Decolonizing Communication Studies

Edited by

Kehbuma Langmia

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This book edition is dedicated to all those communication scholars who are focused on decolonizing the communication discipline.

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INTRODUCTION

KEHBUMA LANGMIA

"In the colonial context there is no truthful behavior."
Frantz Fanon

Do Black lives matter in communications studies?

I pose this question as western civilization continues its march to the brink of collapse driven by political strife, growing inequality, climate change, and a pandemic which is worsening racial gaps. All civilizations end. All empires end. Everything is subject to decay and deterioration. Which means that we have to find opportunities in the chaos and uncertainty and be brave enough to create something new.

To achieve this new future, we need now more than ever what Asante (2020, 39) has termed "audacity of memory". With the memory that humankind originated from Africa, there is apparently no reason, whatsoever, why Africans, according to Molefi Asante, the Black race today should be on the "periphery of humanity" (Asante, 2020, 24).

When is the communication discipline going to assume independence from other disciplines in the social sciences and humanities? Why do we still borrow theoretical and methodological frameworks from anthropology, sociology, political science, history, and ethnography? Ama Mazama is right when she says that western theories are used as weapons of mental incarceration and westernization. A plethora of communication-driven theories like agenda setting, social learning, cognitive dissonance, magic bullet, spiral of silence, propaganda, public sphere, group think, cultivation, etc. have Euro-American geo-political and socio-cultural roots. But the communication studies discipline has spread its tentacles to mass and media communication schools and departments in Asia, Africa, Middle East and the Caribbeans. The discipline is presently in the state of what Emeka Nwadiora calls "psychological homelessness" (Asante, 2020, 59). In the age of digital and electronic communication, the communication discipline

needs its own paradigm shift that responds to the changing phase of human communication landscape before assuming the role of interdependence with some discipline in the humanities, social science, and classics. We cannot continue to borrow ourselves into the future. We will be bankrupt.

With the knowledge that writing as mankind knows it originated with the hieroglyphics of Kemet a thousand years before Christ, there is no fundamental rationale for the discipline to be so heavily Europeanized and Americanized. Authors of this volume, two centuries after the Berlin Conference of 1884/1885 that subjugated Africa and Africans to the lowest rung of human growth on planet earth, have unearthed what seems to be the rationale for why the communication studies discipline needs to be decolonized and to some extent de-westernized to accommodate and include all humankind involved in all forms of communication. By decolonization, we mean Afrocentric communicative tendencies that are visibly gleaned among interactants of African descent that have been passed down from generation to generation (more on this in the book).

To decolonize is to unshackle the cocoon of epistemologically imposed social and cultural norms that people outside the periphery of Europe and America have been subjected to in Africa since the Berlin Conference of 1884/1885. The continent and those that were forced on slave ships to the new world without their consent to the Americas and Europe have internalized western ways of life that are supposedly superior to the ones they have been used to. The educational curricula regardless of discipline in Africa and outside Africa on people with African descent, have been colonized. That means they have been taught that Africa has no history (Asante, 2015) and so does not have any role in geopolitical diplomacy without being 'hand-held' by their colonial masters. This means that for more than 400 years, people of Black ancestry have imbibed foreign educational disciplines, communication studies inclusive, without their role in influencing the curricula and pedagogical standpoints. It means that in the academia, when White supremacy sneezes the minority nations catch not just cold, but that the cold eventually turns to pneumonia. If the communication studies discipline continues on this path (McCann, Mack & Self, 2020) when are we non-western communication scholars going to experience scholastic renaissance that changes the paradigm shift for the next generation? We can only influence the trajectory of the communication discipline if we strive to harvest socio-cultural, political, and economic foundational resources from non-western countries that show us as players and not pawns in the academic journey of self-empowerment. If our minds

are disentangled from the cocoon of western psycho-cognitive imprisonment, we will subsequently liberate our discipline from westerners who still have a firm foothold on the direction of the discipline as if we don't matter. This was one of the reasons we decided in 2018 to publish the book titled *Black/Africana communication* theory. This was the beginning for us to start turning the corner by making our voices heard in the wilderness of imposed silence on the contribution of African scholars in the growth of the communication discipline. In short, dependency has its drawbacks. Let it not become the cankerworm or the cancer in our cognitive universe as we wallow in this scholarly journey to assert our wellbeing that the Black communication scholar also matters. We are determined to set the record straight by pushing our own epistemic communicative resources from Africa. This volume has done just that.

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CHAPTER 1

DECOLONISING CURRICULA: UNRAVELLING THE MASTER SIGNIFIER IN STUDENTS' DISCOURSE FROM THEIR DEMANDS DURING THE #FEESMUSTFALL PROTEST IN SOUTH AFRICA

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More than two decades into the democratic South Africa students saw the cracks of inequality, embarked upon the #feesmustfall protests and demanded their universities "transform" through a "decolonialised" curricula. What did this mean to them? To analyse this, the chapter deploys some theoretical conceptual tools borrowed from political philosophy as well as an analysis of the actual discourse of the students. This chapter used a sample of comments from a survey of students at the Media Studies department at Wits University, in 2015-16, collated by myself as lecturer, to attempt to deconstruct what students desired when they demanded a decolonised curricula in media studies. The latter issue of decolonisation, which has also been recently theorised by scholars of the global South: Chiumbu and Iqani (2020), Langmia (2018), Mutsvairo *et al* (2021), Chasi (2014) Mano (2015), Rodny- Gumede (2018) Milton (2019) Frassineli (2018).

So, while there is the above literature, and this continues to emerge, on decolonisation of universities and in particular for this chapter, on communication and media, nonetheless in 2015, as educators, we stood at a crossroads to be interpellated (hailed or "called out") by students about: the power we command, what we teach, how we teach, and its relevance to the

global south. We[1], who were occupying places and spaces of power as purveyors of knowledge, were now the subjects. The context was political: a rising consciousness about the lasting effects of the degradation of imperialism as theorised by Franz Fanon (1963, 2008) and Steve Biko (1978) led to student uprisings in 2015. It started with the #RhodesMustFall campaign at the beginning of 2015 to culminate in the #FeesMustFall campaign at the end of the year.[2] The upheavals or mini revolutions required political imagination and listening to the voices of interpellation (the students) who were hailing the voices of power (the administrations, the government, the academics and old curricula).

The statue of Cecil John Rhodes (a dedicated ideologist of colonialism and British race supremacy) had prime position at the University of Cape Town – perched prominently on the steps in front of the central campus, until it was removed in January 2015. It was a symbolic break from the past vis-à-vis transformation so that a "more inclusive and welcoming [to black students] university" could be fostered, according to its then vice chancellor Max Price (2015). From statues to fees i.e. symbols to economics, and then the demands for the transformation of curricula in line with "decolonisation". The latter is the focus of this chapter.

Theoretical Framework

What is under scrutiny is the students' attachment to the signifiers "decolonisation" and "transformation", and the status of these signifiers for them. In deploying the notion of "passionate attachment" (to be defined shortly), what is involved is an attempt to conceptually delineate a determinate relation between the subject, students, (who attempt to turn the gaze to make the whole system, the subject) and the signifier decolonisation. And then, of course, how the students turned their gaze to subjectivise those in power. In trying to defragment this, Fanon, Biko and Mbembe's (2001) theories of subjection, racism, the postcolony and decoloniality, as well as Butler's concept of "passionate attachment", and Zizek's of the ideological signifier as a "rigid designator" i.e. as circular and thus foreclosing *a priori*

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[1] By "we" I am being quite specific here, I mean lecturers, academic staff.
[2] The #RhodesMustFall campaign began at the beginning of 2015 at the University of Cape Town (UCT) which brought down the statue of Cecil John Rhodes, a major larger than life symbol of colonialism and racism in South Africa and the second was the #FeesMustFall protest which began at Wits University at the end of 2015 which achieved the reduction of fee increases at South African universities from 10% to zero percent.

any empirical resistance (1989: 89), have all proved to be useful as has my own recent theorising on media studies, decoloniality and freedom of expression in *Power and Loss in South African journalism: news in the age of social media* (Daniels, 2020). Master signifier, to simplify it, means a nodal point, a pure signifier and a kind of knot of meanings, all rigidly designated in one thing for example in blackness, or whiteness. The questions that inform the theoretical framework include: Is decolonisation some sort of absolute, a transcendental signifier that anchors the students' discourse? Is it a conceptual lynchpin, to which students are passionately attached? This would fit into the definitions of a master signifier as theorised by Zizek.

Explaining some main concepts

Passionate attachment: one can be overly attached to one's identity (in race, for example, of our blackness) which could then result in victimhood.

Interpellation: naming, hailing, labelling, calling and subjecting a person to a name, for example, lesbian, black, racist. See Fanon's examples in Black Skins White Masks (2008:82) where he discusses being interpellated as nigger. This is a demand or social injunction with the aim of subjecting and ensuring the subject toes the line. But the subject only becomes the subject by heeding the call, acknowledging the hailing (or interpellation) or turning around in a self-reflexive move (see Butler).

Resignification: not to repeat oppressive norms, but to detach from them; it is a form of resistance which liberates from past fixed attachments.
It's a form of resistance, as in not acknowledging the name, or labelling. To put it in a Fanonian way: "we must find a different path" (1963:251).

Signifier: not just a sign, a representation, standing for something but a mark which represents the subject.

Floating signifier: a signifier with no fixed meaning, whose meaning is not closed off and whose meaning is not attached or linked to another signifier.

Master signifier: is a quasi-transcendental big other, it's an empty signifier that puts an end to the chain of meaning, anchoring all meaning, or fixing meaning, stitching meaning at the end of the day. To explain master signifier further, let us turn to the term "rigid designator" in discussing the role of "The People" within Communist Party ideology, as Zizek did. In the

discourse of the old communist parties, the people, are by definition attached to the cause of communism, (Zizek 1989:147).

Blended with Zizek's concepts as outlined above, this analysis also deploys Butler's theories on power and subjection blended from Hegel, Freud, Foucault and Althusser to develop her concept of "passionate attachment". An attachment, argues Butler (1997:208), is always an attachment to an object – it has the action of "binding to" (but is also tied to a warding off), which is the constitutive action of attachment. The above theories of subjection are important in this chapter to show how, as a form of power, subjection is paradoxical. We are more accustomed to thinking of power as something external to a subject, "something that presses upon a subject" (Daniels: 2006) rather than the subject being, in some sense, dependent on that power.

The main point to be used from this theory is that of power pressing upon and the warding off of the hegemonic curricula by students, showing the demand for resignifications from the past, or wanting a different path *ala* Fanon. So, it's just one theory of the subject being passionately attached to his or her subordination. In this case, however, we see students turning the gaze around and subjecting the old voices of power to their scrutiny, and it's found wanting. There is now a decided unsettling of past attachments to the voices of authority and power. This we will see in the discourse analysis portion of the chapter. And so, our authority as lecturers is interpellated and unsettled. To understand interpellation, let us turn to Butler's Althusserian example of turning towards the voice of power when hailed - of the passer-by who turns, without prompting, to the voice of the law. The paradox is that we accept certain terms of subjection and are often dependent on those terms for our existence and subordination takes place through language. The authoritative voice of the policeman hails a passer-by on the street: "Hey, you". The passer-by turns, recognising himself as the one who was hailed. Yet, why does this passer-by turn around and, thus, become subordinated through language? Is it a guilty conscience? In this research, the students interpellate the higher education curricula, the lecturers, the universities' administrations, whiteness, and patriarchy, among others, undesirables. This research does not attempt to duplicate Fanon, Biko, Zizek or Butler's concepts, but rather to merely draw on them, blending them in order to interrogate the status of transformation as a rigid designator that reflects the passion invested in it. Such a passionate belief is *a priori* insulated and is the pivot of other beliefs, less passionately invested and, thus, more open to critical scrutiny and interrogation.

Method: Survey, Ideology and Discourse

This article deployed a survey conducted with third year and honours students in 2015 to gather comments on what they meant by decolonisation. The methodology is both qualitative, using discourse analysis, as well as theoretical, using concepts to draw out patterns and themes to seek a master signifier. This chapter combines and integrates these methods to reach some political philosophical conclusions about the master signifier in the discourse of students. It deploys theories of decoloniality and subjection borrowed from the works of Fanon, Biko, Mbembe and blended with master and floating signifiers from Zizek's *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (1989) and Butler's "passionate attachment" from *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection* (1997) to offer critical reflections about students' demands vis-à-vis transformation and decolonisation.

