

UBUNTUGOGY: AN AFRICAN EDUCATIONAL PARADIGM THAT TRANSCENDS PEDAGOGY, ANDRAGOGY, ERGONAGY AND HEUTAGOGY

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After almost three centuries of employing Western educational approaches, many African societies are still characterized by low Western literacy rates, civil conflicts and underdevelopment. It is obvious that these Western educational paradigms, which are not indigenous to Africans, have done relatively little good for Africans. Thus, I argue in this paper that the salvation for Africans hinges upon employing indigenous African educational paradigms which can be subsumed under the rubric of *ubuntu*gogy, which I define as the art and science of teaching and learning undergirded by humanity towards others. Therefore, *ubuntu*gogy 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).

INTRODUCTION

Many great African minds, realizing the debilitating effects of the Western educational systems that have been forced upon Africans, have called for different approaches. The following is a sample of excerpts from some of these great Africans.

Sékou Touré:

We must Africanize our education and get rid of the negative features and misconceptions inherited from an educational system designed to serve colonial purposes. We should also promote an education that will acquaint children with real life—not only by giving them a vocational training, but by

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closely relating school with life. Life, indeed, is the true school, and our schools, whether of general education or vocational training, should be auxiliaries of life.¹

Emperor Haile Selassie:

A fundamental objective of the university (i.e. Haile Selassie I University) must be to safeguarding and the developing of the culture of the people it serves. This university is a product of that culture; it is a community of those capable of understanding and using the accumulated heritage of the Ethiopian people. In this university men and women will work together to study the wellsprings of our culture, trace its development, and mold its future. What enables us today to open a university of such a standard is the wealth of literature and learning now extinct elsewhere in the world which through hard work and perseverance our forefathers have preserved for us.²

Julius K. Nyerere:

Our first step, therefore, must be to re-educate ourselves; to regain our former attitude of mind. In our traditional African society we are individuals within a community. We took care of the community, and the community took care of us. We neither needed nor wished to exploit our fellowmen.³

Kwame Nkrumah:

Intelligentsia and intellectuals, if they are to play a part in the African Revolution, must become conscious of the class struggle in Africa, and align themselves with the oppressed masses. This involves the difficult, but not impossible, task of cutting themselves free from bourgeois attitudes and ideologies imbibed as a result of colonialist education and propaganda.⁴

Amilcar Cabral:

On the level of education and culture (three of the seven points): 3. Total elimination of the complexes created by colonialism, and of the consequences of colonialist culture and exploitation. 4. In Guinea development of autochthonous languages and of the Creole dialect, creation of a written form for these languages. In Cabo Verde development of the cultures of the various ethnic groups and of the Cabo Verde people. Protection and

development of national literature and arts. 5. Utilisation of all the values and advances of human and universal culture in the service of the progress of the peoples of Guinea and Cabo Verde. Contribution by the culture of these peoples to the progress of humanity in general.⁵

Ngugi wa Thiong'o:

As you know, the colonial system of education in addition to its apartheid racial demarcation had the structure of a pyramid: a broad primary base, a narrowing secondary middle, and an even narrower university apex....Language and literature were taking us further and further from ourselves to other selves, from our world to other worlds....The call for the rediscovery and the resumption of our language is a call for a regenerative re-connection with the millions of revolutionary tongues in Africa and the world over demanding liberation. It is a call for the rediscovery of the real language of humankind: the language of struggle. It is the universal language underlying all speech and words of our history. Struggle. Struggle makes history. Struggle makes us. In struggle is our history, our language and our being.⁶

Marcus Garvey:

But when we come to consider the history of man, was not the Negro a power, was he not great once? Yes, honest students of history can recall the day when Egypt, Ethiopia, and Timbuktu towered in their civilizations, towered above Europe, towered above Asia. When Europe was inhabited by a race of cannibals, a race of savaged, naked men, heathens, and pagans, Africa was peopled with a race of cultured black men, who were masters in art, science, and literature; men who were cultured and refined; men who, it was said, were like the gods. Even the great poets of old sang in beautiful sonnets of the delight it afforded the gods to be in companionship with the Ethiopians. Why, then, should we lose hope? Black men, you were once great; you shall be great again. Lose not courage, lose not faith, go forward. The thing to do is to get organized; keep separated and you will be exploited, you will be robbed, you will be killed. Get organized, and you will compel the world to respect you.⁷

Jean Price-Mars:

Since our evolution as a people occurred in divergent directions, such that a small number among us has acquired an intellectual and social culture

which makes it a world apart—very proud and vain in its ivory tower and having only a distant and formal contact with the rest of the population lost in misery and ignorance—it is among the multitude that we will have the best chance of again finding the thread of oral traditions derived from overseas. When one submits these traditions to a comparative examination, they immediately reveal that Africa, for the most part, is their land of origin.⁸

C. L. R. James:

The middle classes in the West Indies, colored peoples, constitute one of the most peculiar classes in the world, peculiar in the sense of their historical development and the awkward and difficult situation they occupy in what constitutes the West Indian nation, or, nowadays, some section of it. Let me get one thing out of the way. They are not a defective set of people. In intellectual capacity, i.e., ability to learn, to familiarize themselves with the general scholastic requirements of Western civilization, they are and for some time have been unequaled in the colonial world. If you take percentages of scholastic achievement in relation to population among underdeveloped, formerly colonial, colored countries, West Indians would probably be at the head and, I believe, not by a small margin either. What they lack, and they lack plenty, is not due to any inherent West Indian deficiency. If that were so, we would be in a bad way indeed. I set out to show that the blunders and deficiencies of which we are guilty are historically caused and therefore can be historically corrected.⁹

Frantz Fanon:

Every colonized people—in other words, every people in whose soul an inferiority complex has been created by the death and burial of its local cultural originality—finds itself face to face with the language of the civilizing nation; that is, with the culture of the mother country. The colonized is elevated above his jungle status in proportion to his adoption of the mother country's cultural standards.¹⁰

Specialists in basic health education should give careful thought to the new situations that develop in the course of a struggle for national liberation on the part of an underdeveloped people. Once the body of the nation begins to live again in a coherent and dynamic way, everything becomes possible.¹¹

W. E. B. Du Bois:

Teach workers to work—a wise saying; wise when applied to German boys and American girls; wiser when said to Negro boys, for they have less knowledge of working and none to teach them. Teach thinkers to think—a needed knowledge in a day of loose and careless logic; and they whose lot is gravest must have the carefulest training to think aright. If these things are so, how foolish to ask what is the best education for one or seven or sixty million souls! Shall we teach them trades, or train them in liberal arts? Neither and both: teach the workers to work and the thinkers to think; make carpenters of carpenters, and philosophers of philosophers, and fops of fools. Nor can we pause here. We are training not isolated men but a living group of men—nay, a group within a group. And the final product of our training must be neither a psychologist nor a brickmason, but a man. And to make men, we must have ideals, broad, pure, and inspiring ends of living—not sordid money-getting, not apples of gold. The worker must work for the glory of his handiwork, not simply for money; the thinkers must think for truth, not for fame. And all this is gained only by human strife and longing; by ceaseless training and education; by founding Right on righteousness and Truth on the unhampered search for Truth; by founding the common school on the university, and the industrial school on the common school; and weaving thus a system, not a distortion, and bringing a birth, not an abortion.¹²

Carter G. Woodson:

