao Graham, and Adebayo Olukoshi in *Africa and Development Challenges in the New Millennium*.<sup>18</sup>

Of late, the role of the university on the continent has received serious attention in Paul Tiyambe Zeleza and Adebayo Olukoshi's two-volume *African Universities in the Twenty-First Century*<sup>19</sup>; Knowledge Rajohane Matshediso, Claude Abé, Mildred Kinconco Barya, Esther Van Heerden, and Ingrid Palmarmy's *The Social Sciences and Africa's Future*<sup>20</sup>; Catarina Antunes Gomes and Cesaltina Abrau's *Public Humanities: Thinking Freedom in the African University*<sup>21</sup>; and country-specific work for South Africa, Senegal, Angola, and Mozambique.<sup>22</sup> A critique of the curriculum can be found in Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni's *Epistemic Freedom in Africa: Deprovincialization and Decolonization*.<sup>23</sup>

A major theme connecting Africa to the Americas, Europe, and Asia is slavery and its implications for African societies. The UNESCO *General History of Africa* includes large sections that discuss the sources and routes of slavery. Paul

(Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); Dambisa Moyo, *Dead Aid: Aid Is Not Working and There Is a Better Way for Africa* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2015).

<sup>16</sup> Tom Burgis, *The Looting Machine: Warlords, Oligarchs, Corporations, Smugglers and the Theft of Africa's Wealth* (London: Public Affairs, 2015).

<sup>17</sup> Emanuel Akyeampong, Robert H. Bates, Nathan Nunn, and James Robinson, *Africa's Development in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

<sup>18</sup> Jimi O. Adesina, Yao Graham, and Adebayo Olukoshi, *Africa and Development Challenges in the New Millennium: The NEPAD Debate* (Dakar: CODESRIA Press, 2006).

<sup>19</sup> Paul Tiyambe Zeleza and Adebayo Olukoshi, eds., *African Universities in the Twenty-First Century*, vol. 1, *Liberalisation and Internationalisation*, and vol. 2, *Knowledge and Society* (Dakar: CODESRIA Books, 2004–5).

<sup>20</sup> Knowledge Rajohane Matshediso, Claude Abé, Mildred Kinconco Barya, Esther Van Heerden, and Ingrid Palmarmy, *The Social Sciences and Africa's Future* (Dakar: CODESRIA Books, 2004).

<sup>21</sup> Catarina Antunes Gomes and Cesaltina Abrau, *Public Humanities: Thinking Freedom in the African University* (Dakar: CODESRIA Books, 2022).

<sup>22</sup> *Charter for the Humanities and the Social Sciences* (Pretoria: Department of Higher Education, 2011); Mame-Penda Ba and Jean Alain Goudiaby, *Les sciences humaines et sociales au Sénégal: Une évaluation critique* [The human and social sciences in Senegal: A critical assessment] (Dakar: CODESRIA Books, 2016); Teresa Cruz e Silva, *Universidades Públicas em Angola, Moçambique e Cabo Verde: Experiências de Mudança e Desafios de Liderança (1975–2009)* [Public universities in Angola, Mozambique and Cape Verde: Experiences of change and leadership challenges (1975–2009)] (Dakar: CODESRIA Books, 2021).

<sup>23</sup> Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni, *Epistemic Freedom in Africa: Deprovincialization and Decolonization* (London: Routledge, 2018).



E. Lovejoy provides a good overview in his *Transformations in Slavery*.<sup>24</sup> Joseph E. Inikori's *Africans and the Industrial Revolution in England* has sharply challenged the conventional history of modernity and Britain's industrial revolution.<sup>25</sup> A parallel accounts to Inikori's is G. Ugo Nwokeji's *The Slave Trade and Culture in the Bight of Biafra*.<sup>26</sup>

Philosophically, the core debate about the constitution of the humanities on the continent has been between the scholars who have argued for the vitality of indigenous forms of oral discourse or "sagacity"<sup>27</sup> and those who have, like Paulin Hountondji, critiqued them as problematic disseminators of "ethno-philosophies."<sup>28</sup> Hountondji later retracted and offered a synthesis in *The Struggle for Meaning*.<sup>29</sup> The rejection of ethno-philosophy is shared by Kwame Anthony Appiah in his influential book *In My Father's House*.<sup>30</sup> Amady Aly Dieng's *Hegel et l'Afrique noire* captures well the continued discomfort with Euro-centric philosophies and their views of Africa.<sup>31</sup> The publication of Souleymane Bachir Diagne's *The Ink of the Scholars: Reflections on Philosophy in Africa* marks an influential turn, alongside his earlier edited volume *The Meanings of Timbuktu*.<sup>32</sup>