So what about a discourse? Stuart Hall (1996) leaning on social theorist Michel Foucault (1926-1984), described it well: A discourse does not consist of one statement, but several statements working together to form a "discursive formation" (The West and the Rest: Discourse and Power). This discursive formation for this chapter is the #MustFall movements.

Disagreeing with Foucault, Hall did not believe that a discourse was true or false or scientific. However, both believed that discourse was entwined with power.

As previously discussed, the method resides in the theory but a survey method was also used to find out what the students were looking for. What did their discourse on transformation reveal? On the concepts of discourse and ideology, the following theorists, besides Hall and Foucault, were consulted: Louis Althusser (1994); Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe (1985); Diane Macdonell (1986); Michel Pécheux (1982) and Fairclough. These theorists have articulated concepts of meaning, understanding and language that have been particularly apposite to an analysis of students' discourse on decolonisation and transformation of curricula. The main point, taken from Pécheux and Macdonell, is that the meaning of a word or expression is not intrinsic. Rather, it is dependent on the particular context in which it is articulated. The context here was that 21 years into the South Africa, the structures of society remained unequal.

The field of discourse is not homogenous, according to Macdonell (1986:54); it is social and the statements made, the words used and the meanings of the words used, depend on where and against what the

statement is made. Drawing on the works of Pécheux, she wrote: "words, expressions, propositions among others, change their meaning according to the positions held by those who use them". Meanings are therefore part of the "ideological sphere" (Macdonell 1986: 46). In addition, Fairclough's critical discourse analysis method was also consulted (Fairclough 1989): a close analysis of language contributed to understandings about power relations and ideology in discourse. Most appropriate for this study was his social analysis (explanation). It is the interconnectedness, in this case the intersectionality of struggles and what signifiers were used, that is at issue.

The #MustFall struggles took place in a discursive system encompassing multiple views.

The context here is that 21 years into the new democracy, students found themselves unable to pay huge fee increases; they were struggling for accommodation and food; and these day to day life struggles become entangled with a need for transformation in curricula too – when they deconstruct that the majority of their theorists are Eurocentric, pale and male, and old.

A qualitative critical discourse analysis, using the sympathetic and sometimes ambivalent voices of power, and the students' voices, allowed for an assessment of the patterns created in the way students use the signifier – decolonisation. The primary sources being the students' own discourse through a survey (author generated) conducted in 2015 with Honours and third year Media Studies students. About 40 students participated in the survey. The questions in the survey were:

*What do you understand by the term transformation/and or what is transformation to you? *What did the Media Studies department need to do to transform/and or decolonise?

The chapter now proceeds with the discussion and then applying the theoretical conceptual tools as framed in the theoretical outline to make sense of the discourse in reaching some conclusions.

Discussion: The voices of power

The students turned their gaze on power and interpellated universities as "white", "patriarchal" and "colonial" (Pambo 2015; Duma 2015). Theorising contemporary race issues, Sithole wrote in *Meditations in Black* (2016) that the racist gaze sees not the human but the black (2016:7) and that the black

struggle was about the existential demand to be human. The philosophising demanded a reconfiguration of the subject. This demand has become intertwined with a revival and new awareness of the importance of Black Consciousness as fostered by Biko, who railed against the fact that a minority should impose its value system on the majority (Maluleke 2015). Biko was determined to resist both the colonial push "to empty the native mind of all content" and destroy, disfigure and distort the past of the oppressed (ibid). Nonetheless, Biko set out for a quest of true humanity arguing that blacks had "had enough experience as objects of racism to wish to turn the tables". Likewise, Fanon pleaded to resist a "desire to catch up with Europe" (1963:251); indeed, he offered a rational alternative: we must find a different path which would advance humanity. It is within these theoretical frameworks that the students' must fall movements rose in 2015.

So, the students at the country's most privileged university, UCT, in January 2015 excavated the racist gaze literally and symbolically by removing the statute of the arch racist/colonialist Cecil John Rhodes. Then the subjected (the students) turned their gaze away from themselves as subject to interpellate and subjectivise the powers that existed within all the authorities mentioned already: university vice chancellors, academics, the president of the country, the Education minister and the government. The gaze went beyond race, the tentacles spread. Women students called for #PatriarchyMustFall, raising the issue of rampant violence against women which led to the Decolonising Feminism conference hosted by the Wits Centre for Diversity Studies in August 2016 in Johannesburg.[3] At this conference, feminist academic Pumla Gqola called for a "globally promiscuous project" vis-à-vis the questions: what does it mean to be an African feminist woman who is both rioting and writing? And, "what does a decolonised feminist do?" Gqola invoked metaphors of fire and violence as opposed to the first, second and third waves of feminism from the west (2016). This conference took place shortly after black women feminist students staged an anti-rape protest at the Independent Electoral Committee operations centre while President Jacob Zuma was addressing the audience.

Some sympathetic, and ambivalent, voices from power

The discourse of the students, which will be delineated further in the chapter, showed the clear inter-sectionality of race, gender, class consciousness

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[3] The conference critiqued the difference between white feminism and black feminism given that the sources and structures of power in society were different.

struggles which may have interesting implications for what the master signifier could be. The students' interpellated figures of power, who were not necessarily the arch imperialist racist and colonial figures such as Rhodes, but instead were figures who were in ambivalent positions of authority. For example, lecturers at universities, part of the power system with structures of the past, in many ways still firmly in place. Besides Gqola, other academics (and those in positions of power) were sympathetic to students' demands. As social theorist Xolela Mangcu, who was positioned at UCT, observed of himself that he was not surprised at the #RhodesMustFall movement, as this did not happen without a context: "These students are resisting the world adults failed to decolonise, as well as demanding the mandate to transform the universities" (Mangcu 2015).

Mangcu captured it succinctly: "Their demands resonated around the country because it spoke of a latent sentiment of alienation that young people have from the culture of the country, which is particularly predominant in the universities. The people that teach them, the curriculum they study, books they read and the symbols all around them tell them that the narrative of the revolution was a lie." (ibid).

These voices provide context and highlight the importance of race, class and gender injustice and inequalities before we proceed to the main data i.e. the students' discourse on decolonisation and transformation of curricula. Transformation during 2015 was understood to mean: access i.e. inclusion of poor students into universities; an increased black professoriate; an increased number of women into this cohort, particularly black women; and curriculum transformation – which is what this chapter aims to uncover to then extrapolate a master signifier. This chapter narrows the focus down to the discourse of students about curriculum transformation.

"Curriculum transformation is not just about introducing black authors and philosophers but questioning the logics and the Eurocentric views in the field of maths and science too", according to vice chancellor of Wits University, Adam Habib (2015), who was also chairperson of Universities South Africa. What, he asked self-reflexively, was the right thing to do? "I live in a neo-liberal world and I am the VC at Wits. Do I change the curriculum or do I ask what spaces we need to create? But how do we force white professors to re-think curriculum? Where do we find black professors who will teach it?"

Head of the Political Studies department at Wits University Daryl Glaser (2015) opined that curriculum transformation was about the introduction of

"black thought". Interjecting in the debate, senior lecturer in history department at Rhodes Vashna Jagarnath proffered that the reasons for not changing curricula are "just excuses" (Jagarnath 2015). South African universities used theory developed in the global north to answer questions relating to issues in the global south, she countered. Jagarnath felt that Eurocentric curricula showed black people as data and never as intellectuals, while the current curricula legitimised colonialism. "I have broadened history to include African women. I teach about Winnie Mandela as an intellectual and a feminist, not from a patriarchal view we are accustomed to. Apparently I teach very dangerous stuff" (ibid). The discourse of Jagarnath reveals the intersectionality of struggles and issues she is trying to bring in to her teaching – race, class and gender – which were missing in the past.

There were some who viewed the issues mainly from a numbers and funding point of view. Vice chancellor of Stellenbosch University Wim de Villiers intended making the university more inclusive by "setting funds aside specifically for a more diverse staff corps" (Shabangu 2015).

One of the key movements during both the Rhodes must fall and fees must fall the #MustFall protests was the Open Stellenbosch movement at Stellenbosch University to drop Afrikaans as a medium of instruction at the university. The movement won this demand through its protests. "It is Open Stellenbosch belief that untransformed, racist institutional culture is the root of the problem of staff diversity," articulated Mohammed Shabangu, spokesperson for the Open Stellenbosch movement (Shabangu 2015). "To understand institutional culture and how it works, management is going to have to open itself to a conversation with marginalised groups on campus," Shabangu explained.

As the discourse above reveals, the students felt that deliberately or otherwise, dominant Western scholarship reflected an alienation of African in particular and south theorising in general (Zwane 2015).

Students' voices on Decolonising the curricula

What precisely are students looking for when they interpellate curricula? The aim was to isolate the master signifier in their discourse. What were the students aiming at, what was the rigid designator when they demanded "Decolonisation" and "Transformation" during the #MustFall campaigns? Who was interpellated and how? What was rigidly designated or fixed, to which all meanings were derived, which then became the master signifier?

And, then following this was a fixed binary opposition, what floated? Was there evidence of passionate attachment in the student's discourse? If so, what are they passionately attached to?

#TransformWits activist and member of the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), Vuyani Pambo, voiced his dissatisfaction thus: "Management has been pretending to be listening to our calls and has been dragging its feet … the curriculum we get from these institutions is alienating. Black students cannot find themselves in the literature that they read…we need more black lecturers, **especially** female lecturers, an Afrocentric curriculum and more student activism".[4]

The Pambo's discourse is crystal clear. It reveals the frustration in an intersectional way: race, class and gender but also general alienation. While the research aimed to uncover what the master signifier was for a purposively chosen department at one university, in tandem with this would be what students were passionately attached to. A clue to the answer may be in the discourse of PhD candidate in the Media Studies department at Wits University, Katlego Disemelo. An ardent activist during the #FeesMustFall protest in October 2015, Disemelo expressed eloquently the struggles, which also emphasised that no particular struggle was removed from the other completely, nor were disparate ideological positions revealed (Disemelo 2015). He noted "It is also about laying bare the failures of the heterosexual, patriarchal, neoliberal capitalist values which have become so characteristic of the country's universities. These may seem like disparate ideological positions. They aren't. They all address the conditions of structural disenfranchisement under which many non-white and non-privileged students and outsourced workers languish on a daily basis in these institutions."

Disemelo's discourse revealed the crossing-cutting of the struggles from political to economic to gender to sexuality; racism, classism, sexism and heterosexism as the techniques of power which uphold enslavement.

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[4] *City Press* (2015) Serving white interests. 8 September 2015.

Findings and Discussion: The third year and honours students' discourse

A deconstruction of the Discourse

The emergent trend and pattern is "change" but change is not rigidly designated or tied to any one signifier. The different signifiers attached to change included: race, diversity, gender, inclusivity, as well as transport to and from the taxi rank in Bree Street.

Some of the student discourse illustrates this clearly, for example, one fuller answer to the question in the survey was:

"My understanding is that it is about diversity in the demographics of various institutions, and also fostering for equality."

"A change in the structure of something."

"Transformation is the idea of integrating all races in a collective, creating diversity and eradicating a dominant or superior race."

"It is about trying to make everyone feel accounted for, and therefore feel equal within their community and institution." "It is a very important process which refers to reform and change in terms of ideologies of governing how society functions and how people are treated it is a movement for justice and for equality."

"I understand the term transformation as being the immutable changer that should happen due to the changes in the structure of society and circumstances of the past."

"The transition from apartheid into democracy. The institution needs to move forward into the future."

"Restructuring and implementing equality of different races."

"It means changing something for the better, making it accessible and easier for everyone. To make everyone feel part of something or not excluded."

"It is a term used to define gradual change over a period of time in order to receive an improved outcome."

"Implementing an alternative administration which is different dominant hegemonic rule."

There is definitely evidence of passionate attachment – to "change". But change was tied to different signifiers: equality, justice, a feeding scheme, inclusion, alternative admin, race changes, gender changes, modernisation, improvement, diversity, from apartheid to democracy. The latter were all floating signifiers, tied to the master signifier, change.