It seems only a reasonable proposition, then, that, if under the present system which produced our leadership in religion, politics, and business we have gone backward toward serfdom or have at least been kept from advancing to real freedom, it is high time to develop another sort of leadership with a different educational system. In the first place we must bear in mind that the Negro has never been educated. He has merely been informed about other things which he has not been permitted to do. The Negroes have been shoved out of the regular schools through the rear door into the obscurity of the backyard and told to imitate others whom they see from afar, or they have been permitted in some places to come into the public schools to see how others educate themselves. The program for the uplift of the Negro in this country must be based upon a scientific study of the Negro from within to develop in him the power to do for himself what his oppressors will never do to elevate him to the level of others.¹³

Malcolm X:

The textbooks tell our children nothing about the great contributions of Afro-Americans to the growth and development of this country. And they don't. When we send our children to school in this country they learn nothing about us other than that we used to be cotton pickers. Every little child going to school thinks his grandfather was a cotton picker. Why, your grandfather was Nat Turner; your grandfather was Toussaint L'Ouverture; your grandfather was Hannibal. Your grandfather was some of the greatest Black people who walked on this earth. It was your grandfather's hands who forged civilization and it was your grandmother's hands who rocked the cradle of civilization. But the textbooks tell our children nothing about the great contributions of Afro-Americans to the growth and development of this country.¹⁴

Each one, teach one!!¹⁵

Molefi Kete Asante:

When it comes to educating African-American children, the American educational system does not need a tune-up, it needs an overhaul. Black children have been maligned by this system. Black teachers have been maligned. Black history has been maligned. Africa has been maligned. Nonetheless, two truisms can be stated about education in America. First, some teachers *can and do* effectively teach African-American children; secondly, if some teachers can do it, others can, too. We must learn all we can about what makes these teachers' attitudes and approaches successful, and then work diligently to see that their successes are replicated on a broad scale. By raising the same question that (Carter G.) Woodson posed more than fifty years ago, Afrocentric education, along with a significant reorientation of the American educational enterprise, seeks to respond to the African person's psychological and cultural dislocation. By providing philosophical and theoretical guidelines and criteria that are centered in an African perception of reality and by placing the African-American child in his or her proper historical context and setting, Afrocentricity may be just the escape hatch African Americans so desperately need to facilitate academic success and "steal away" from the cycle of miseducation and dislocation.¹⁶

In light of the preceding excerpts, at least two major questions emerge here:

- (1) Why have Western educational systems not yielded much benefit for Africans?
- (2) Did Western educational systems infiltrate African societies because Africans lacked their own? The following paragraphs attempt to answer these questions.

In response to the first question, as Awoonor¹⁷ has pointed out about African political systems and Bangura¹⁸ has done similarly about African educational systems, Western systems are incompatible with African systems because the former (i.e. Western) are based on a concept that fragments African life derived from a Eurocentric division of labor theory which separates education from politics, religion, economics, and the social institutions of family, or group, or people. This fragmentation theory emanates from Eurocentric epistemology and a fundamental approach to existence which has its genesis in Greco-Roman and subsequently Judeo-Christian thought.

Thus, one of the major tenets that guide this essay on *ubuntugogy* as an African educational paradigm that transcends *pedagogy*, *andragogy*, *ergonagy* and *heutagogy* (their definitions and distinctions are provided in the following section) is that before we attempt any description of the educational thought process of Africans, it will be necessary to locate its total personality within the boundaries of its own self-perception; this means delineating African philosophy and its view of the world, both visible and invisible, its fundamental habits of thought, and its attitude towards its physical and spiritual existence.

As Awoonor¹⁹ and Bangura²⁰ have also pointed out, the African life concept is holistic—i.e. it is based on an integrative world view. All life to the African is total; all human activities are closely interrelated. This has as its underlying principle the sanctity of the person, her/his spirituality and essentiality. This essentialist view of the person confers value to her/his personhood. All else—his or her labor and achievements—flow from this value system. Even personal shortcomings cannot invalidate it.

In addition, for Africans, politics defines duties and responsibilities alongside obligations and rights. All these relate to the various activities that have to do with survival. The survival concept is continuing, dynamic and dialectical. The fundamental principle that is at the basis of this conception is a moral one. Moreover, the African moral order never defined rigid frontiers of good and evil. Good and evil exist in the same continuum. Whatever is good, by the very nature of its goodness, harbors a grain of evil. This is a

guarantee against any exaggerated sense of moral superiority which goodness by itself may entail. The notion of perfection, therefore, is alien to African thought. Perfection in itself constitutes a temptation to danger, an invitation to arrogance and self-glorification. The principle of balance defines the relationship between good and evil. As life operates in a dialectics of struggle, so also does good balance evil and *vice versa*.

Thus, the essence of *ubuntu*gogy is that it is imperative and urgent for African educators to be concerned about broader education as well as training and to be concerned about approaches to learning and teaching which are undergirded by humanity or fellow feeling toward others. When *ubuntu*gogy is considered along with the idea of the socialization effects of educational environments and the possibilities of a reinforcement of these notions and contexts, the implications for an African educational process appear vital.

In response to the second question, as Davidson Nicol has pointed out, the University of Sankore in Timbuktu, which flourished in the 16th Century, is very important to Africans. To most people in Europe and America, the history of Africa begins with the slave trade; but increasingly, Africans feel that the latter was simply an incident in a long history of the continent and that one must look beyond that. Sankore was a Muslim institution, or a series of institutions, where law, philosophy, and theology were taught, and it bore the same similarity to the present Al Azar University in Cairo—another Muslim university—which medieval Oxford does to present day Oxford.²¹

Nicol further revealed that Al Azar University would in fact be a convenient point from which to start from a point of view of African nationalism. It is one of the focal points which have been used to unite Muslims all over the continent. Scholarships are given to attend it, and students there are taught Arabic, Islamic theology, and law. Upon graduation, they go back to spread their knowledge and Islamic culture in the various African countries.²²

But even before the advent of the universities in Timbuktu and Egypt, as Tiberondwa,²³ among others, has argued, the absence of Western education in pre-colonial Africa does not presuppose that education was lacking on the continent. As long as humans have been on earth, each community has evolved its own forms of education based on the religious, social, political, economic and cultural values of that community.

Traditional forms of education existed all over Africa, based on ethnic and clan units and covered both the theoretical and practical fields. Education was part of living, but not everyone had to go to a "school building" to be educated. The whole process of living was a process of learning. As

reported by Tiberondwa, in an interview he conducted, a traditional ruler (the *wanyasi*) of Lango District in Northern Uganda stated that:

There are people who have claimed the honour of having been the first teachers in many parts of this country. This is only true if it refers to the first teachers who introduced European education here, but it is not true if it refers to teachers in general because we have had teachers in this area for many centuries. We had our own education long before the Europeans came here, and we had teachers who used to conduct traditional education wherever man lived. Even animals, both domestic and wild, have education and have teachers among themselves.²⁴

The *wanyasi's* response is reminiscent of views on traditional education throughout Africa. Education was not introduced in Africa by Europeans. What they introduced was European or Western education. This is not the same as introducing education, since not all education is European.

Indigenous African education was never a process of unconscious imitation. It was deliberate, in many cases conducted by teachers in a particular manner aimed at achieving definite goals. Children were taught different things at different ages. The teachers included parents, brothers, sisters, relatives, neighbors, and members of the age group. The period of active participation can begin at the age of eight and continue throughout life. Quite a lot was learned through clan traditions and through contact between young boys and young girls of the same age groups. However, parents, especially mothers, were the most important teachers. For example, the Karamojong, a semi-nomadic people of Northern Uganda, have a well known walk-song recited by mothers to encourage crawling babies to walk. The literal translation of the song reads as follows:

If the chicken can teach
Their children to peck,
And the birds can teach
Their children to fly
Then why can't you
My lovely baby walk.