Although some consider ethno-philosophy deficient in its claims, failing on the grounds considered the hallmarks of good philosophy, others have continued to experiment with its possibilities: Innocent Asouzu and Jonathan Chima-konam demonstrate the viability of a philosophical program that seeks to transcend ethno-philosophy by enriching it with concepts that promote the criticality and analyticity demanded by critics of ethno-philosophy, in a manner

<sup>24</sup> Paul E. Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery: A History of Slavery in Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

<sup>25</sup> Joseph E. Inikori, *Africans and the Industrial Revolution in England: A Study in International Trade and Economic Development* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

<sup>26</sup> G. Ugo Nwokeji, *The Slave Trade and Culture in the Bight of Biafra: An African Society in the Atlantic World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

<sup>27</sup> Henry Odera-Oruka, *Sage Philosophy: Indigenous Thinkers and Modern Debate on African Philosophy* (Leyden: Brill, 1990).

<sup>28</sup> See Paulin Hountondji, ed., *Endogenous Knowledge: Research Trails* (Dakar: CODESRIA Books, 1997).

<sup>29</sup> Paulin Hountondji, *The Struggle for Meaning: Reflections on Philosophy, Culture, and Democracy in Africa*, trans. John Conteh-Morgan (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2002).

<sup>30</sup> See Kwame Anthony Appiah, *In My Father's House: Africa in the Philosophy of Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

<sup>31</sup> Amady Aly Dieng, *Hegel et l'Afrique noire: Hegel était-il raciste? [Hegel and black Africa: Was Hegel racist?]* (Dakar: CODESRIA Books, 2007).

<sup>32</sup> Souleymane Bachir Diagne, *The Ink of the Scholars: Reflections on Philosophy in Africa* (Dakar: CODESRIA Books, 2013); Souleymane Bachir Diagne, ed., *The Meanings of Timbuktu* (Dakar: CODESRIA Books: 2010).

conducive to system-building.<sup>33</sup> Of course, an earlier voice that has been forgotten in more recent debates is that of Valentin Y. Mudimbe and his 1988 book *The Invention of Africa*.<sup>34</sup>

A “rationalist” tradition has centered around Ethiopia since the seventeenth century. That tradition’s originator Zera Yacob has been attracting scholarship grows by leaps and bounds.<sup>35</sup> Other recent work, such as Elleni Centime Zeleke’s *Ethiopia in Theory*, captures vividly the production of Ethiopian social thought amid turbulent years of insurrection and revolution.<sup>36</sup>

Many thinkers, including those in the diaspora, agree with Ngūgĩ Wa Thiong’o’s insistence on the need for writers to express themselves in their indigenous languages.<sup>37</sup> The work of exploring the value of local languages for the humanities projects has been under way, as has the argument that there can be a convergence of many of them into a smaller family of mother tongues.<sup>38</sup>

Akinsola Akiwowo and Jimí Adésínà have offered serious sociological reflection on the above questions in relation to indigenous and Yoruba-based language concepts.<sup>39</sup> Broader issues and more mainstream sociological debates are addressed in Ansa Asamoá’s *On Social Change in Sub-Saharan Africa* and in

<sup>33</sup> See Innocent Asouzu, *Ibuanyidanda and Some Basic Philosophical Problems in Africa Today* (Zurich: Lit Verlag, 2013); Jonathan O. Chimakonam, *Ezumezu: A System of Logic for African Philosophy and Studies* (Cham, Switzerland: Springer, 2019). See also Ada Agada, “The Sense in Which Ethno-Philosophy Can Remain Relevant in 21st Century African Philosophy,” *Phronimon* 20, no. 1 (2019): 1–20.

<sup>34</sup> Valentin Y. Mudimbe, *The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, Philosophy, and the Order of Knowledge* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988).

<sup>35</sup> See various works by Teodros Kiros: “The Meditations of Zera Yacob, a 17th-Century Ethiopian Philosopher,” Boston University Working Paper Series, 1994; “Zera Yacob: A Seventeenth-Century Ethiopian Founder of Modernity in Africa,” in *Explorations in African Political Thought*, ed. Teodros Kiros (London: Routledge, 2013), 69–79; “Zera Yacob and Traditional Ethiopian Philosophy,” in *A Companion to African Philosophy*, ed. Kwasi Wiredu (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), 183–90; *Zera Yacob: The Rationality of the Human Heart* (Trenton, NJ: The Red Sea Press, 2005); and Fasil Merawi, “Zera Yacob’s *Hatata* and the Vitality of an Indigenous Ethiopian Philosophy,” *Ethiopian Journal of Social Sciences* 3, no. 2 (2017): 1–10.