A further interesting finding is that the majority of those students who took the survey said that in fact they found that the Media Studies department was already transformed. Of the 40 responses, 30 said yes (75%), 4 (10%) were neutral and 6 (15%) said no. It is possible that this result was due to the fact that the survey was conducted by a lecturer, the author of this chapter, or it could be a genuine finding given that the department had revised the curriculum to have the South theorists dominate as opposed to the north.
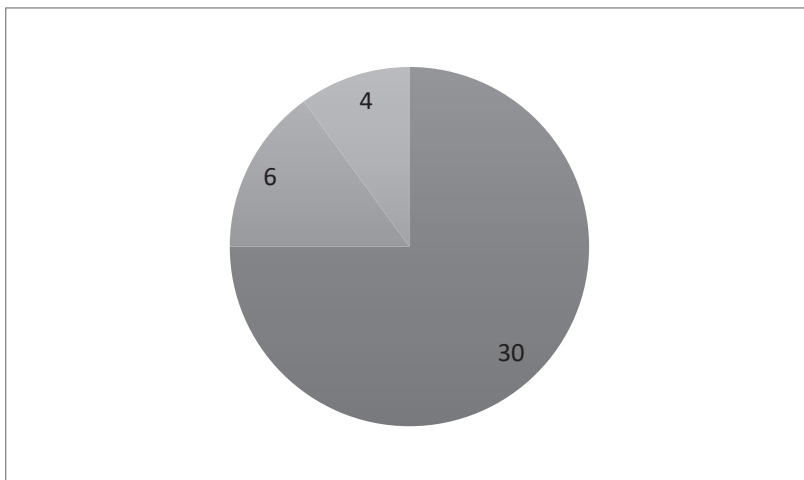

Figure 1: Perceptions of transformation from Media Studies students (Author generated graph)

What the students wanted changed in curricula: unveiling the discourse

This section does not list all the responses, as many of the students praised the department and did not say what they wanted changed. As some background, the media studies department had workshops every year on

curricula change, especially in the years just before and after the protests. Some of the changes included:

constantly redesigning courses so theorists cited are globally representative rather than all white Americans/Europeans. It used case studies and examples that are relevant to students' lives. We introduced a careful programme of support and mentoring for tutors, who are a crucial part of the transformation agenda as they work on the ground with students.

The department offered financial support to deserving and needy students in the form of paid employment, from research and admin assistance to Wits Plus and sessional teaching; engaged with a range of guest lecturers to ensure diversity in the classroom; agitated for South African blacks in the posts which became available in 2017 and was successful with this.

It then contracted with Oxford University Press to produce a new theory primer book: *Media Studies: Critical African and Decolonial approaches* edited by Sarah Chiumbu and Mehita Iqani. This was published in 2020 and indeed the book cites the processes above. In this book, in response to students' radical gazes, I wrote a chapter on freedom of expression from a black consciousness, feminist and decolonial approach, in many ways as a response to the students discourse; as seen in the next section. Here, the research selects purposively what change the students sought. The below student discourses are classified according to the themes which emerged.

Local content

More local content (*"I think we should have more South African content in the curriculum"*, *"Need to facilitate more South African centred lectures, more focus on all races in the media"*, *"Academics that have theorised SA's unique media landscape need to be prescribed in the course"*).

Less theory and more real world

More practical's and less theory (*"In the last year of study there should be practicals whereby students go out in the real world and experience journalism"*, *"It should introduce more practical ways to address the curriculum so that the understanding is beyond theory"*, *"More real word examples – videos, movies, books, etc. Including more videos, etc. as empirical examples. The help contextualising well, as well as communicating more effectively"*).

Engaged and communicative lecturers please

More engaged lecturers (*"The supervisors need to become more engaged with the student papers", "More engagement. A need for theory linked to opinions and experiences. Giving ideas of jobs/ experiences within the field. Expansion if departmental knowledge also gives an upper hand for faculty and students", "More engagement with students on an online platform to ensure that there is a constant flow of communication and have hands on engagement with students"*).

Embracing cultures, languages and diversity

Embracing all cultures and races (*"Embracing all races. Embracing culture and religion from diverse background", "Media Studies needs to be more compassionate to students who do not have the best writing skills because English is not our first language", "Incorporate different ideas across many cultures and races", "Encourage more black students. Encourage respect and dignity amongst students; black/white/ Indian/coloured"*).

Push the boundaries

Readings that are offensive (*"I think there should be readings that are offensive because media studies should cover all spectrums of the debate"*).

Discuss what Stereotyping is

*T*eaching how to recognise stereotypes (*"Teaching students to recognise stereotypes and binaries linked to certain communities/groups or people and in this way promoting critical thinkers; seeing an objective world and to teach students of a full unpoliticized history of South Africa to highlight how many structures and internalized ideals have stemmed from that"*).

More African scholars

More African scholars, language, race, diversity, gender, culture, religion, etc. (*"We could perhaps look at integrating more diverse staff, particularly Black South African staff", "It is very western orientated; perhaps focus more on African perspective", "They can try to incorporate other fields of studies –African theories or theorists"*).

Teach digital media

Teaching digital media (*"There is a huge lack in the study of digital media in SA. Often it is mentioned within the course but a thorough interrogation of it is needed especially since you are teaching a generation that only operates within digital media", "I think media studies needs to use a more diverse and current way of exposing students to the various prevalent media forms and content in the world"*).

More politics

More current affairs (*"Stay relevant to current issues around the world", "Highlighting current affairs and help students to become more active citizens", "Continue to focus on the changing role of the media in our developing democracy"*).

What emerged here was also passionate attachment to change vis-à-vis these floating signifiers:

There was a passionate attachment to change but change was not rigidly designated i.e. not fixed to say race, for example, or blackness or gender. The students interpellated their academics and their institutions on a variety of levels in their discursive formations which were rich and textured. While they desired more African scholars, and black through they also desired more alternative media examples to be taught.

Conclusions: Passionate Attachment to *change* but Signifiers Float

The chapter comes to four main conclusions: the students's discourse revealing what they understood by decolonising was wide ranging and diverse, showing clear intersectionalities of race, class gender, sexuality, culture, language, class issues, indeed what was emphasised in teaching. In fact, all in all, this broad understanding is encouraging and could be used in rather practical ways for future planning of curricular in media studies.

Theoretically, there is passionate attachment to "Change" but this is not rigidly designated in the sense that it is not tied to one thing. There is no master signifier for change. The last section regarding the students in the classroom was almost a surprising moment after the discourse of the student protest leaders and some academics included. The varied signifiers for change float. This is clear from the patterns that emerge from the qualitative

analysis of the way the signifier "change" is distributed and deployed throughout the students discourse or discursive formation, and from the review of the meanings. Many of the students' pronouncements on change were also based on the need for transformation in general but there is no vagueness, indeed there are specifics.

In many instances there are references to race and gender but in just as many there are references to wanting less theory, "more practical's" and more digital media courses. The signifiers are vastly divergent, for example, from race and gender to transport issues. The iteration and reiteration for change takes such varied and disparate forms that one has to say the signifiers float with a lack fixedness and stability. However, while this may be the case, what is clearly in evidence is firstly, that the demand for change is fixed and secondly, that interpellation has taken place.

The students have hailed the universities (including its lecturers) as relics of apartheid structures, in terms of the techniques and technologies of power, mentioned early in the chapter, and they have demanded transformation. In response, the universities' have made half turns towards the voices of interpellation. These half turns, due to ambivalence given positionalities, include engagement with students – but not full engagement – and changing of curricula to some extent.

Some of these half turns from those interpellated include, at Wits University, the vice chancellor being held captive and asked to occupy the floor at the old Senate House (in 2016 renamed after ANC MK hero, Solomon Mahlangu House) at the start of the fees must fall protests; surveys being done in various schools and departments[5] - such as the one deconstructed in this chapter; the removal of colonial statues; and then a zero percent increase in fees (in 2015).

In Butlerian terms about being passionately attached to one's own oppression, this chapter rounds off the argument that students have passionate attachment to decolonisation and transformation but this is not an attachment to their own subjection. Quite the reverse – it is a warding off of past oppressions. Nor is it a shell – or hollow – while there is a Master signifier i.e. "change" – there are many floating signifiers attached to change. So harking back to the theory delineated at the beginning of the chapter, Butler, in discussing subjection theories using the concept of interpellation, writes that in the

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[5] After all lecturers earn a living and want to protect their position. So while they are sympathetic and empathetic they are not fully turned towards the plight of students.

ideological state apparatuses the subordination of the subject takes place through language. In the Althusser example of the passer-by being hailed by a policeman, as "hey you" and then turns. Butler asks why this person responds to the authoritative voice of the law. The point is that Althusser does not answer the question. Butler argues that the subject is passionately attached to his or her own subordination through a reflexive, sometimes a violent or melancholic, turn. There were violent turns in the students' #MustFall movements but these were not towards their own oppression. The various kinds of violence: language, arson, removal of statues, placards and songs were towards the powerful. We witnessed a turn away from the voice of power – old power. The students interpellated or hailed their vice chancellors in the following way: sit down and listen and to their lecturers in the following way: we want more black thought, more local theory, in fact we want less theory, more diversity, more blacks and more women. They demanded resignifications from the past oppressions and voices of superiority.

Evidently, resignifications are needed in South Africa for a deepening of democracy. Ideological and other interpellations could also be the site of radical reoccupation and resignification, and we witnessed this during the #MustFall protests. In South Africa, with regard to decolonisation, these resignifications can occur through the course of debate, for example, where norms can be reiterated in unpredictable ways. If decolonisation is rigidly designated and if passion is invested in one particular transformation to the exclusion and regression of other signifiers, then that is rendered a master signifier. In this case, it could have been race, but race was found to be one of many signifiers of past oppression attesting to the intersectionality of the struggles and demands.

The students' discourse showed fluidity and a lack of rigid designation. There was a turning away from themselves to look outwardly and interpellate power structures seen in lecturers, curricula, and universities as a whole. They are subjecting the hegemonic voices and powers to their scrutiny. There are unpredictable ways that this scrutiny is taking place, showing contingency and resignifications from old norms which oppress.

Transformation, it is argued here, is a floating signifier in their discourse on transformation – it means many things. It isn't a meaning tied in a knot to one meaning – like "the people" and "communism" in the Stalinist era, therefore, there is no master signifier.

It is through the embrace of these injurious terms and through the reiteration of such norms that there are possibilities for resignification. This would, this chapter argued, involve a detaching from the signifier, decolonisation as a master signifier to embracing it rather as a 'floating signifier'. In other words, in South Africa today, it is not *a priori* a central principle of *all* social experiences. It is rather, as itself, a contingent series of phenomena to be accounted for. Such detachment could undo and unsettle the passionate attachment to subjection. The discourse is a social one, and a social discourse is historical – it is a discourse at a particular point in time in South Africa's history (of transformation politics). Who is to say that this discourse will always remain without new resignifications, that it might not take an unpredictable turn? So, what floats and what is rigidly designated (as master signifier)? Zizek, in a chapter entitled *Che Vuoi?,* explains "ideological quilting" using Lacanian *point de caption,* that within different political contexts there will be different "floating signifiers" that form a quilt of ideology, and the fixed meanings emerging from the nodal points. In other words, there will be one signifier that effects identity and within that particular context, unifies a given field, giving it meaning and constituting identity.

Within different political contexts there will be different "floating signifiers" that form a quilt of ideology, and the fixed meanings emerging from the nodal points. In other words, there will be one signifier that effects identity and within that particular context, unifies a given field, giving it meaning and constituting identity. So yes, in this case, "change" was the one fixed signifier, but it meant many things. There was no ideological quilting to make a nodal point. There was no unified field tied to "decolonising". There was no rigid designator, thus foreclosing any empirical resistance. The passion was in evidence but was not invested in one thing. There was a lack of totalisation and fixity in the students' discourse, which marked the intersectionality of struggles.

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CHAPTER 2

REENGAGING AFRICANIZED PEDAGOGY, THEORETICAL POSTULATIONS AND INDEXING

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Introduction - A Westernized Discipline, Media or Cultural Imperialism?