If the dog can teach
Its children to bark

And the lion can teach
Its children to kill,
Then why can't you
My lovely baby walk.

If the winds can teach (force)
The trees to move (swing)
And the mountains
Can answer (echo) back
Then why can't you
My lovely baby walk, walk, walk.²⁵

Each ethnic group had its own customs and traditions and, depending on the environment of the group, young boys and girls were expected to have sound knowledge of the essential skills. Good manners were emphasized. Members of each ethnic group or society had some accepted core values, and the elders would condemn strongly any action or behavior that tended to undermine the promotion of the accepted values. It was not uncommon for any elder in the community to discipline any child he or she found doing anything that was regarded as wrong. It mattered not whether the child was his or her own, a neighbor's or just any child.

Respect for elders, good eating manners, maintaining virginity before marriage, and courage among boys and girls are some of the examples of what clans or ethnic groups tended to protect as accepted values. Parents were usually held accountable if their children were found lacking in good manners. Consequently, parents, as well as the community at large, formed a group of traditional teachers whose duty was to guide the children so that they could develop the values, beliefs and manners accepted in their society. As such, every member of the community was expected to play a role in promoting the values of his or her society.

There were some people who had acquired certain professional skills and who acted as professional teachers. There were some herbalists and medicine men and women who knew a lot about local medicine. Some of them were believed to have powers to cure the sick without using any medicine. These specialists used to train young people who were sent to them to learn these skills.

Other specialist teachers included bark-cloth makers, blacksmiths, carpenters, military instructors, makers of canoes and boats, potters, tobacco pipe-makers, specialists in making bows and arrows, basket-weavers, mat-weavers, makers of fishing hooks, makers of fishing baskets, etc. There

also were people who specialized in administration, diplomacy and public relations. To some of these and many other professional teachers, children were sent to learn various specialized skills. This was a form of apprenticeship and was a formalized type of teaching that followed a definite pattern, beginning with simple skills and progressing steadily to complex ones. It was conducted by specialists in specially prepared places or workshops. For example, herbalists taught their students the names and characteristics of important herbs and how to use them to cure diseases. Upon completion of their courses, the graduates went through certain graduation ceremonies before they were passed out and allowed to practice their medicine.

Whether formally or informally, traditional education prepared the youths of a community for specific responsibilities they were going to shoulder as adults. It was education for life with all its complexities, aimed at satisfying personal needs, promoting the growth of personal talents and serving the community in which the students lived. This facilitated the transfer of knowledge from one generation to the next.

Traditional education resulted in changes in attitudes and values. Such changes were the result of learning processes and not merely from imitation and conformity. The traditional teacher was not simply teaching his students to imitate what their forefathers had done. Rather, he or she was engaged in a more complex task which involved imparting to his or her students such ideas as would lead to intellectual growth, constructive thinking, conceptualization and creativity. Graduates from traditional institutions of learning were capable of composing new songs, riddles and proverbs, etc.

They could make new models of tools and military weapons. They could treat new diseases and handle effectively calamities such as earthquakes, famine, floods and other unexpected developments. Conformist education could not have trained the traditional scholars to deal effectively with new and sometimes very challenging situations.

Although the form of education varied from one ethnic group or society to the next, depending on the environment and customs, many of its aspects were common to all ethnic groups or societies. The curricula interwove religion, politics, economics, and social relations. History, geography and nature study, or biology, were invariably interwoven. Religion, dancing, warfare and marriages were interlinked in such a way that a child could gain knowledge in all these fields in a single activity or ceremony.

The dead were regarded as full members of the family, and their spirits were given food at harvest time and meat each time an animal was slaughtered, so that they would not feel left out. The spirits were believed to have the ability to communicate with the living, and this belief still persists

even among some Christians and Muslims. The art of communicating with the dead was taught to the young especially after their initiation ceremonies which used to take place after they had reached puberty.

Students learnt about their own rulers and those of the neighboring ethnic groups. This allowed them to know their history, so that they can protect it. Knowledge of their ethnic group's social, political and economic relationships with others was essential for peaceful co-existence. They learned the traditional laws of the land as well as the range of punishments administered on those who broke them.

Students were taught the names of plants and animals, about births, deaths, diseases and how to cure or prevent them. They had Religious Education—i.e. they learned about different gods, about good and bad spirits, life after death and the methods of worshipping their gods individually and collectively. They also had Physical Education—i.e. they were taught wrestling, running, aiming at rings, singing and dancing, and engaging in many other extra-curricular activities.

There was some form of testing or examination in traditional education. A mother would pretend to be sick and leave the responsibility of managing the home, cooking, cleaning and looking after the visitors to her young daughter to see how she performed these duties without assistance. In most cases, testing was done through the actual performance of a required task such as building a hut or fighting an animal that had attacked the cattle. Riddles and proverbs constituted an informal method of testing memory and intelligence.

In sum, traditional African education through its examinations emphasized that students should be able to learn skills and responsibilities, and to use common sense, initiative and new concepts in dealing with new situations. Indeed, for the African, education was a process of human survival.

THE DEBILITATING EFFECTS OF WESTERN EDUCATION AND AFRICAN CULTURAL RESILIENCE

Western education has made many Africans selfish. It has transformed their families from extended ones to nuclear ones—i.e. husband, wife and their own children only. Children not born in the nuclear families and members of the extended families are all regarded as outsiders. In pre-colonial Africa, divisions into cousins, nephews, nieces, half-brothers, half-sisters, uncles and aunts were absent. Uncles and aunts were called fathers and mothers, respectively; cousins were simply called brothers or sisters, as they were all members of one family. In some areas, families went beyond

biological relationships. There were relationships known as blood-brothers or blood-sisters acquired through special traditional ceremonies. These and their own relatives also became members of the extended families. All these and any other beliefs connected with kindness, reliability and respectability were meant to promote goodness and good manners among the people, especially members of the extended family or close family friends.

Western education tended to be discriminatory. Particular attention was given to the education of the children of people of influence. Promising youths were prepared for responsible positions.

When European missionaries arrived in Africa, they converted some Africans, particularly the rulers and other influential people, to their new religion, condemned the medicine men and the herbalists who they often oxymoronically referred to as "witch-doctors," and sometimes imprisoned them. They regarded the worshiping of traditional gods as primitive and superstitious, and discouraged the wearing of certain ornaments which were believed to be curative. Dancing at wedding ceremonies was regarded as sinful. Local drinks were replaced with imported ones, and the Africans who continued to drink the local brew were labeled drunkards. On the whole, African culture was regarded as having little value. The traditional teacher was replaced by the new teacher who was either a European missionary himself or an African convert, indoctrinated in the church and made to believe that the indigenous people had to change their ways of life if they were to get to heaven.

However, many traditional customs and beliefs proved resilient. The traditional teacher, the traditional medicine man and the traditional prophet continued to be very active in many parts of Africa. When society became hostile to them upon the advent of Christianity and colonialism, many of them went underground. They practiced their professions at night or in locked rooms because the governments, the Christian church and society were all against them.

To this day, there are still many people who call themselves Christians that continue to believe in magic, the supernatural and the spirits. The belief that certain diseases cannot be cured by European medicine is commonly held in many parts of Africa. Many people (including Christian priests, teachers, medical doctors, hospital nurses, students, lawyers, government officials, etc.) who condemn magic publicly in fact practice it privately.