<sup>36</sup> Elleni Centime Zeleke, *Ethiopia in Theory: Revolution and Knowledge Production, 1964–2016* (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2019).

<sup>37</sup> Ngūgĩ Wa Thiong’o, *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature* (London: Heinemann, 1986).

<sup>38</sup> See Emmanuel N. Chia, ed., *African Linguistics and the Development of African Communities* (Dakar: CODESRIA Books, 2006).

<sup>39</sup> Akinsola Akiwowo, “Indigenous Sociologies: Extending the Scope of the Argument,” *International Sociology* 14, no. 2 (1999): 115–38; Jimí Adésínà, “Sociology and Yoruba Studies: Epistemic Intervention or Doing Sociology in the ‘Vernacular’?,” *African Sociological Review* 6, no. 1 (2002): 91–114.

my own recent essay “Rethinking Africa’s Sociological Project.”<sup>40</sup> A related return to the indispensable work of Archie Mafeje and Bernard Magubane continues.<sup>41</sup> In a move from the economic imperatives of colonialism to the modalities of rule and identity formation, the work of Mahmood Mamdani has been influential, as has Achille Mbembe’s *On the Postcolony*, within postmodern and postcolonial circles.<sup>42</sup>

In the scholarship examining inequality and identity formation, an area of increasing attention is gender. The provocative work of Ifi Amadiume challenges the imposition of Western ideas of patriarchy on gender relations in Africa. Her empirical evidence tries to undo commonplace conceptions of male and female and to provide an alternative interpretation of power.<sup>43</sup> Other well-researched, conventional accounts of women in African history and society include Christine Oppong’s *Women’s Roles in Sub-Saharan Africa*; Jean Allman, Susan Geiger, and Nakanyike Musisi’s collection *Women in African Colonial History*; and Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch’s *African Women: A Modern History*; as well as archaeological reflections in Susan Kent collection *Gender in African Prehistory*.<sup>44</sup> These should be read against the more critical work gathered by Ayesha Mei-Tje Imam, Fatou Sow, and Amina Mama in their *Engendering African Social Sciences*, and by Egodi Uchendu in *Masculinities in Contemporary Africa*, as well as Fatou Sow’s recent *Gender and Fundamentalisms*.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>40</sup> Ansa Asamoah, *On Social Change in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Guide to the Study of the Process of Social Transformation* (Accra: Woeli Publishers, 2001); Ari Sitas, “Rethinking Africa’s Sociological Project,” *Current Sociology* 62, no. 4 (2014): 457–71.

<sup>41</sup> See Archie Mafeje, *The Theory and Ethnography of African Social Formations* (London: CODESRIA Book Series, 1991); Bernard Magubane, “Urban Tribalism: Theory and Ideology,” in *African Sociology: Towards a Critical Perspective; The Collected Essays of Bernard Makhosezwe Magubane* (Trenton, NJ: African World Press, 1999). Both are widely used in South African scholarship.

<sup>42</sup> Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonial Rule* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996); Mahmood Mamdani, *Define and Rule: Native as Political Identity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012); Achille Mbembe, *On the Postcolony* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

<sup>43</sup> Ifi Amadiume, *Male Daughters, Female Husbands: Gender and Sex in African Society* (New York: Bloomsbury, 1987).

<sup>44</sup> Christine Oppong, *Women’s Roles in Sub-Saharan Africa* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2012); Jean Allman, Susan Geiger, and Nakanyike Musisi, eds., *Women in African Colonial History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002); Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch, *African Women: A Modern History* (London: Routledge, 1997); Susan Kent, ed., *Gender in African Prehistory* (Lanham, MD: Alta Mira Press, 1998).