How then should we place communication studies? A westernized discipline that should remain as such – colonized – or an imperialist discipline? Several dialectics in this area provide a connection between culture, media, globalization and imperialism, as well as the complexities that characterized their intersections. These complexities, if not clearly checked, can fuel a sort of hegemony that is sometimes labelled as colonization and its several variants. It was opined by Demont-Heinrich that at an extreme on this continuum of complexities, "cultural imperialism is cast as the international extension of the long-discredited hypodermic needle theory which views cultural consumers as passive automatons" (Demont-Heinrich 2011, 666), and at another extreme "the globalization of culture perspective is cast as a wildly postmodern standpoint in which free-floating individuals are said to be able to make an infinite set of localized meanings from cultural products" (Demont-Heinrich 2011, 666), nevertheless, we need to "locate a productive middle ground between cultural imperialism and globalization of culture" (Demont-Heinrich 2011, 666) for communication and media studies to thrive since such complexities have struggled to hold a standpoint as a result of the interests of scholars. Inherently, we could subsume that a thread runs through all the intersections.

In conceptualizing imperialism at any level, we should be quick to identify the fundamentals, as well as the political inclinations that constantly drive such hegemony (Godsgift and Obukoadata 2008), the position by Schiller's

classical theory (Sparks 2012), the recontextualization of the MacBride's Report (Preston 2005) and the different ways they impinge on the ante. The processes of conceptualization create praxes that are devoid of any tangibility as encapsulated by the mandate of the New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO) (Nordenstreng 2013). Considerations outside of these would normally limit our experiences in understanding imperialism, westernization and colonialism. Any discussion on imperialism would address Lenin's five characteristics of (1) the role of economic concentration; (2) the dominance of finance capital; (3) the importance of capital export; (4) the spatial stratification of the world as a result of corporate dominance; and (5) the political dimension of the spatial stratification of the world. When all of these are harvested and gleaned, we would find ample reasons why we should decolonize communication studies to at least, not only free the restrictions from studying communications, but also provide a leeway to recreate power hegemony in finances, capital and spatial stratifications (Fuchs 2010).

It is from this plank that we attempt to provide a discourse on how to reengage Africanized pedagogy, re-enact theoretical postulations and revisit indexing. The chapter examined the notion of colonialization within the frame of the study by looking at the various notion of decolonization. We then try to see how not to colonize the media by identifying specific areas that should be addressed.

Disciplines, Colonization and Decolonization

Decolonization, as a concept, process, experience and movement has been canvassed long ago (Fanon 1965). In the first instance, colonization has led to hybridization (Obukoadata 2010) where the supposedly ideal from various shreds colluded and coalesced to provide the cahooted acceptable. Therefore, to decolonize such a mantra is to allow an autoethnography where new voices would be heard and explored. There is the argument that such attendant colonialization is difficult to recover, rather the focus on decolonization should be on bourgeoning newer "experiences of in-betweenness, nostalgia, homelessness, lack of belonging, among others" in order to create "identities and ideologies, performances, and practices that actively question, critique, and challenge colonization" (Chawla and Atay 2018, 4-6) that should challenge foreign ideologies, powers and agency structure (Croteau and Hoynes 2003) with such a degree of self-reflection. Decolonization calls for opening spaces for illumination, inclusions,

counternarratives since the outcomes cannot be located within the frames of a single discourse (Sium, Desai, and Ritskes 2012).

In conceptualizing decolonization of communication, especially in the aspect of social change, Dutta (2015) laid hold to the notion that decolonization implies the explicit resistance to supposedly dominant categories of development that have been subaltern, neoliberal and scripted in the narratives of multicultural participation. Such scripting and narrative clearly detract from the contributions of indigenous knowledge to what should constitute the gamut of social change. The import is that most disciplines have been somewhat wholly colonized in terms of the knowledge architecture or in part (Mills 2015). The communication field is no exception, more so when we recall that from the origin, the discourse of communication has been influenced by other disciplines who still claim total legitimacy to understanding it better. When the issues of resistance are espoused, it assumes invariably, that, there is pull or force holding onto it, and preventing the new lease of life from altering the status quo. This has been alluded to in the argument that educators of intercultural communication still support dominant hegemony, prevailing social hierarchies and inequitable power distributions to the chagrin of challenging same and providing a subtle shift of consciousness (Gorski 2008). Therefore, he argues further, that the acceptable path is to challenge and dismantle any existing mantle of hegemony, hierarchies and power agency. As earlier pointed out, there will be some kind of resistance to this notion of decolonization, whether the shift is subtle or harsh, at least for now. For instance, in some communication departments in African universities, the curriculum had not been altered to reflect these new complexities in learning. Only recently at the post-graduate board of the University of Calabar, a few panellists laboured to convince some other die-hards on the need to alter the curriculum as well as allow for virtual presentations of seminars, theses, and dissertations. There are pockets of these resistances across boards, most times owing to the inadequacies of the instructors to cope with the rigours associated with changes.

To decolonize, there must first be a conscious effort in understanding the impact of colonialism on people's minds, before we can challenge the 'knowing' and the dominance of western philosophies that have beclouded several minds. When this is done, then one can now begin to reclaim indigenous perspectives where legitimization of knowledge would be entrenched, collaboration enhanced, and university education more meaningful to development. Anything else will continue to make the African communication perspective subservient (Thaman 2003). Therefore,

with decolonization comes the furore of another cycle of colonization. Coloniality is seen as the control and disciplining of indigenous perception and interpretation of the world, of other beings and things according to certain legitimized principles, that are most times culturally askance to the interpreter (Tlostanova 2017).

To decolonize a curriculum, Sleeter (2010) detailed some parameters that must be considered which include reflecting the nuances of the people who would use the curriculum and not those who feel it is just time for a paradigm shift. Other parameters include intersectionality, participation, and accountability (McDowell and Hernández 2010). When this is done, we can then grapple with the merit of knowledge and what it entails. Is knowledge intended to just know, or to be used by the acquirer? Is knowledge supposed to be divorced from the people it is intended to serve? If the answers to these are in the negative, then the kind of knowledge currently being disseminated through the African communication pedagogy does not serve any purpose, as the expectation is to generate solutions to existential problems. When we argue around the gnome of colonization and decolonization, the tendency is to always isolate certain phenomenon from its hold, and, knowledge creation, use and distribution is one of such holds. Gnome is used to depict the same role that some mythical characters played in guarding what they believed to be some secret treasures that are sacred. Some communication departments have these mythical personalities that are completely averse to any attempt to even interrogate the usefulness of a pedagogical design.

However, there is the other thinking that arises when the imagination of organizational communication as a decolonizing project continues to reify and legitimatize a form of rationality, and in practice leads to further colonialization, suppression and oppression of native/indigenous forms of understanding and organizing within our disciplinary field (Grimes and Parker 2009). What will post-colonial research look like if articulated along the lines of the indigenous people?

Another aspect of decolonization would attempt to look at the way communication studies are currently carried out. Here, the thought pattern would be to use more scientific methods of the evolutionary science in the study of literature. This will amount to a complete deviation from the corpus-based approach, and place most scholars at the mercy of experimentation and statistical analysis. There is also the claim that such an approach will provide a platform for universality and generalizations of specific sociohistorical contexts. However, this does not completely suggest

that all such literary analysis should benefit from this view of decolonization (Haase 2010).

There is equally the issue of subjectivity when one attempts to extricate the constructs from the coloniality of power hegemony. The thrust of the treatise by Schiwy (2007) is that gender-issues cannot be abstracted from the discourse of coloniality in communication studies as the mere notions of 'femininity and masculinity are themselves colonial constructs that have pressed more complex notions of gender, sexuality, and desire into a binary'. At another point, the argument is that the issues of gender are beyond binary classifications, and sometimes dovetail into the trilogy, which makes it difficult to unwork such colonial legacies. It is in helping with some of the issues raised that the underlying proposals are made, not as limiting options, but as key indexes to benchmark other suggestions, and where possible, provoke newer understanding.

How not to Colonize

Reengage Africanized Pedagogy through Localized Ameri-Eurocentric Models

At the crux of decolonizing communication studies is the need to reengage pedagogy. A reengaged pedagogy contrives to allow the change dynamics of society to collude with the change demands in the knowledge circle. Doing it the way it had been done to achieve relatively different results has been the bane of African communication scholarships in recent times. Suffice to say it is mentioned that other disciplines beyond communication studies are towing the lines of reengagement in pedagogy to fit current reality. There has been wide advocacy for grafting 'personally engaged pedagogy' into curricula to enhance the 'quality of the learning experiences' (Berry 2005), as well as re-infuse culturally relevant pedagogy which would reflect issues of equity and social justice that is 'contingent upon critical reflection about race and culture of teachers and their students' (Howard 2003).

Arguments abound on the need to encourage faculty and stakeholders to intentionally incorporate cultural inclusion in their pedagogy and their courses. Communication studies should take the lead. At this point, one must commend the efforts of Professor Des Wilson, of the University of Uyo, Nigeria for his unrelenting cultivation and crafting of African communication systems in areas such as public relations, advertising, and filmic studies. Over the years, Professor Wilson had advocated for the

teaching of these courses in a manner that should incorporate the African vicissitudes, and, also challenge doctoral candidates to explore research theses in areas of uncharted African communications systems. Such cultural inclusion by faculty has been assumed to provide 'ownership of the classroom learning environment to benefit an increasingly diverse array of students' (Quaye and Harper 2007).

Reengaging pedagogy is seen as a critical agent that helps to disrupt the binary's delimitations of us and them, developed and developing, real and surreal, and functional and dysfunctional (Subreenduth 2003). Decolonization of communication studies comes with the teacher creating a narrative that offers possibilities for greater engagement of education in the classroom and beyond, and how the teachers' narratives, built on their own negotiated experiences, constraint, identity constellations and level of ambivalence, sombreness and constructivism can free, and provide transformative abilities (Subreenduth 2003). We need to explore, theorize and recommend a postcolonialist pedagogy to free the mind and intellect from the colonialist concerns. As argued later in the chapter, we subsumed that while it is not a strait-jacket approach to undo colonialism, it is becoming increasingly necessary to path-find new ways to deal with colonialism. It comes with engaging at different levels of collaborative inter-institutional pedagogical practices vouched as the community, self and identity projectile that critically interrogate knowledge and identities (Bozalek, Leibowitz, Swartz, Nicholls et al 2010).

What the whole discourse subsumed is that contextual cultural factors are germane to effective learning and cognition. The argument has always been that "much of the school failure exhibited by African-American children can be explained in terms of the cultural discontinuity resulting from a mismatch between salient features cultivated in the African-American home and proximal environments and those typically afforded within the United States educational system" (Allen and Boykin 1992, 587). Therefore, when certain cultural factors are incorporated into the learning contexts, there would be an increased performance which is interpreted as cognitive-contextual-cultural familiarity, and achievable through holistic instructional strategies, culturally consistent communicative competencies, and skill-building strategies (Howard 2001).

This provides a critical threshold for the pedagogy by using dialogical exercises which can ultimately aid in opening useful avenues of critical inquiry as the cultural nuances of the people are pivotal in providing understanding. The use of foreign pedagogy can increase students' scores,

but drastically depreciates the application of such knowledge (Tate 1995; Thomas 2009). Such acquired knowledge are only used to pass examinations and not to address specifics relevant to their environment. This argument encompasses the joke on social media where a former mathematics teacher met his students on the street and needed their help to get to a particular location. They were willing to help but described the place for him using mathematical coordinates and terminologies that had no current bearing, but suggestively reminiscence of the abstractness of their classroom engagements. This is the bane of deploying such pedagogy. Even the street numbering in Africa does not align with such geographical latitude and longitude. Furthermore, Esposito and Swain (2009) and Allen, Jackson and Knight (2012) explore issues surrounding teaching for social justice by adhering to the tenets of culturally relevant pedagogy because it helps prepare students to effect change in their communities and the broader society on the one hand, and, addressing simultaneously, the invisible and stereotypical views of African values, knowledge, and ontology on the other, while being a veritable part of it (Ferreira and Janks 2007).

Dillard (1996) made frantic calls for recognition of cultural diversity in how we are expected to know, deconstruction of out-used epistemologies in 'what' and 'how' they are taught for transformations to come. While Burke (2015), on his own, has argued that even at the level of reengaging pedagogies, one must not downplay the place of gender and emotions, misrecognition and shaming. This pattern, though, provokes a kind of nostalgia where the African mantra rarely allows the female gender to make informed contributions in classroom discussions, and where betrayal of emotions is un-African-male-like. In his treatise, he alluded to the underlying "fear of the 'feminization of higher education'". An indigenous knowledge base is therefore pivotal to the underlying issue of decolonizing communication studies, which should start with reengaging the pedagogy.