In many communities, some unmarried girls still consult magic doctors for charms to consolidate their arrangements, housewives to strengthen their marriages, workers to seek promotion or favors from their

bosses, students to pass examinations, footballers/soccer players to confuse their opponents with *juju*, businessmen and businesswomen to expand their businesses, warriors to conquer their enemies, unblessed wives to ask for children, etc. Rain-makers are still very powerful people in some African communities. And there are people who live in great fear of the spirits, witchcraft and the unknown.

Many Africans, including the educated ones, continue to live in two worlds: the traditional and the modern-scientific. When modern hospitals fail to cure a disease, the patient goes to the traditional doctor. In fact, some people know which disease to refer to which doctor.

In sum, Christianity, colonialism and Western education have failed to completely uproot the African from his or her cultural world. The people who live in these two worlds are often confused, because both worlds seem to yield appropriate fruits. 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 *ubuntu* as an African educational paradigm can respond to positively.

PEDAGOGY, ANDRAGOGY, ERGONAGY, HEUTAGOGY AND UBUNTUGOGY DISTINCTIONS

Political scientists Danny Balfour and Frank Marini²⁶ have done an excellent job in summarizing the fundamental distinction between *pedagogy* and *andragogy*. Some aspects of the discussion in this section draw from their analytical framework.

Over the four decades, some adult education specialists have adopted the term *andragogy* for the philosophy, principles, and practices that they have found most useful in tackling the special learning needs and characteristics of adult learning. These specialists have made a distinction in the adult education literature between *pedagogy* (an approach to education allegedly based on assumptions of student-as-child) and *andragogy* (an approach to education based on assumptions of student-as-adult). In 1985, Joseph Davenport and his colleagues tackled the controversial issues surrounding the concept of *andragogy*: differing philosophical orientations, classification of *andragogy* and the general utility or value of the term adult education. They also examined the appropriateness of the focus on teaching and learning and critical differences between *andragogy* and *pedagogy*. Indeed, as education specialist Popie Marinou Mohring²⁷ has pointed out, the earlier distinction between *andragogy* and *pedagogy* is problematic in the sense that the pejorative meaning ascribed to *pedagogy* undermines its older and well-

established meaning which neither focuses exclusively on children nor emphasizes the characteristics ascribed to it in the andragogy literature.

Although problematic, the way the pedagogy concept has been treated in the adult education literature is not without justification. A great deal of evidence exists in education at all levels to support the characterization. It is probably best to treat the terms pedagogy and andragogy as the adult education literature has used them like "pure types" or "ideal types" in the Weberian sense, or "models" as the concept is commonly employed in contemporary social science. This will allow one to view the two concepts as extreme positions on a continuum of approaches to teaching, where no one teacher's approach is likely to be an unadulterated or complete example of either of the concepts.

The basic difference between pedagogy and andragogy is that between treating learners as passive and dependent individuals and treating them as relatively autonomous and self-directed individuals. Education specialist Malcolm Knowles²⁸ has noted that much of what is commonly conceptualized as education and teaching is the outcome of attempts to transmit knowledge and culture to children under conditions of compulsory attendance. Knowles²⁹ and other scholars in the adult education domain³⁰ saw pedagogy as a method which developed in such a context and to have inappropriately permeated all of education, including adult education. Pedagogy, then, is problematic for educating Africans not so much because its assumptions may be oriented towards the learning needs of children as because they are associated with specific educational objectives and settings. Consequently, pedagogy does not provide a comprehensive model for learning about African phenomena either by children or adults. Specifically, pedagogy is aimed at transmitting knowledge to learners who are presumed not to have the means or ability to learn on their own. It is characterized by a relationship of dependency between teacher and learner, where the latter is mostly passive and is taught by, or learns from, the former. Pedagogy assumes that the learner lacks relevant knowledge and experience and generally is incapable of determining the learning or educational agenda. As such, the agenda is to be set by the teacher or educational institution. This educational agenda, according to Brookfield³¹, is based on subjects sequenced in terms of level of difficulty and the skill level of the learner.

Pedagogy is familiar to most of us from at least part of our early school days. It probably can be effective and appropriate, given certain educational goals, participants, settings, and subject matter. Also, it can be applied to both children and adults. However, it cannot address every individual's learning desires and needs. Most adults, and even some children,

cannot only learn various subjects from their teachers but also can take an active role in identifying and effectively pursuing their own learning agendas.

The basic assumption of andragogy is that adults have a preference for self-direction in learning. As a learner matures and develops an autonomous sense of self, he or she tends to shun dependency relationships. This andragogical model, as presented by Ingalls,³² takes into consideration the autonomy of mature adults and their drive to continue the learning process. A corollary to this assumption is that the accumulated experience of learners is a valuable learning resource that should be integrated into the educational process. The learning content of andragogy is determined by the learners in collaboration with their teacher or facilitator because of the autonomy, desire to learn, and experience of the former. This agenda calls for solving problems or pursuing interests in the learner's immediate environment.

Several implications can be delineated because of the fundamental difference between pedagogy and andragogy. The first of these, following Ingalls and Knowles,³³ has to do with the power relation between teacher and learner. While andragogy makes less of a distinction between teacher and learner, pedagogy emphasizes a dominant teacher and a dependent and passive learner. The andragogy teacher acts like a facilitator or resource for the learner and also acts as an active learner in the process. In pedagogy, communication is one-way directional: from teacher to learner. Andragogy, on the other hand, encourages integrative learning. The second implication is that in pedagogy, as Ingalls³⁴ noted, the teacher unilaterally decides *what* is to be learned and *how* it is to be learned in the belief that the learners are incapable of identifying their learning needs. In andragogy, the learners themselves directly and significantly influence the curriculum based on their interests and needs. The role of the teacher in andragogy becomes that of a facilitator to help learners form interest groups and diagnose their learning needs. Andragogy allows learners to manage and direct this collaborative process.

Finally, as Knowles, Ingalls, and Brookfield³⁵ maintained, pedagogy treats education more in terms of preparation for the future than as a matter of doing in the present. An implied distinction exists between the world of learning and that of doing. Andragogy assumes that learning is central to what it means to be human. Consequently, very little distinction is made between learning and doing, between education and everyday problem-solving. Andragogy calls for identifying and solving problems in the present. It looks at the present situation and attempts to define and pursue concrete goals.

In sum, the nature and outcome of an educational process will hinge upon the assumptions that educators hold about the abilities and needs of the learners. Pedagogy can sensibly be employed if it is believed that students are

dependent and passive and would not learn in the absence of steady direction from the teacher. On the other hand, andragogy can sensibly be used when educators believe that students are basically autonomous, self-directed, and motivated to learn.

As Knowles³⁶ reminded us, the assumptions educators hold about learners can become self-fulfilling prophecies. Learners in a pedagogic setting can become passive in the classroom largely because that is how they have been socialized to behave. Adults can become ambivalent about becoming involved in the educational or training experience for fear that they will be treated as though they lack the maturity and experience to contribute to the learning process.

Over the years, many of us have found the andragogical approach to be quite useful in a number of areas. These areas include foreign language teaching, professional performance improvement, art education, ideology, cultural studies, learning opportunities, updates on adult learning theory, international business enterprises, library use skills, faculty learning, theory building, academic writing and reading, and social responsibility.³⁷

However, recently, a relatively small number of scholars have been quite critical of the andragogical approach. Kaplan³⁸, for instance, has argued that one of the main problems facing andragogy is that its systematic nature is more the result of other theoretical deliberations than those of its own. She noted that until the mid-19th Century, andragogy founded its development mainly on prevailing communal, social, economic, political and cultural conditions in various countries. She added that in the 1950s, andragogy turned increasingly into a science whose goals were directed toward humans and their relationship to the world in which practice is only the result of human's "spiritual praxis." Thus, she called for andragogy to now deal with the theoretical organization of its theory, historically perceive its achievements thus far, and become connected with other sciences to accelerate its own development while at the same time acquire its own identity and an internal coherence as a science. As it now stands, Kaplan believed that different individuals still have very different understandings of andragogy: (a) some consider andragogy a pedagogic discipline; (b) others consider andragogy a relatively autonomous science within the framework of the general sciences of teaching and learning; (c) still others consider andragogy a method, skill, theory, or model of adult learning. Consequently, while she conceded that the starting point of andragogy as an independent science of adult education is hardly in dispute, she nevertheless insisted that andragogy's autonomy as a science of adult education must now be considered.