<sup>45</sup> Ayesha M Imam, and Amina Mama, Fatou Sow, eds., *Engendering African Social Sciences* (Dakar: CODESRIA Books, 1997); also in French as *Sexe, Genre et Société: Engendrer Les Sciences*

The arts, too, are enjoying scholarly scrutiny. An impressive array of work here includes the three-volume study *Ethiopian Christian Liturgical Chant: An Anthology*; Salah M. Hassan's *Gendered Visions: The Art of Contemporary Africana Women Artists*; Souleymane Bachir Diagne's *African Art as Philosophy: Senghor, Bergson, and the Idea of Negritude*; Chika Okeke-Agulu's *Postcolonial Modernism: Art and Decolonization in Twentieth-Century Nigeria*; Kofi Agawu's *The African Imagination in Music*; the edited collections *Contemporary African Cultural Productions* and *Musical Bows of Southern Africa*; and Premesh Lalu's call for aesthetic education in *Undoing Apartheid*.<sup>46</sup> South Africa has experienced a surge of creative work, given that such work is now rewarded in the South African higher education system alongside peer-reviewed journal articles. Music, visual, performance, and creative writing programs have generated serious, critical, award-winning work. The annual awards for creative work given by the National Institute for the Humanities and the Social Sciences provide an introduction to the wide array of such work.<sup>47</sup>

Among the plethora of political studies of systems, processes, governmentalities, and power, a good start would be Issa G. Shivji's *The Concept of Human Rights in Africa* (now in its second edition after two decades); Sam Moyo's *African Land Questions, the State and Agrarian Transition: Contradictions of Neo-liberal Land Reforms*; Adom Getachew's *Worldmaking after Empire: The Rise and Fall of Self-Determination*; Francis B. Nyamjoh's *Insiders & Outsiders: Citizenship and Xenophobia in Contemporary Southern Africa*; Jimi O. Adesina's *Social Policy in the African Context*; Deborah Posel's essay "Race as Common Sense: Racial Classification in Twentieth-Century South Africa"; Gerhard Maré's

*Sociales Africaines* (Paris and Dakar: CODESRIA/Karthala 2004); Egodu Uchendu, ed., *Masculinities in Contemporary Africa* (Dakar: CODESRIA Books, 2008); and Fatou Sow, *Gender and Fundamentalisms* (Dakar: CODESRIA Press, 2020).

<sup>46</sup> Kay Kaufman Shelemay and Peter Jeffery, eds., *Ethiopian Christian Liturgical Chant: An Anthology*, 3 vols. (Madison, WI: A-R Editions, 1993); Salah M. Hassan, ed., *Gendered Visions: The Art of Contemporary Africana Women Artists* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1997); Souleymane Bachir Diagne, *African Art as Philosophy: Senghor, Bergson, and the Idea of Negritude* (Dakar: CODESRIA Books, 2011); Chika Okeke-Agulu, *Postcolonial Modernism: Art and Decolonization in Twentieth-Century Nigeria* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015); Kofi Agawu, *The African Imagination in Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016); Valentin Y. Mudimbe, ed., *Contemporary African Cultural Productions* (Dakar: CODESRIA Books, 2013); Sazi Dlamini, ed., *Musical Bows of Southern Africa* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2021); and Sitas and Damodaran, *Maps of Sorrow*.

<sup>47</sup>Annual award winners since 2016 are listed at NIHSS's website, <https://www.nihss.ac.za/awards>.

*Declassified: Moving beyond the Dead End of Race in South Africa*; and Achille Mbembe's *Critique of Black Reason*.<sup>48</sup>

As the continent attempts to deal with major changes and challenges, the humanities and social sciences have a clear and defining role to play. It is important to work hard to create a new unity of purpose and to reenergize new generations of students so they can both ask vital questions and create human-centered solutions. It always seems impossible, as Nelson Mandela mused, until it is done.

<sup>48</sup> Issa G. Shivji, *The Concept of Human Rights in Africa*, 2d ed. (Dakar: CODESRIA Books, 2023); Sam Moyo, *African Land Questions, the State and Agrarian Transition: Contradictions of Neo-liberal Land Reforms* (Dakar: CODESRIA Books, 2007); Adom Getachew, *Worldmaking after Empire: The Rise and Fall of Self-Determination* (Dakar: CODESRIA Books, 2020); Francis B. Nyamjoh, *Insiders & Outsiders: Citizenship and Xenophobia in Contemporary Southern Africa* (Dakar: CODESRIA Books, 2005); Jimi O. Adesina, *Social Policy in the African Context* (Dakar: CODESRIA Books, 2021); Deborah Posel, "Race as Common Sense: Racial Classification in Twentieth-Century South Africa," *African Studies Review* 44, no. 2 (2001): 87–114; Gerhard Maré, *Declassified: Moving beyond the Dead End of Race in South Africa* (Johannesburg: Jacana, 2017); Achille Mbembe, *Critique of Black Reason* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 2017).

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