It is instructive to note that when such pedagogies are reengaged, it paves the way to not necessarily begin the robust process of hypothesizing communication models to fit the frames of new studies from the pedagogy, but also to amplify reasons to localize these models (Obukoadata 2012). Curiously, there have been several such models postulated in the archives of communication department libraries across Africa that have not been used. This is the time to test them and revaluate their usefulness, while at the same time localizing other western-centric models. For instance, Wilson's trado-media model on development communication suggests a complete paradigm shift of development communication approaches to the realm of indigenous communications. It is instructive to note that in most

African universities, this model is not considered worth studying; only those models tested in other climes are deemed significant for mention. Even when used in thesis writing, they are heavily queried.

Filter Communication through African Lens

Communication has been argued to be a process of meaning sharing, and in this context, concerns have been raised in the direction of polysemy, and sometimes in the aspects of conceptualization. Polysemy exists along several frontiers, as one can argue the presence of polysemy within polysemy. But a greater way to minimize polysemy is to filter communication through the lenses of the users in what has made George Gerbner's communication model evergreen. When we decolonize communication studies, we minimize polysemy by filtering communication through the lenses of African by Africans.

Yes, the nuances of globalization, internationalization, and cosmopolitanism are loud, but the marketing maxim of thinking globally and acting locally cannot be a better truism at this point of our disidentification in our identification. Clearly, the goal should be to de-westernize communication studies (Waisbord and Mellado 2014) in a manner that suggests indigenization of knowledge and gives us a better identity from the ascribed identity.

As part of leveraging on the indigenization of the knowledge paradigm, Dutta (2007) advocated that health communication approaches should be anchored on cultural settings where the focus should be the culture-centered and the cultural sensitivity approaches. This position holds some importance to this discourse as texts in communication studies are laced with examples from western orientations. The culture-centered approach is premised on commitment to build theories and applications from within the culture, while the cultural sensitivity approach strives to adapt the messages to the cultural markers of the target audience (Dutta 2007). When this is achieved, we would have filtered communication studies through the African lenses, and make the consumers of the de-westernized texts comfortable with the knowledge garnered.

We are equally presented with an idea that interrogates the representation of HIV/AIDS in Africa by examining the three dimensions of naturalist, humanist and pluralist photographic methods. Naturalists are regarded as neutral and value-free, the humanist as catalyst for positive change, although deeply stereotypical, while the pluralist as necessary to overcome stigmas and held dogma about a people (Bleiker and Kay 2007). Instructive

in this idea is that seeing a context from the lens of others, who are not directly situated in it, would end up provoking more stereotypes, and giving credence to mundane issues. The argument by the study especially on their examination of the widely circulated iconic photograph of a HIV/AIDS infected Ugandan woman and son shows representation that is far from correct. They, Bleiker and Kay, maintained that such pictures portray Africans as 'nameless and passive victims, removed from the everyday realities of the western world'. This same mentality has affected scholarship and teaching, where, as an advertising and public relations instructor, who relied mostly on these westernized texts, one finds it very difficult to see classical examples of crisis management in public relations teaching, or in advertising copies that are drawn from Africa. Question is, why should the narrative about Africa be measured and filtered from the lenses of the western world especially on select issues such as health, poverty, economy, and political processes?

On another level of discourse in amplifying the above held views, the idea of translocalism as a theoretical plank on which studies on global communication would be anchored on the local to make meaning more relevant (Kraidy and Murphy 2008) is canvassed. This focus is hinged on the maxim that communication is about meaning making and sharing. Their thoughts had crystallized into what we have today as the Geertzian theory. However, there are contentions in several areas that would tend to diminish from the whole discourse of translocalism. One of such is the concerns of global communication practices that could be hindered especially with the gnome provided by the enabling media technologies. This said, one can assume that with the roll-out of artificial and enhanced intelligence and virtual reality on the 5G platforms, the argument is no longer in favour of the wider supposedly globalization agenda, but on an individualized agenda that could be connected to the global spectrum. The point is that discussions and debate on globalization are shifting to the realm, interest and idiosyncrasies of the individual within a global spectrum. Other concerns might exist, but the outbreak of the Corona virus, and the various protocols put in place to manage and mitigate it has proven that the normal as we used to know it no longer exists, therefore it is time to re-engage the new normal.

There is also the overwhelming conclusion that agencies, structures and institutions in aid campaigns are pro-west because they reinforce Western assumptions about Africa to varying degrees (Hanchey 2016). Such aid is assumed to entrench imperialistic power relations by portraying African agency in Western-centric ways. Thus, constant relying on such centric aids will deepen the hegemony, while filtering will provoke a radical shift away

from Western centrism to localized representations. Such representations are likely to result in disidentification, which will interrogate power hegemony and fluid oppressions, as well as provide better identity to sexuality, age, gender, effective cross-cultural adaptation, adaptation to a host culture, environmental justice narrative framework, and authenticity in a communicative situation (Fox 1997; Dickinson 2012; Eguchi and Asante 2016). It should be pointed out that the twin issues of authenticity and adaptability are not superficial but mutual and interrogative.

In furtherance of the filtration process, Park, Baek and Cha (2014) relied on "Gudykunst's cultural variability in communication framework and culture-specific facial expressions of emotion" to assert that people favour horizontal and mouth-oriented emoticons when such is created and used within their individualistic cultures, and favour vertical and eye-oriented emoticons within the collectivist culture. The point, here, is that communication is more meaningful when horizontal than when it is vertical, as bounding exists more at the horizontal plane. Horizontal communication gives room for critiquing and attempting to understand the communication encounter, while vertical allows for just accepting the encounter, most times to no good. Therefore, communication studies should follow this same pattern of individualistic Africanised cultures, rather than the collectives, even though arguments persist on the need for the collective action as a magic band to foster social change (Obregón and Tufte 2017). While the arguments had always been that Africa and its systems are collectivist in approach, we must not exclude the realities that there are no cultures that are inherently collectivist or individualistic. At several points in the scheme of things, cultures dovetail along the collectivist and individualistic agenda at different times on the continuum, and for a culture to grow into the collectivist frame, there are inherent elements of the individualistic (Freitag and Stokes 2009).

The argument so far presented is that situating the learning experiences within a local context, translocalism, provides understanding. Therefore, to situate implies to filter through local lenses of actors, sites, audiences and topics that help definition making and legitimization (Carlson 2016) and infuse language through its multiplicity of dimensions on human behavioural patterns and linguistic diversity (Harrison 2006). Linguistic diversity will allow for communication texts to be produced in various languages of the subcultures. When effectively implemented, such filtration will enhance the decolonialization of communication studies.

Encourage more of ethnographic studies which are culturally Africans

Ethnography seems to have a greater attachment to African communication research more out of the fact that existing data sources are not reliable and where they are available, they are few and not easily accessible. Ethnography seems to find greater relevance in postcolonialism and autoethnography, which have been argued to be practices that are inherently self-reflexive, and locally and culturally inclined. Decolonizing communication studies require such postcolonial autoethnography gust which can challenge and engage more diverse voices by employing more variant storytelling techniques (Chawla and Atay 2018) supporting the position that indigenous voices are localized content that should be expressed locally.

Ethnography and autoethnography are viewed as resistance to mainstream ontologies, pedagogies and methods because the minority and the excluded are finding voices through them. They are helping hands to placate the scholarly processes of decolonization. The identification of postpositivist, hermeneutic, critical, and normative study points (Baran and Davis 2009) have enamelled the need to focus more on ethnography as a balance from the nuances that creep up from the limitations of doing either of the former. Beyond that is the fact that ethnographic study tends to suit the African dialogic better than other forms. One can argue that respondents are more open to telling compelling stories from their lenses than to providing responses to questionnaire items.

The notion that increasing usage of these ethnographic variations of studies by "postcolonial, transnational, diasporic, or other minority scholars in the arts, humanities, and social sciences suggest that new epistemologies which encourage and facilitate different ways of thinking and being could assist in the activation and embodiment of the decolonization processes" (Chawla and Atay 2018, 6). Accordingly, the purpose and intention of the autoethnographic approach are to create practical disruptions to the research traditions by opening windows for more variegated narratives from the natives, insiders, and silenced knowledge bases (Holman Jones, Adams and Ellis 2013). The thrust is that readers would be more connected with such local knowledge bases to stimulate disidentification in identification. Such a compelling storytelling approach to generating data is germane to the process of decolonization.

However, this will not go unchallenged especially by the harbinger of thoughts that are pro-western in approach. Struggles are likely to erupt at

fault points since postcolonial scholars would always be accused of undoing a done-structure to accommodate a disparate ideology of knowledge productions, distributions and modernity within which Anglo-Euro academy was produced and ensconced (Shome and Hegde 2002). This should not detract from the ultimate merits of redirecting thought patterns to achieve a mission. Ethnography and autoethnography are inherently and culturally African.

Issues with indexing of African publications

As debatable as this issue might present itself, the manner and approaches to indexing African-related studies from African-based scholars should be re-evaluated. Currently, virtually all the indexing bodies are American, European and Asian based, and these already have deep-seated biases for scholarship from such climes. Murlimanju, Prabhu, Prameela, Pai, and Saralaya (2016) for instance, noted that researchers who published in predatory journals are less experienced and originate from developing countries, why also alluding that even some established indexing bodies play host to predatory journals. The interesting aspect of these allusions is that the authors are all Indians, a supposedly developing country. While we might not exclude a measure of furlough from African scholars, especially on the quality of their research in recent times, we cannot conclude with all certainty that the quality of research from the African continent is low-rated either, especially, with the challenges, promises and politics at the behest of internationalizing knowledge through a defined pathway and meeting the exigencies of some defined/interested sponsors (Santo 2004; Nyamnjoh 2004; Zegeye 2005; Nwosu 2006).

Indexing has been viewed quite seriously as a measure of delimiting the African research contents, no thanks to the burgeoning issues of funding, production, distribution, directions of knowledge sources and distribution, and inherent politics. During the 2019 AGM of the African Council for Communication Educators in Abuja, it was argued that it was high time the African continent with its retinue of communication scholars sat with relevant stakeholders to set up an Afrocentric indexing body to cater to communication needs. Notable personalities at the AGM who canvassed for this paradigm shift include Professors Cecil Blakes, Des Wilson, Bruce Mutsvairo, Idowu Shobowale, Nnamdi Ekeanyanwu (ACCE President) and a host of numerous communications scholars. The arguments were a reiteration of earlier positions on the same issues raised sometimes by the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA). The resolution was that a high-powered committee should

be constituted to interface between relevant stakeholders and path-find a way for communication scholarship in Africa.

There is no gainsaying the fact that there abound a rich flora of communication research and journals doting the African landscape that have not and may probably never find their way into the foreign indexing bodies. There are several other universities and faculty-based communication journals whose contents and patronage had been left at the behest of the younger scholars since the senior scholars need some of these other indexed journals to get to the peak of their careers. Almost all universities in Africa require that for scholars to get promoted to the professorial ranks, and in some dire conditions, their work must have been published in journals indexed by these established bodies. This has become a huge mental and psychological burden. Much as we must advance the frontiers of knowledge to the point of internationalizing our works, there is need to decolonize the mindsets of scholars, to debrief them from the notion that only journals indexed in their established business are noteworthy. Le Roux (2006) noted for instance that the major gains of indexing in such reputable bodies include visibility, credibility and prestige, which in most instances does not have the bottom-line advantage, implying a strong bias against journals produced in Africa despite regularity and high quality.

The Asians, faced with the same challenges, set up several Asian-based indexing bodies that have risen to the challenges of becoming global indexing outfits. For Africa, we can step the ante by insisting on looking inwards. While one might appreciate the challenges and backlash that may result from confronting the established bodies, we cannot overlook the fact that something needs to be done. To decolonize communication scholarship from the western operated myopia, we need to establish an African-based indexing body that will spell out guidelines. Such guidelines, should as a matter of necessity not detract away from the already high standards set by the established bodies. We are not unaware of the roles that editors of African descent are playing in managing the overall growth of most of these well-indexed journals, and this can be replicated.