St. Clair³⁹ contended that contrary to Knowles' six assumptions to

support his claim that andragogy is the art and science of teaching adults, andragogy is not all about learning. For St. Clair, the assumptions demonstrate how the theory lays out a humanist view of learners and their potential for growth, with implications for teaching, social philosophy, and human relationships. As such, he believed that andragogy can be considered an approach to the education and development of adults strongly rooted in the disciplinary needs of adult education in the 1960s, but it provides little insight into learning other than a set of assumptions about learners. In addition, he argued that despite Knowles' claim that the framework could be applied to any adult learning setting, it is essential to recognize that andragogy only addresses certain types of learning at certain times. St. Clair further asserted that andragogy cannot be claimed as a distinguishing feature of adult education as a field, because the approach does not provide a clear delineation between what can be considered education of children and that of adults and adult education and human resource development. Thus, he concluded that in the future, andragogy will maintain its role as a necessary component of the field's shared knowledge, but it is highly unlikely to be perceived as sufficient to explicate or shape the education of adults.

Also, Rachal⁴⁰ argued that the efficacy of andragogy is inconclusive and affected by definitional confusion. He then suggested that analysis of research on andragogy yields the following seven criteria for an operational, consensus-based definition: (1) voluntary participation, (2) adult status, (3) collaborative determined objectives, (4) performance-based assessment, (5) measurement of satisfaction, (6) appropriate adult learning environment, and (7) technical issues.

A few scholars have developed new approaches to augment the pedagogical and andragogical ones. In the first of their two essays, Tanaka and Evers⁴¹ baptized the term *ergonagy*, coined from the Greek terms *ergon* (work) and *agogos* (lead), to describe concepts associated with education and training related to preparation for, and performance of, work. Combining the definition of pedagogy as the art and science of teaching and that of andragogy as the art and science of helping adults learn, Tanaka and Evers suggested that they both provide a basis for addressing the question of whether *ergonagy* can be considered a component of education and, thus, provide a clearer and more universally accepted concept of occupational-vocational education and training for better international dialogue, research, and comparative studies.

In their second essay, Tanaka and Evers⁴² argued that although the Japanese term *kyo-iku* is translated into English as "education," significant differences exist between the two terms. They believed that *ergonagy* can help to integrate the Japanese concept of *kyo-iku* and the Western concept of

education, because ergonagy supports a continual blending of academic and vocational education for improved work opportunities throughout individuals' lives, whether in one or several careers. They also suggested that because it subsumes andragogy and pedagogy, ergonagy can make international dialogue, research, and studies of *kyo-iku* and education clearer and more defined.

Kenyon and Hase⁴³ began by arguing that while education has traditionally been seen as a pedagogic relationship and andragogy has provided many useful approaches for improving educational methodology and has been accepted universally, the latter (i.e. andragogy) still connotes a teacher-learner relationship. They further argued that due to the rapid rate of change in society and the information explosion, educators should now be looking at educational approaches where learners themselves determine what and how learning should occur. Kenyon and Hase offered the concept of *heutagogy*, defined as the study of self-determined learning, as a natural progression from earlier educational methodologies and may well provide the optimal approach to learning in the 21st Century. Heutagogy, they suggested, would (a) allow students to work as troubleshooters, problem solvers, and general consultants in charge of improvements; (b) allow one to recognize the critical importance of learners in all aspects of the learning process; and (c) allow educators to help learners remember how to learn, develop confidence in their perceptions, and learn to question their interpretations of reality within a framework of competence. *Ubuntugogy* transcends *pedagogy*, *andragogy*, *ergonagy* and *heutagogy*. As the art and science of learning and teaching that is undergirded by humanity towards others, *ubuntugogy* hinges upon the African philosophy and way of life called *ubuntu*—a word from the Southern African Nguni language family (Ndebele, Swati/Swazi, Xhosa and Zulu) meaning humanity or fellow feeling; kindness.⁴⁴

To explicate *ubuntugogy*, the rest of the discussion in this section draws from many works that have dealt with the concept of *ubuntu* and similar African thoughts.⁴⁵ From these works, it can be deduced that *ubuntu* serves as the spiritual foundation of African societies. It is a unifying vision or worldview enshrined in the maxim *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*: i.e. "a person is a person through other persons." This traditional African aphorism articulates a basic respect and compassion for others. It can be interpreted as both a factual description and a rule of conduct or social ethic. It both describes the human being as "being-with-others" and prescribes what that should be.

Also, from the preceding works, at least three major tenets of *ubuntu* can be delineated. The first major tenet of *ubuntu* rests upon its religiosity.

While Western humanism tends to underestimate or even deny the importance of religious beliefs, *ubuntu* or African humanism is decidedly religious. For the Westerner, the maxim, "A person is a person through other persons," has no obvious religious connotations. He or she will probably think it is nothing more than a general appeal to treat others with respect and decency. However, in African tradition, this maxim has a deeply religious meaning. The person one is to become "through other persons" is, ultimately, an ancestor. By the same token, these "other persons" include ancestors. Ancestors are extended family. Dying is an ultimate homecoming. Not only must the living and the dead share with and care for one another, but the living and the dead depend on one another.

This religious tenet is congruent with the daily experience of most Africans. For example, at a *calabash*, an African ritual that involves drinking of African beer, a little bit of it is poured on the ground for consumption by ancestors. Many Africans also employ ancestors as mediators between them and God. In African societies, there is an inextricable bond between humans, ancestors and the Supreme Being. Therefore, *ubuntu* inevitably implies a deep respect and regard for religious beliefs and practices.

The second major tenet of *ubuntu* hinges upon its consensus building. African traditional culture has an almost infinite capacity for the pursuit of consensus and reconciliation. African style democracy operates in the form of (some times extremely lengthy) discussions. Although there may be a hierarchy of importance among the speakers, every person gets an equal chance to speak up until some kind of an agreement, consensus, or group cohesion is reached. This important aim is expressed by words like *simunye* ("we are one": i.e. "unity is strength") and slogans like "an injury to one is an injury to all."

The desire to agree within the context of *ubuntu* safeguards the rights and opinions of individuals and minorities to enforce group solidarity. In essence, *ubuntu* requires an authentic respect for human/individual rights and related values, and an honest appreciation of differences.

The third major tenet of *ubuntu* rests upon dialogue, with its particularity, individuality and historicity. *Ubuntu* inspires us to expose ourselves to others, to encounter the differences of their humanness in order to inform and enrich our own. Thus understood, *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu* translates as "To be human is to affirm one's humanity by recognizing the humanity of others in its infinite variety of content and form." This translation of *ubuntu* highlights the respect for particularity, individuality and historicity, without which a true African educational paradigm cannot reemerge.

The *ubuntu* respect for the *particularities* of the beliefs and practices of others is especially emphasized by the following striking translation of *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*: "A human being through (the otherness of) other human beings." *Ubuntu* dictates that, if we are to be human, we need to recognize the genuine otherness of our fellow humans. In other words, we need to acknowledge the diversity of languages, histories, values and customs, all of which make up a society.