Besides, when the issues of indexing are decolonized, it will afford the scholars from Africa access to most of these journal databases. Access is critical at this point in that we find scenario where even after Africans have published in these so-called established and well-indexed journals, they sometimes do not have access to the contents, and even their students find it difficult to read, quote and cite them, thereby continuing the whole circle of cogni-colonization. Indexing in Africa will help researchers access

contents that ordinarily are inaccessible except those that are logged on the databases of European and American universities. Another core issue of colonizing from indexing is that Africans are made to write in a pattern that is too familiarly Eurocentric or Americentric (Fernandez 2006; Walters and Linvill 2011).

The import is that beyond struggling to whip the research into such neo-colonialist addendum, subsequent readers must also be whipped into such corners to be able to understand and make meaning out of the text (Zainab, Abrizah and Raj 2013). The simple conclusion is that everything and anything Afrocentric is presumably substandard. Culturally, we can attest to the peculiarity of the African character in terms of speech, gait and understanding. These are markedly different from what is obtainable elsewhere. We have seen journals published in French, Portuguese, Spanish and other languages that are not English, yet very highly rated. The certainty of journals published in Afrikaans or Yoruba, to ever be considered for foreign-based indexing, is almost non-existent, considering that the ones published in English have been largely ignored. Consequently, African universities and scholarships should rethink and reengage an Afrocentric approach in creating an indexing body, that should be generally acceptable. This will provide a new leeway to re-examine the meaning of communication within the African context. While this chapter does not attempt to mirror those other thoughts on the relevance of some of these Ameri and Eurocentric concepts to our daily living, we cannot wish them away in the future.

Concluding Remarks

To bring everyday performances in the communication discipline together, to rethink, re-engage, re-envision, re-educate and re-enact research and postcolonialism on African postulations as well as create disidentification, the use of ethnography design should be encouraged as opposed to other held scientific approaches. Disidentification, as encapsulated by Muñoz (1999) helps to resist practices and structures through resistance, confrontations, references, and critique. The ultimate is to decolonize the mantra and provide cultural maneuvering between the colonizer and the colonized subjects' positions (Anzaldua 1987; Bhabha 1996).

We conclude that re-engaging Africanized pedagogy as a way of decolonizing communication studies, is not going to come without any resistance, especially from Africans who are deeply used to the old ways, and would, necessary, do everything to maintain the status quo. There is the need to rethink our approach by first localizing Ameri-Eurocentric models

and construct to provide a better understanding of meaning creation, knowledge and identifications. It has been argued that divorcing imperialism from decolonizing communication studies would further exacerbate the pains, as such, there is the need to also rethink imperialism by revisiting Schiller's classical theory with a modern and localized mindset.

The chapter discusses the need to filter communication through the lens of African scholars so that databases and theoretical postulations will give more meaning to the construct of knowledge and its usefulness. Such databases could thrive from encouraging more ethnographic and autoethnographic studies if such shifts would be concretized. The time is no farther than now from when Fanon (1965) first advocated for the decolonization of knowledge and disciplines. Collectivism, individualism and a whole lot around identification and disidentification have dominated the thought pattern in this chapter. It might throw more debate to the table and might even ask for a consideration of 'pluriversality' as an option, but it is time to reengage at all levels, not for lack of scholarship, but the need to create an African hegemony.

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CHAPTER 3

RACING TOWARD AN AFRICAN INCLUSION: DE-ESSENTIALIZING THE GLOBAL SOUTH

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Racing Toward an African Inclusion: De-essentializing the Global South

Inarguably, the conversation in the West around de-westernizing communication studies in the West is much needed and critical. As Wang (2011) noted, it is an intellectual monologue. However, this conversation should not mask earlier ones and efforts made outside the West. Willems (2004) outlined the marginalized genealogy of the discipline. The author presented an overview of vital academic debates on media and communication in Africa that denote the rise and fall of epistemic dominance and resistance.

Academic scholarship of the West is proliferated with universal claims of relevance while framing knowledge about people and places elsewhere as "particular" and "specific" (Grosfoguel, 2007, p. 213). The United States and some western European countries' predominance in the traditions, organizing, and knowledge production inhibits the transference of knowledge from this context to another outside the West because of peculiar ontological and analytical biases (Waisbord & Mellado, 2014), but these biases can be decolonized. The simple understanding of human communication as varied forms of interaction that occur in a myriad of contexts makes it imperative to race toward the point of inclusion that mirrors these complex multiplicities. Beyond this fact, the increased globalization of the discipline (Waisbord & Mellado, 2014), the growing international student population in the West, and the continuous migration

of workers behooves communication researchers and teachers to shift the current paradigm to reflect the presence of the discipline.

A paradigm is a scientific community's dominant mode of thinking, termed "normal science" (Kuhn, 2012). The attribution of normality is inherently bound to taken-for-granted assumptions that baptize people and places with inferior and discriminatory categories. Mazama (2003), from an Afrocentric perspective, contended that a paradigm is only functional when it activates our consciousness. My contribution to the intellectual monologue on decolonizing communication studies is not only for its sake but, most notably, for the liberation of historically marginalized people and places of Africa. The practitioners of normal science have notoriously rationalized assumptions about Africa or omitted her stories. "It is as though the original colonial elites hired a P.R. agency to sell the concept that Africans were innately inferior. . . and the last several centuries still haunt black advancement and achievement" (Burrell, 2010, p. xiii).

Recent writings on the de-westernization of the discipline (e.g., Demas, 2020; Dutta, 2015; Mohammed, 2021; Tapas, 2012; Waisbord & Mellado, 2014; Wang, 2011) have primarily critiqued the application of theories, study population, and academic/professional cultures. Social theories associated with the West are not necessarily universally valid (Sousa Santos, 2012). Undoubtedly, communication scholars have provided empirical evidence to necessitate a paradigm shift that is inclusive of the field's producers and consumers of knowledge. However, the challenge has been how to arrive at a de-westernized discipline. There are no clear indicators to replicate. In this chapter, I employ a critical edge in advocating for an African inclusion (considering her multicultural facets) as a (not *the*) frame to decolonize the discipline. I challenge communication researchers and teachers to de-essentialize the "Global South" and crack control systems of scholarly communication. Finally, I offer critical suggestions for meaningful engagement.

What Does it Mean to De-westernize?

One of the conceptualizations of de-westernization is "reassessing and expanding the ontological horizons of communication studies by analyzing issues that are either understudied or absent in the West or go beyond conventional geographical boundaries" (Waisbord & Mellado, 2014, p. 363). It is crucial to deconstruct the conceptualization with a critical edge for inclusion. Any definition that centers around the West, the very element that needs decolonizing, is simply reproducing a westernized

paradigm that forfeits and subordinates four-fifths of the world's population, directly or indirectly rendering them irrelevant in knowledge production. Such definition purports what Mudimbe (1988) described as epistemological ethnocentrism, "the belief that scientifically there is nothing to be learned from 'them' unless it is already 'ours' or comes from 'us.'" (p. 15).

Rather than focusing on the analysis of issues understudied or absent in the West, let us focus on populations and contexts in isolation from the West, lest we use the West as a yardstick or a lens of examination. Dismantle this structure that perpetuates the status quo. This focus generates a genuine overlap of teaching and research practices, such as issues and cultures that may not necessarily be peculiar to a school of thought and thereby produce a dominant frame. It will also re-position populations away from the margins and recognize them as producers and consumers of communication knowledge. We will be valuing and revitalizing indigenous knowledge.

In this chapter, de-westernization is a broad attempt to de-center what has been historically centered rather than presumably essentialize "western" communication scholarship. The attempt is to widen the scope of the discipline. De-westernizing the discipline—rooted in scientific traditions and models across the West—is synonymous with de-centering it from its current position. It will not be conducted on anyone's terms, as Waisbord and Mellado (2014) question. It is important to note that a de-westernized discipline does not archive the historical influence and traditions of the West. Instead, it portrays diverse epistemologies and knowledge about various cultures—a way of life—while affirming them as standards and norms. This approach is a manifestation of decolonization.

Examining how existing western ideas apply to the rest of the world is critically problematic as replacing western-centric knowledge with knowledge from a specific region. First, because the rest of the world is not culturally, socially, economically, and politically homogenous, we will lose sight of the nuances that exist at the macro to the micro-levels. Second, we will be re-centering the West and reproducing the status quo—that is, recolonization. These two core reasons are guiding principles for my focus on an African context away from the already marginalized Global South—a term needing deconstruction. I use Africa as a marginalized case to decolonize the discipline.

I refrain from using "western" and "non-western" as juxtaposing terminologies to escape this trap of centering and essentializing the West.

Henceforth, I choose to use "dewesternization" without hyphenation to deflect the assumption of my attempt to take away everything western from the discipline. I must confess that the English language does not do due diligence to naming without polarizing. Under dewesternization, the subsequent sections elaborate on some decolonization ways with an African context in mind. As Comaroff and Comaroff (2012) posited, the Global North could use some knowledge from the increasingly evolving developments in the Global South.

Decolonizing with an African context in mind

Communication research has preoccupied itself with deconstructing hegemony, power distribution, and influence in society (Mansell, 2007) with the spirit of intersectionality. It would be ironic to turn a blind eye to these issues within the discipline. In this era of multiculturalism and the propagation of its tolerance thereof, the ideas of postmodernism, postcolonialism, decolonization, and deconstructionism should be critically applied in assessing the discipline.

Within the subdisciplines of communication studies, there are different attempts to dewesternize the discipline. See Wang (2011) for a review. The practical suggestions I offer below may apply differently to the subdisciplines. They may already be in place, but without a critical edge— intentionality and holistic integration—we will not experience a paradigm shift. That is not to mean that we could use less time in decolonizing the discipline, but we need to engage in intentional and holistic approaches across the field.

De-essentialize the Global South

"Global South" has sparked debates in many academic spaces about its use, meaning, and critical value. It generally refers to low or middle-income countries mostly outside Europe and North America (Dados & Connell, 2012). These Global South countries are in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Latin America, and Oceania. Synonymous terms include periphery, less developed, developing, underdeveloped, and third world. Mind you, "western enlightenment thought has, from the first, posited itself as the wellspring of ubiquitous learning, … it has regarded the non-West…—now the Global South—primarily as a place of parochial wisdom, of antiquarian traditions, of exotic ways and means. Above all, of unprocessed data" (Comaroff & Comaroff, 2012, p. 113-114).

As a descriptor, the Global South clusters the world's poorer economies and disregards the complex multiplicity of social and political experiences. However, it denotes geopolitical relationships. It is now more than a simple metaphorical reference to underdevelopment. According to Dados and Connell (2012), "it references an entire history of colonialism, neo-imperialism, and differential economic and social change through which large inequalities in living standards, life expectancy, and access to resources are maintained" (p. 13).

In the first phase of deconstructing the Global South, I embrace a deterritorialized political economy conceptualization as "spaces and peoples negatively impacted by globalization, including subjugated peoples and poorer regions within wealthier countries" (Mahler, 2018, p. 32). This conceptualization critically goes beyond demographic boundaries to a "true" *global* social agency of dominated groups which can then be located both within the geographic North and South. In a deterritorialized Global South, Africans include those in the diaspora. I do not dismiss the descriptor definition because it assesses global relations and the world's history. However, beyond this definition undergirds taken-for-granted assumptions of African people and places which have served as the ideological function of naturalization — "to make dominant cultural and historical values, attitudes and beliefs seem entirely 'natural,' 'normal,' self-evident, timeless, common sense and thus, objective and true reflections of 'the way things are.'" (Barthes, 1977, pp. 45-46).

It is essential to review dominance and essentialism in the second phase, not to trap ourselves in the model minority syndrome. For instance, the works of Gayatri Spivak, Homi Bhabha, and Dipesh Chakrabarty on subaltern and post-colonial studies have spearheaded the use of the term Global South to analyze subaltern agency and oppression. They promote a deconstruction of the narratives echoed by the West about the "Other." It is not surprising the heavy reliance on these ideologies in decolonizing and hence the heavy presence and focus on Asia or Asia nations— given the origins of these scholars—which should not be blindly essentialized as the voice of the Global South. Doing so will presuppose that the analytical and theoretical frameworks of Asian studies are absolute and permanent. Nothing is. Hence, a reference to the Global South should always be critically contextualized. While differences and particularities are worth noting, they are not absolute. The point is not to draw boundaries but to accept and acknowledge particularities. To say that the experience contained in any South is global is untrue in the deterritorialized frame. It is rather *local*.