Ubuntu's respect for the particularity of the other is closely aligned to its respect for *individuality*. But the individuality which *ubuntu* respects is not the Cartesian type. Instead, *ubuntu* directly contradicts the Cartesian conception of individuality in terms of which the individual or self can be conceived without thereby necessarily conceiving the other. The Cartesian individual exists prior to, or separately and independently from, the rest of the community or society. The rest of society is nothing but an added extra to a pre-existent and self-sufficient being. This "modernistic" and "atomistic" conception of individuality underscores both individualism and collectivism. Individualism exaggerates the seemingly solitary aspects of human existence to the detriment of communal aspects. Collectivism makes the same mistake on a larger scale. For the collectivist, society comprises a bunch of separately existing, solitary (i.e. detached) individuals.

Contrastingly, *ubuntu* defines the individual in terms of his or her relationship with others. Accordingly, individuals only exist *in* their relationships with others; and as these relationships change, so do the characters of the individuals. In this context, the word "individual" signifies a plurality of personalities corresponding to the multiplicity of relationships in which the individual in question stands. Being an individual, by definition, means "being-with-others." "With-others" is not an additive to a pre-existent and self-sufficient being; instead, both this being (the self) and the others find themselves in a whole wherein they are already related. This is all somewhat boggling for the Cartesian mind, whose conception of individuality must now move from solitary to solidarity, from independence to interdependence, from individuality *vis-à-vis* community to individuality *à la* community.

In the West, individualism often translates into rugged competition. Individual interest is *modus vivendi*, and society or others are regarded as a means to individual ends. This is in stark contrast to the African preference for co-operation, group work or *shosholoz*a ("work as one": i.e. team work). The *stokvels* in South Africa are approximated to be 800,000. Stockvels are joint undertakings or collective enterprises, such as savings clubs, burial societies and other co-operatives. The stockvel economy might be described as capitalism with *sazi* (humanness), or, put differently, a socialist form of

capitalism. Making a profit is important, but never if it involves the exploitation of others. Profits are equally shared. Thus, stockvels are based on the *ubuntu* "extended family system": i.e. all involved should be considered as brothers and sisters, members of the same family.

Indeed, the *ubuntu* conception of individuality may seem contradictory, since it claims that the self or individual is constituted by its relations with others. But if this is the case, then what are the relations between? Can persons and personal relations really be equally primordial? African thought addresses this (apparent) contradiction in the idea of *seriti*: i.e. an energy, power of force which makes us ourselves and unites us in personal interaction with others. This idea allows us to see the self and others as equiprimordial or as aspects of the same universal field of force. This distinctive African inclination towards collectivism and collective sense of responsibility does not negate individualism. It merely discourages the notion that the individual should take precedence over community.

Consequently, an oppressive communalism constitutes a derailment, an abuse of *ubuntu*. True *ubuntu* incorporates dialogue: i.e. it intertwines both relation and distance. It preserves the other in his or her otherness, in his or her uniqueness, without letting him/her slip into the distance.

The emphasis on the "ongoing-ness" of the contact and interaction with others on which the African subjectivity feeds suggests a final important ingredient of the "mutual exposure" that is mandated by *ubuntu*: i.e. respecting the *historicality* of the other. This means respecting his or her dynamic nature or process nature. The flexibility of the other is well noted in *ubuntu*. In other words, for the African humanist, life is without absolutes. An *ubuntu* perception of the other is never fixed or rigidly closed; rather, it is adjustable or open-ended. It allows the other to be, to become. It acknowledges the irreducibility of the other: i.e. it never reduces the other to any specific characteristic, conduct or function. This underscores the concept of *ubuntu* which denotes both a state of being and one of becoming. As a process of self-realization *through* others, it simultaneously enriches the self-realization *of* others.

PRESUPPOSITIONS AND REQUIREMENTS FOR UBUNTUGOGY

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.

The task of *ubuntugogy* is to critique the Eurocentric "idea" and "general philosophy" in their metaphysical belief that European humanism is superior to that of the African people. This falsehood, which Europe and America perpetuated and still do, in so many ways, is based on the idea that the rest of humanity has to be forced to believe like Europe and America in order to be "humanized" into a singular humanity. This, in the words of Tsenay Serequeberhan, implies the "singularisation of human diversity by being forced onto a singular track of historical 'progress' grounded on an emulation and/or mimicry of European historicity."⁴⁶ According to Serequeberhan, this "pretext" that flattens all difference has to be critically "de-structured" by contemporary African philosophy if "our shared humanity" is to be realized and critically appropriated. Indeed, for him, "the task of contemporary African philosophy—its critical-negative project—is the critique of Eurocentrism and recognition and de-structuring of its speculative metaphysical underpinnings, which still holds us in bondage."⁴⁷

The African Renaissance, which should guide our thought processes, therefore, must recapture those basic elements of African humanism (*ubuntu*, eternal life, and immanent moral justice) as the opening of the way to a new humanistic universalism. This, according to Chancellor Williams, "is the spiritual and moral element, actualized in good will among men (and women), which Africa itself has preserved and can give to the world."⁴⁸

As stated earlier, the University as an institution of learning and knowledge reproduction has its origin in Africa. The Sankore University founded in the City of Timbuktu in the Songhay Empire was the latest and best of its kind anywhere in the world. The University was the intellectual capital of the Western Sudan and provided a vibrant learning environment for the learners and the teachers. Felix DuBois, in his book, *Timbuktoo the Mysterious*, described the scholars at this University in the following words:

They astounded the most learned men of Islam by their

erudition. That these Negroes were at a level with the Arab savants (men of exceptional learning) is proved by the fact that they were installed as professors in Morocco and Egypt. In contrast to this, we find that the Arabs were not always equal to the requirements of Sankore.⁴⁹

Thus, before colonization and the Arab and European enslavement of Africans, Africa provided the best institutions of learning that existed at the time. It is recorded that when the Moroccans invaded Timbuktu in 1552, Professor Ahmad Baba, the last Chancellor of the University, was the author of some 40 books on different subjects. He had a collection of some 1,600 books in his library. He was exiled, and this treasure was destroyed in the hands of the Arab invaders.⁵⁰ The basis of African civilization was weakened and efforts were made to destroy it. But although weakened, it neither died nor was it destroyed.

The physical structures were destroyed but not the soul of the Africans who believed in eternal life and immanent moral justice of humanity. It is this soul of humanity that survived and that seeks to rebuild what was lost of the institutions Africans created in the past, but which have relevance in their lives in today's world. Indeed, as George James pointed out in his *Stolen Legacy: Greek Philosophy is Stolen Egyptian Philosophy*, much of the 1,000 books credited to Aristotle were not his products. Most of them were copied from Egyptian texts, which Alexander The Great had looted from the libraries of Egypt during Greek conquest and occupation of that African civilization. From his research, James was able to observe that:

Certainly he (Aristotle) could not have obtained them from the Greeks, for that vast body of knowledge, which bears his name and which was presented as new, would really have been the traditional common possession of all who were members of the Greek Schools of philosophy for they would have been the only persons inside Greece permitted to own such books; for knowledge was protected as secret. Under these circumstances it is evident that the vast body of scientific knowledge ascribed to Aristotle was neither in possession of the Greeks of his time, nor was there any one in Greece competent to teach him Science and, least of all, on so vast a scale.⁵¹

James concluded that the Greeks, among the surrounding nations, were the most anxious to obtain the valuable secrets of the Egyptians, in the

Ancient Sciences, and this opportunity came when Alexander The Great invaded Egypt. According to Strabo and Plutarch, who James quoted, Alexander entrusted these books in the hands of Aristotle; and upon Aristotle's death, the looted books fell in the hands of Theophrastus who succeeded him as head of his School. Later, the Roman Army looted these books in style when Greece fell to Rome in 84 BC. They were carried by Sulla to Rome, where Tyrannio, a grammarian, secured copies and enabled Andronicus of Rhodes to publish them.

Cheikh Anta Diop had pointed out that until Africa is able to reclaim this historical and promethean consciousness that is embodied in the achievements of ancient Egypt, the history of Black Africans and that of humanity in general will "remain suspended in air." According to him, such a history can never be written correctly "until African historians dare to connect it with the history of Egypt."⁵² In his view, even the study of languages, institutions, etc. cannot be treated properly until this is done: "in a word, it will be impossible to build an African humanities, a body of African human sciences, so long as the relationship does not appear legitimate."⁵³

For us to respond to this historic challenge and be part of the correction of the historical distortion and theft of our African heritages, we must provide deeply thought out and well-conceived vision and mission, with a well articulated strategy to achieve our objectives. To succeed, our effort must be part of the creation of a counter-hegemonic discourse which can enable, as Odora Hoppers and colleagues characterized it, the "triple agenda of deconstruction, reconstruction and regeneration" to be undertaken at the same time.⁵⁴ To achieve this counter-discourse, we must engage in work that can help and contribute to reshaping the direction of education on the continent and in the Diaspora towards a more culture-specific and culturally relevant curriculum of liberation.

We must carry out theoretical formulations and reflections in an interdisciplinary, pluridisciplinary and comparative manner. We must provide conditions for the acquisition of knowledge not only for "its own sake" but for the sake of humanity and African recovery and rebirth. We must develop new methodologies and techniques for accessing, utilizing, and storing all knowledge based on an African epistemology and cosmology. This would imply, according to Dani Nabudere,⁵⁵ the development of an all-inclusive approach, which recognizes all sources of human knowledge as valid within their own contexts. This requires the adoption of hermeneutic philosophy in its African essence.

Our methodological approach should be hermeneutical. It should be open-ended to permit cross-cultural communication and exchange of ideas and

opinions to promote understanding between all knowledge systems in their diversities.⁵⁶ This African philosophical approach is based on the acceptance of pluralism and cultural diversity. The name of Hans-Georg Gadamer is associated with this line of argument in hermeneutics, in which he stressed the need for the "fusion of historical horizons" as the best way of transmitting understanding between the different lived histories or experiences of different communities as the basis of their existence. Hermeneutics insists on both the cultural context as well as the historical contingencies of events as necessary in bringing about a true understanding of the different lived experiences. Furthermore, hermeneutics has its roots in the African/Egyptian mythical figure of Herms, the messenger of knowledge from the gods to mortals, and that is why "hermeneutics is without reason, named after Herms, the interpreter of the divine message to mankind."⁵⁷

This philosophic-*ubuntu*gic approach should be based on premises that encourage learning and teaching, which encompasses knowledge, interests, and real life situations that the learners and teachers can bring to learning situations. This notion of site-specific knowledge tries to correct the Eurocentric tendency to universalize knowledge around Occidental centers and sites of knowledge which are privileged to the disadvantage of others, claiming to be the only sites of "rationality" and "scientific knowledge." The recognition of these other sites and centers creates a truly multipolar world of global knowledge drawn from all sources of human endeavor.

Also, as Professor Hubert Vilakazi argued:

The peculiar situation here is that knowledge of the principles and patterns of African civilisation remained with ordinary, uncertificated men and women, especially of those in rural areas. The tragedy of African civilisation is that Western-educated Africans became lost and irrelevant as intellectuals who could develop African civilisation further. Historically, intellectuals of any civilisation are the voices of that civilisation to the rest of the world; they are the instruments of the development of the higher culture of that civilisation. The tragedy of Africa, after conquest by the West, is that her intellectuals, by and large, absconded and abdicated their role as developers, minstrels and trumpeters of African civilisation. African civilisation then stagnated; what remained alive in the minds and languages of the overwhelming majority of Africans remained undeveloped. Uncertificated Africans are denied respect and opportunities

for development; they could not sing out, articulate and develop the unique patterns of African civilisation.⁵⁸

Professor Vilakazi added that Africa, therefore, finds itself in an awkward situation. Africans need to develop educational systems founded upon and built on the civilization of the overwhelming majority, yet their intellectuals are strangers to that civilization. They have no spiritual or intellectual sympathetic relationship with the culture and civilization embracing the masses of African people: "The biggest spiritual and mental challenge to African intellectuals is that in this massive re-education process (which is necessary), the only teachers they have are ordinary African men and women who are uncertificated, and who live largely in rural areas." He concluded by stating that:

We are talking here about a massive cultural revolution consisting, first, of our intellectuals going back to ordinary African men and women to receive education of African culture and civilisation. Second, it shall break new ground in that un-certificated men and women shall be incorporated as full participants in the construction of the high culture of Africa. This shall be the first instance in history where certificated intellectuals alone shall not be the sole builders and determinants of high culture, but shall be working side by side with ordinary men and women in rural and urban life. Intellectuals must become anthropologists doing fieldwork, like Frobenius. But unlike academic Western anthropologists, African intellectuals shall be doing field work among their own people as part of a truly great effort aimed at reconstructing Africa and preparing all of humanity for conquering the world for humanism.⁵⁹

Professor Vilakazi challenged all of us to wake up to this clarion call and create a new University that will resurrect the deep values of African humanism (*ubuntu*) that is so badly needed in today's gadgetized and digitized world without the human touch and spirit. Indeed, we must work diligently to bridge that gap.

This approach would be one which departs from the one-sided Western "Africanist" who, in his or her search for the "authentic" African and the depository of genuine African discourse, seeks to locate the "real" African and to establish an iron wall between "the man in the bush" vis-à-vis the

Westernized educated African. Y. V. Mudimbe, too, would like to see the emergence of a "wider authority" of a "critical library" of the Westernised African intellectual's discourses developed together with "the experience of rejected forms of wisdom, which are not part of the structures of political power and scientific knowledge."⁶⁰ This is a useful reminder, despite the fact that Mudimbe himself, as Masolo correctly pointed out, "lamentably fails to emancipate himself from the vicious circle inherent in the deconstructionist stance" of how this "usable past" should be used by African "experts" to construct an "authentic" African episteme.⁶¹

African languages shall, therefore, be at the center of developing our knowledge sites. Language, as Amilcar Cabral rightly pointed out, is at the center of articulating a people's culture. He also noted that the African Revolution would have been impossible without African people resorting to their cultures to resist domination. Culture is, therefore, a revolutionary force in society. It is because language has remained an "unresolved issue" in Africa's development that present day education has remained an alien system. Mucere Mugo quoted Franz Fanon who wrote: "to speak a language is to assume its world and carry the weight of its civilization."⁶² We must, therefore, be diligent in making sure that, as Mwalimu Carter G. Woodson once urged us in *The Mis-education of the Negro*, our students are no longer made to scoff at our African languages. Indeed, Professor Kwesi K. Prah has argued consistently over many years that the absence of African languages has been the "key missing link" in African development.⁶³

The methodological approach should also be one that uses open and resource-based learning techniques available in the actual learning situations. It has, therefore, to draw on the indigenous knowledge materials available in the locality and make the maximum use of them.