Asia has been "fertilized" with American theories as Miike (2003) described Asia as "testing grounds" (p. 244). By the mid-2000s, a minimum of seven communication journals in English centered on Asia or Asian nations (Chen, 2006). Two decades ago, Goonaraseka and Kuo (2000) cautioned Asian researchers about academic dependency. Dutta (2020) mentioned the disguised production of Asian knowledge in communication scholarship that replicates scripts of whiteness.

I neither preach Afrocentricity as a replacement for Asiacentricity nor privilege it over other cultural frameworks. My mention of Asiacentricity is to identify and de-essentialize it as the token of the world's *South* – now a metaphorical term to refer to people and places under the subjugation of marginality and oppression. I draw Afrocentricity from the margins to the limelight as one (not *the*) means to decolonize communication discipline. Like Charles (2019), who used Afrocentricity as a paradigmatic shift to decolonize the curriculum, we can use Afrocentricity to decolonize the discipline.

The decolonization discourse is undoubtedly complex in evocative and provocative forms about "historical, epistemological, methodological, theoretical, ideological, philosophical, pedagogical, discursive, ethical, and practical concerns" (Pillay, 2017, p. 136). Decolonizing communication studies aims to enrich it beyond eurocentrism rather than deny and crucify its value and contribution. Like Asante (2011), my goal is to dismantle the hierarchical system founded on the Anglo-Germanic notion of a race since the 16th century.

In practice, using the term *local South* does not essentialize. We need to reframe our action, thinking, and organizing of the term Global South around its conceptualization to appropriate its meaning to reflect the identities of local Souths. Some critical questions that will help us arrive at this frame are: how is the term framed in your argument and findings? Is your conceptualization grounded in your research, or are you merely using the term? If your conceptualization of the term merely categorizes people, how useful is that? Having conceptualized the term, does your research rely on any aspect of "original" ontology and epistemology? A deep and critical understanding of *local Souths* is vital to our conversations and teachings on the subject for teachers. We can decolonize the information about local Souths to which we expose our students. Our students are certainly not glued to only us for knowledge, but we play a pivotal role in their knowledge formation.

Crack control systems of scholarly communication

The question that sparks this discussion is: Who are the creators of scholarly communication? I bet your answer will include more than "the West." If so, why is the discipline westernized even beyond western geographical borders? My responses to these questions lead me to the need to crack control systems of scholarly communication. The issue is not that only the West is producing knowledge but a gatekeeper (different actors with one agency) who determines who and what goes in and out of the gate. I sample the following actors to discuss the processes of decolonizing their performances: libraries, aggregators, academic departments, and discipline associations.

This gatekeeper—*libraries*—oversees the preservation and sharing of research outputs (e.g., journal articles, dissertations, and multimedia production). Libraries significantly control communication scholarship. They record, aid in discovering, preserve, and promote the appreciation and use of knowledge (Lor, 2004). In this regard, in a decolonized library, its librarians are conscious of their significant role as gatekeepers and intentionally alter colonial library systems. Academic departments should not just assign librarians to the discipline without paying attention to this consciousness.

With the increased digitization of African heritage material, institutional subscription, and promotion of the materials, their use should also rise. However, ownership of these materials and ethical considerations should not be overlooked. This call rises above a mere representation to the inclusion of a producer of knowledge. Know about the producer from the producer's point of view. Nevertheless, there are barriers to the reception and dissemination of African journals outside Africa (Lor, 2007). Perhaps, in the discipline, these barriers have contributed to the marginalization of epistemological and historical foundations of communication studies in Africa.

Given that non-White scholars are underrepresented in communication publication rates, citation rates, and editorial positions (Chakravartty, Kuo, Grubbs, & McIlwain, 2018), marginalization is reinforced when libraries depend on related metrics for journal subscription, for instance. A decolonized library identifies, recognizes, and most importantly, rectifies this pitfall. Discipline librarians should be sensitized to advocate for the inclusion of "non-popular" materials and sources in the quest to liberate a white-washed community of learners and educators.

This gatekeeper—*aggregators* (Lor, 2007)— is involved in quality control, packaging, and disseminating knowledge. Examples of aggregators are publishers, reviewers, and editors. Aggregators organize either for-profit or not-for-profit, but the former oversees more flow of "high value" content (Lor, 2007). Consider the following systems of their operation: the language of publication, pricing, licensing schemes, and intellectual property and copyright regulations. These systems regulate "worthy" investment based on biased and predominant needs of users, majority of whom are non-Africans. They push Africans out of the league of using and contributing knowledge to the discipline; for example, an African Swahili native speaker publishes in the English language because the so-called top-tier journals are English publishing journals. Of what use could this publication be to Swahili-only speaking folks? There is a domino effect. Indeed, in decolonization, an entire system needs overhauling.

Aggregators' systems of organizing follow a colonial pattern. Sage publications (U.S.) and Taylor & Francis Group (U.K.) dominate the publication of communication journals (Gunaratne, 2010). The "elitist" Social Science Citation Index (SSCI) eliminates the few communication journals produced outside the West, such as the *Philippines Journal of Communication* published by the University of the Philippines (Gunaratne, 2010). This elimination, whether intentional, reinforces and reproduces the knowledge from the West as absolute and universal.

Aggregators must re-examine their work and role, particularly journal inclusion and research publication standards, in patronizing academic imperialism. Chakravartty et al. (2018) have well-established the underrepresentation in publication, citation rates, and editorial positions of non-White scholars in the discipline. Afrocentric perspectives should not be limited to Black journals or cached in special editorials. This approach is a recolonization style of a Eurocentric paradigm. Let us take a holistic approach to decolonize the discipline.

This gatekeeper—*academic departments*—holds the key to the door of liberating the colonized minds of learners. Nevertheless, as an effect of the fall of the dominos, how can this gatekeeper decolonize its consumers' minds when it is a culprit of a "westernized" discipline? Academic departments hire teachers and scholars, control curricula, regulate the discipline at their local level, institute policies for tenure and promotion, and admit and educate students. These systems require critical examination.

Communication departments should reorientate their processes and ideas as well as their students. For instance, it is not enough to simply hire African scholars and restrict them from scholarly collaborations. Academic departments must re-examine policies and unwritten rules about the superiority and credibility of sole authorship because they are individualistic ways of thinking and organizing. Collaborations should be encouraged among faculty and students, as well as with the communities they serve. Research requirements for tenure and promotion must acknowledge publications on underrepresented people and places (mainly, Africa, in this context) which are mostly not found in the so-called top-tier journals. The idea of ranking journals as top-tier needs to be revisited. "Ranking" is a system of colonial hegemony of whiteness (Dutta, 2020). White capitalist corporations own and market these global rankings while establishing normative structures of whiteness (Dutta, 2020).

Academic departments should recognize, critically engage, and appreciate their African scholars, teachers, and students. For example, in Nikoi's (2019) examination of his intellectual experience as an African international student in a North American university, the author grapples with colonialism in communication theory. This experience is not surprising in a paradigm plagued with an epistemic plurality deficiency. A decolonial approach "demands a delinking of oneself from the knowledge systems we take for granted (and can profit from) and practicing epistemic disobedience" (Mignolo, 2014, p.107). Practicing epistemic disobedience means encouraging our students and facilitating their desire to research Africa and its people from an Afrocentric perspective. Such works as Mohammed (2021), Nikoi (2019), Pindi (2018) give us insights into their experiences as African intellectuals from which we can gravely learn for the race toward an African inclusion. However, the narratives of these few privileged African scholars should not be made to suffer the single story (Adichie, 2019) syndrome.

Let me be quick to add here that a decolonized African episteme emerges from "where it belongs, in Africa itself, led by the efforts of African academics to re-engage with their societies, seek to understand where their problems lie and develop theoretical as well as practical ways to deal with them" (Clapman, 2020, p. 151). With Africa in mind, the decolonization project is not the same as integrating people of African origin into Western structures of knowledge creation. The study of people and places of Africa should not be left to western conceptualizations that have no connection to Africa itself. The entire process should always be Africa-centered.

Wunpini (2021) demonstrated the erasure of African media from the Global North academy and highlights the challenges of African students and scholars. Such a rich resource captures practical issues for redress. I challenge every department to review its curriculum critically. Identify the unhatched cocoons of African epistemology and knowledge. It is not enough to relegate African perspectives to intercultural communication spaces. It should be integrated into the curriculum as credible existing perspectives.

A decolonized curriculum intentionally rediscovers neglected voices, challenges constructed singular discourses, and questions teaching practices and normative theory. For instance, the fundamental principle of communication theory is framed beginning with speaking, followed by mediation and reception. The act of listening is almost entirely missing (Reid, 2018). However, listening is an integral communication practice in some other parts of the world. A decolonized curriculum also sensitizes its students on its intentionality for student appreciation, thereby preventing unnecessary backlash, especially on faculty evaluation for Africans. Intentionality is a necessary tool for cracking normative ways because of long-standing and unconscious performances. Capacity-building should occur at all levels within departments.

This gatekeeper—*communication associations*—oversees the organizing of the discipline. These associations should holistically re-examine the organizing of conferences and events (locations, themes, and acceptance/rejection of scholarly work for presentation), provision of resources, membership, leadership, and decision-making processes. In addition, I recommend that communication associations (a) promote the holistic integration of marginalized/non-mainstream voices, (b) actively support the development of alternative publication channels and forms beyond text, and (c) encourage the translation of scholarly work for a popular audience.

Communication associations like The International Communication Association (ICA) have attempted racing toward inclusion but simultaneously affirmed white hegemony. This contradictory position is harmful to the race and its stakeholders (both visible and invisible). In all aspects of power beyond numeric representation, the dominance of a people in a group supports the emergence, development, and establishment of its ideologies as dominant. Given that ICA's constitutive power rests in the bosom of the discipline's White mainstream (Dutta, 2020), ICA is #soWhite.

Dutta (2020) critiqued ICA's naming as "international" when it does not incorporate and represent participation and ownership from the margins. Since 1964, Africa has not hosted any of ICA (main) conferences. Instead, Africa has only become worth a regional cocoon for regional conferences under the guise of "collaboration with other global associations and communication scholarship communities[1]." Ironically, ICA has been hosted in the territorialized Global South, though recently since 1964. The countries that represent this Global South are Japan (Fukuoka, 2016), Singapore (2010), and Korea (Seoul, 2002). Will ICA be the first international association to host its conference somewhere in Africa? This question is not even to imply that being the first to take this step comes with an excuse ticket but that once you claim an international status, it is imperative to be truly international. This colored marginalization of Africa is yet another recolonization style of a Eurocentric paradigm. Decolonizing communication studies is hitched to a holistic integration of all stakeholders.

Above all, cracking control systems of scholarly communication means actively questioning systems: knowledge production, dissemination, and use. It also means expanding the norm: norm-ing the academic participation of African communities. The call to dewesternize, decolonize, or internationalize communication studies is not novel (Willems, 2014) except in the West. Outside Western spaces, there have been critical production and consumption of communication knowledge. While these spaces are clustered as the territorialized Global South, the Asiacentric dominant voices of the region have occupied significant spots. Africa has been gravely marginalized in the field's hegemonic histories, reflected in the dewesternization discourse.

Africa has an extensive record of the state of the discipline in Africa. These records provide regional accounts as well as a critique of the Eurocentric nature of existing research. See Willems (2014) for a review. The regional reports support the argument that centering Africa has different interpretations and applies differently across the region. White (2009) offered insight into grassroots communication in Africa.

Norm-ing the academic participation of African communities means to conscientize stakeholders of the discipline about the African context. For the academic professional, this means the presence of the context in research, teaching, service, and every aspect of the professional life, for that matter, as one of the many possible ways of organizing. This presence

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[1] https://www.icahdq.org/page/affiliated

will transmit to consumers of the discipline. Communication scholarship in Africa is littered with advocacy for research more clearly rooted in African contexts (Willems, 2014); hence, a deliberate reorientation rather than replacing critical and constructive framing of Africa and African contexts in the discipline. In the reorientation, let us consider the demographic representation of persons in the academic and professional institutions, authorship, manuscript reviewers, conference location, and integration of "original" ideologies and traditions from Africa.