One of the fundamental problems facing African economies and African scholarship is the dependency syndrome. This condition has replaced colonialism in the form of neo-colonialism. According to eminent philosopher Paulin Hountondji, research in Africa has been extroverted (externally oriented) just like African economies because knowledge production is a specific form of production "akin to the production of goods."⁶⁴

What all this suggests is that we must revisit African teaching that takes these epistemological, cosmological, methodological, and *ubuntu*gogic challenges into account. Hence, we should be culture-specific and knowledge-source-specific in our orientation. As such, we must work very hard:

- (1) to increase African knowledge in the general body of global human

knowledge;

- (2) to create linkages between the sources of African knowledge and the centers of learning on the continent and in the Diaspora;
- (3) to establish centers of learning in the communities and ensure that these communities become “learning societies;”
- (4) to link knowledge to the production needs of African communities;
- (5) to ensure that science and technology are generated in relevant ways to address problems of the rural communities where the majority of African people live and that this is done in African languages; and
- (6) to reduce the gap between the African elites and the communities from which they come by ensuring that education is available to all Africans and that such knowledge is drawn from the communities.

Free exploration and discourse that give every human being a right to an education is the very expression of human freedom and will help to debunk one-sided theories such as those advanced by Darwin's *Origin of the Species* and their advocacy of “survival of the fittest”—theories that have given license to particular power groups to exterminate the weak ones. Instead, the enlarged humanities and the science of humanity should explore cooperative ways of survival of the entire humanity in the spirit of *ubuntu* or humanness, which holds: *I am because We Are*.

Thus, a process of redefining the boundaries between the different disciplines in our thought process is the same as that of reclaiming, reordering and, in some cases, reconnecting “those ways of knowing,” which were submerged, subverted, hidden or driven underground by colonialism and slavery. As Linda Tuhwai Smith has correctly noted of native Australian knowledge systems, which were colonized:

In terms of the way knowledge was used to discipline the colonised, it worked in a variety of ways. The most obvious forms of discipline were through exclusion, marginalisation and denial. Indigenous ways of knowing were excluded and marginalised....Discipline is also partitioned (like land-DWN), (where) individuals (were) separated and space compartmentalised....This form of discipline worked at the

curriculum level, for example, as a mechanism for selecting our 'native' children and girls for domestic and manual work. It worked also at the assessment level, with normative tests designed around the language and cultural capital of white middle classes.⁶⁵

Creating holistically defined curricula for our schools will, therefore, of necessity, mean reasserting African ways of knowing and ordering of knowledge. Such a process of reclaiming our own ways of knowing is in fact a liberation process, which must be reflected in our academic curricula by participatory research in which the masses of the African people must participate.

The study and research will reflect the daily dealings of society and the challenges of daily life of the people. Therefore, as Sémon Pathé Guéye pointed out, the problematic of the African Renaissance must be tackled through a fruitful dialectic between theory and practice, intellectual elaboration and practical experience. He added:

This dialectic will be based on, and underlined by, a permanent and constructive dialogue between the scientists and politicians who are committed to the same objective of renewing our continent, but also between the masses and the elite, who pretend to think and act in their name but sometimes confine themselves to intellectual speculation that has nothing to do with the daily life of the common people. The concept which will result from our discussions would be able to meet the needs and demands of the masses and to become, in their hands, a powerful instrument for positively transforming their current situation and opening the prospect of a better future.⁶⁶

Professor Taban lo Liyong, Head of the Centre for African Studies at the University of Venda, South Africa, who has been involved in elaborating an African-centred curriculum for teaching at the Centre, has argued that each discipline must elaborate and extend its curriculum to embrace the African indigenous worldview, or social practices, or scientific and technological usages and developments. According to Professor Liyong, past technological developments and achievements of Africans, their techniques, arts and artistry, the products and processes of production must be studied with a view to "modernizing them." At the same time, he argued that

technological innovations from Europe and Asia "should be married to the native ones to produce a third new and appropriate technology." In whatever event, he advocated that the "African rhythm should control the speed of adoption or adaptation; African ethos of communal care and spiritual life should determine what we get from outside or keep from our past."⁶⁷ This is the correct approach because besides recognizing other systems of knowledge, it leaves open the need for African systems of knowledge to acknowledge and learn from others in a discourse of cross-cultural understanding.

Fatnowna and Pickett are also correct when they said that to achieve such a synthesis would, in one sense, be a "return" but also a "a re-integrative process of recovering wholeness." In this sense, according to them, such integration "goes beyond itself because the same process engages us in transformation." It is a dialectical transformation of the different parts that existed before, but which now exist in a new form and with a new content. It is a transformation that involves the liberating of knowledge at both ends of the sites of knowledge as well as "being intimately bound up with the transformation of values and a sense of belonging to a whole-earth, a perspective that privileges the local within commitment to the global." This, essentially, is a transformation of human consciousness "both driven by and necessary for those changes in knowledge systems" creating a relational nature of things."⁶⁸

As we recall, during the establishment of the Medieval University in Europe, the first University in Southern Italy utilized the African practice of palaver and to teach law students rhetoric, speechifying and oratory. This is today's legal art called advocacy, which has encompassed other areas of human communication.

Professor Mucere Mugo of Kenya has perfected the combination of literal and oral techniques of learning and transmitting knowledge and messages in her acidic work. She has used oratory interludes as a methodological approach in critical analysis as a way of developing an emancipation and liberation education and culture. The interludes "punctuate" the literal discourse and the discussion. She continues to do this because she has argued that literacy should not be privileged over orate traditions, consumed by the majority of African people.⁶⁹ The approach is tenable. Life Long Learning (LLL) has recently become a vogue in many countries of the developed world as well as international organizations as a new approach to learning in the 21st Century. Yet this educational approach is deeply embedded within African cultures and epistemology. According to Professor Mucere Mugo, learning and culturalization in African societies were considered continuing processes "that took place from birth until death with

the family unit, extended family, the village and the entire community participating." She added that:

This extended, collective participation in educating children and inculcating cultural ethos, however, did not replace the efforts of the professionals who taught very specialised knowledge and skills, especially at given milestones of the journey of life. The education was also very practical in conception and methodology. It was oriented towards problem posing and problem solving at individual and communal levels.⁷⁰

Professor Mugo referred to Mwalimu Jomo Kenyatta's anthropological work about the Gikuyu, *Facing Mount Kenya*, and Mwalimu Julius Nyerere's *Arusha Declaration and Tanzania Ten Years after Independence* as approving this method of learning and as justifying them on the basis of the long African cultural experience.

CONCLUSION

The preceding discourse has been edging towards the proposition that in order for Africans to combat low literacy, civil strife and underdevelopment, *ubuntugogy* would add a distinctly African flavor and momentum to the endeavor. *Ubuntugogy* is both a given and a task or *desideratum* for educating Africans. It is undoubtedly part and parcel of the cultural heritage of Africans. However, it clearly needs to be revitalized in the hearts and minds of some Africans.

Although compassion, warmth, understanding, caring, sharing, humanness, etc., are underscored by all the major world orientations, *ubuntu* serves as a *distinctly African rationale* for these ways of relating to others. The concept of *ubuntu* gives a distinctly African meaning to, and a reason or motivation for, a positive attitude towards the other. In light of the calls for an African Renaissance, *ubuntugogy* urges Africans to be true to their promotion of peaceful relations and conflict resolution, educational and other developmental aspirations.

We ought never to falsify the cultural reality (life, art, literature) which is the goal of the student's study. Thus, we would have to oppose all sorts of simplified, or supposedly simplified, approaches and stress instead the methods which will achieve the best possible access to real life, language and philosophy.

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WEB SITES

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