Norm-ing the academic participation of African communities means consciously supporting and promoting integrated spaces for Africa and Africans. Some of these continuous actions could include seeking out African students and scholars and subscribing to African journals. Instead of relinquishing theories and concepts to subdisciplines, a critical edge approach is a holistic integration of such ontologies. It is time for action. Many ideas are cropping up to crack the colonial structures and systems inherent in the discipline. Let us employ self-reflexivity during the implementation.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I focused on including Africa and her multicultural facets of knowledge and epistemology as a frame to decolonize communication studies. This race toward decolonization requires the discipline's researchers and teachers to de-essentialize the Global South and crack control systems of scholarly communication. The Global South is more than what Asia holds, as Africa is more than what South Africa holds. I sampled libraries, aggregators, academic departments, and discipline associations as colonial actors and discussed the processes of decolonizing their performances. Also, I offered critical suggestions for meaningful engagement.

Finally, the call for an African inclusion as one of the credible producers/consumers in the decolonization project is significant and urgent because of her long-standing exclusion and marginalization as a communication knowledge creator. Inclusion is beyond a mere representation. Faulty inclusion merely inserts elite intellectuals with an association to Africa in the vain name of internationalizing or promoting diversity and inclusion. This approach is yet another style of recolonization to propagate whiteness. I embrace inclusion as a holistic integration. The goal here is not to ignore the West but to get closer to the subaltern, silenced, and marginalized versions of the Communication discipline. The

goal is to "norm," legitimize, validate, recognize, reclaim, and protect from exploitation the cumulative wisdom of different African traditions and minds. Decolonization must happen even in our practical everyday human relations, way of thinking, and modes of operation.

The decolonization race is long overdue.

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CHAPTER 4

DECOLONISING COMMUNICATION STUDIES BY 'RE-CENTERING' THE COLONISED MIND

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Upon receiving and glancing through an 'Essential Reading List' for a Theory of Communication course, in any institution in a country that was once colonized by either Britain, France, Portugal or Spain, except for the United States, one would be forgiven if they entertained the thought that they had registered for a course in 'the mother country', the name used by colonial settlers to refer to home. The list from a typical university curriculum would include: Message Design Logic (MDL) - O'Keefe (1988), Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) - Giles and Coupland (1991), Uncertainty Reduction Theory (URT) - Berger and Calabrese (1975), Expectancy Violations Theory (EVT) - Judee Burgoon (1978, 1994), Social Exchange Theory (SET) - Thibaut and Kelley (1959), Symbolic Convergence Theory (SCT) - Bormann (1982), Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) - Petty and Cacioppo (1986), Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) - Fishbein & Ajzan (1975) etc.

The dominance of theories and scholars from the so-called global north stands out, but not as much as the absence of scholars and theorists from Africa. Communication students, will almost exclusively, engage with theories, models and conceptual frameworks and scholars with whom they do not share heritage, lived experience, worldview and locality. The course content exposes the student almost exclusively to Euro-American-oriented and dominated theories and scholars who have a western cultural bias. The student is directed to theories and traditions that emanate from Euro-American traditions, histories, thought and way of life, which in turn trace their history to the ancient Greek and Roman cultures. If the sources do not deny outright the existence of any other civilization, culture, history or the civilization of the 'other' that 'outlier' will be characterized in a manner

connoting its inferiority and irrelevance. This situation persists today, even as most post-colonial states have been politically 'free' for more than half a century. Coloniality persists.

The manner in which the communication student will conceptualise and interpret the discipline is shaped and oriented by alien theories and theorists. Their future research orientation will inevitably be influenced by the colonial nature and character of the institution which will rub off them. Traditions that inform theories in the disciplines crystallize the individual student's approach to the discipline and confine their intellectual exploration within the same lines. It is as if they are handed a line drawing with the instructions, 'do not colour outside the lines'. In Africa, efforts to decolonize through the erasure of Euro-American-centricity and a replacement with African centeredness has been partially successful. The little success is confined to Africanization of personnel, even though this as a manifestation of decolonization is doubtful because of the ideological orientation of these Africans (Nyamnjoh 2019). Attempts at Africanizing the curricula, pedagogical structures and epistemologies have seen more lip service than actual action (Nyamnjoh 2019).

What has held back the decolonization of education, communication discipline and in particular health communication? What does the African academy and its schools of communication lack in producing individuals who would deliver on Africa's development agenda and goals such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)?

Students of the post-colonial polity are unable to find relatability, or relevance of their own lived experience, their world view, sense of values and ethos in their academic journey. After completion of their course the education seems to have either confused them totally, such that they cannot usefully engage with their community, its social, economic and political challenges, or they are alienated and immerse themselves into the colonial mould – a square peg in a round hole and continue to perpetuate the coloniality of the education and the discipline.

Scholarship of any sort is only useful if it serves to tackle social, economic and political problems faced by a people. The product of an education system still mired in the colonial system and era, cannot be impactful in supporting the developmental agenda of independent nation-states. It is clear, that the legacy of colonialism still has a firm imprint and is responsible for the marginalization of local epistemologies as illustrated above in the theoretical foci of education. In this chapter, the question is not

whether decolonization of education is essential, that debate has been adequately addressed by Chikumbutso and Waghid (2019) in *Decoloniality as a Viable response to Educational Transformation in Africa* where they assert that decolonizing education goes beyond being a social act, and assert that it wades into political and decmocratic reforms. This view is fully embraced here, and for clarity it is emphasized that decolonization implies a subversion of current colonially inspired ontological, axiological and epistemological worldview, and engineering a replacement with a more appropriate and relevant ground-up philosophical orientation. This by no means suggests relacement of one hegemonistic world view with another, rather it implies an organic growth guided by a clear articulation of philosophy and ideology. Worldview and political ideoplogy are central to this process.

This chapter grapples with the question of decolonization of communication studies. It is argued that decolonization of a particular discipline, or sub-discipline like health communication, cannot happen in a vacuum, it must fit within a larger effort to re-orient the entire education system and this re-positioning must be led by decolonization of the national psyche.

Shifting Worldview: The Alternative

Decolonization of education begins with a challenge of the dominant hegemony inherent in worldview. Questioning and seeking to subvert an embedded problematic worldview, is analogous to uprooting a tree with its entire root system, rather than chopping it down. Regeneration will occur from an intact root system, therefore in the case of remnants of the Eurocentric colonial education the process of decolonization must excavate deep and expose the core of the residual identity once held by colonised people and uplift it. This excavation exercise can be described as a quest for a relevant worldview concept and philosophical framework geared at providing an epistemological grounding that allows for the development of social theories.

Asiacentric and Afrocentric movements have emerged countering the dominance of the Euro-American worldviews (Carroll, 2014; Jackson II, Walker, & Burbanks IV, 2010; Manthalu & Waghid, 2019; Nyamnjoh, 2019; Wingfield, 2017: Miike 2002) and the efforts at decolonization can be informed by them. The proponents of these alternative worldviews argue for a shift in focus of academic endeavours and demand for a re-centring that will allow for the recognition of the concepts, postulates and philosophical resources that are rooted or derived from the ethos and

cosmologies of diverse communities (Jackson II, Walker, & Burbanks IV, 2010; Carroll, 2014; Miike, 2002).

The pushback renounces the uncritical acceptance of western models and the neglect of the cumulative wisdom embodied in other civilizations. Africana studies in the United States provide a blueprint model of a similar social regeneration process that has been undertaken to redeem the psyche of the Africans in the diaspora where slavery, just like colonialism, was traumatically used to disorient the African slaves. The decolonization process in African stands to gain much from aligning itself with concepts such as Afrocentricity.

Afrocentrists assert that there cannot be African History, African social sciences without an African worldview (Asante 1991; Asante 2009). This means that there cannot be scholarship in communication that is not premised on an indigenous worldview. Indeed, the African worldview is not seen as an alternative way to interpret social phenomena, it is the only legitimate way. Worldview is a product of the philosophical assumption that a community lives and is guided by it. A community's understanding of their universe and how they fit into it is captured in their cosmology. Their ontology describes how they perceive their nature of being, or how they essentialize their existence, how they relate to the entire universe. The values they espouse are contained in their axiology and finally, their epistemology which determines how they perceive the knowledge generation processes.

Both the African-centred and Asiacentric worldview conceptualizes the universe as being seamlessly interconnected, interrelated and inter-dependent while from an ontological point of view, being is seen as an essential spirit with manifestations of the material (Ndung'u, 2009: Miike, 2002). The axiological point of view places value on the individual as part of a larger continuum therefore the relationship one has with the other is fundamental to self-identity. African and Asian epistemology asserts that knowledge can be acquired beyond the five senses, meaning that it goes well beyond empiricist and logical validation. Diagnostic information or a prognosis of illness from a spirit is just as valid as that from an experiment. The differences as described leads one to conclude that social reality is not only lived differently, it is understood and communicated differently. Worldview will in essence determine definitions, concepts and values, how we evaluate experiences and events in life; the significance of events and happenings are dependent on the values attached to them which is a factor

of the beliefs and attitudes they arouse. Communication and communication studies must therefore be informed by this episteme.

Arguments have been made holding that there was no way that social constructs within the African experience could be analysed and understood without adopting an African worldview or if they were, such analyses were inadequate (Carroll, 2014; Rashid, 2012). It is also held that education systems that do not challenge scholars to chart this course have stymied the evolution of social theories relevant to the African experience (Carroll, 2014).

Centralizing an African worldview concept and framework provides the epistemological base that would allow for the development of theories and the decolonizing of education and communication and most importantly, Health Communication. Health, wellness, perception of being healthy or unhealthy is socially construed and embedded within a culture and worldview (Conrad and Barker 2010). The way that an individual perceives their health is not objective, it is bound within their worldview. Brown (1995) writing on a social constructivsit perspective on his part describes the social construction of disease and makes a distinction between social construction of illness, and social construction of medical knowledge. Of most relevenace to this paper, is his exposition on social causation though he does not go far enough and include the kind of experiences in the social construction of health as described below.

The thorny question of language in Health Communication

Language is a vehicle of culture and is itself an expression and manifestation of culture. That communication courses do not reference languages and assume the hegemonic Euro-American dominance of the colonial languages is an area of concern. For illustrative purposes we examine salutation between two Swahili speaking individuals:

A: Hujambo? (Hello. Any news?)

B: Sijambo. Sina neno, sijui wewe. (I have no news, what about you?)

A: Mimi sijambo. Habari za utokako? (I am well. What's news from where you come?)

B: Watu wazima (People are well)

A: Wewe je? (How about you)

B: Mimi ni mzima, sina neno. (I am well I have no complaints)

This salutation begins with an inquiry over the news of the general community and only after this concern is dispensed with, does the inquiry over the health of the interlocutor come into play. The salutation moves from the general to the particular, from general news about the wellbeing of the community to the wholesomeness of the two involved in the conversation. This establishes the worldview embedded in the language. The other element communicated in the language is the concept of wellness. In Swahili – *uzima* – means, whole or complete. Contrast this with the same situation in the English language:

A: Hello

B: Hello

A: How are you?

A: I am fine thank you.

B: And how are you?

A; I am very well. Thank you.

Within language, the salutation is the most basic signifier of worldview and in these two contexts, the wellbeing of the communities from which these speakers belong is treated very differently. In the Swahili speaking one, the wellness of the community takes precedence and the wellness of the individual is located within the wellness of the general community.

In the English-speaking example, there is no reference to the community; the response is individual and personal. The English speaking questioner has a scant concern about the wellbeing of the responder's larger family, their interest is confined to the responder. The responder knows not to offer any details about anybody else. Their partner or child might as well be in a coma, but unless directly probed, that information is deemed too private to share. The centrality of world view in understanding the non-Eurocentric view of health and how to communicate it is illustrated below in the retelling of a personal anecdote.

Speaking to a spirit

Many years ago, a distant cousin, Tom, adamantly retold how he had heard a spirit speak. My scepticism as he explained that his relative, a traditional healer practising out of an informal settlement in Nairobi, communed with a spirit called, *Nyar Loka* (Daughter of Yonder) to receive prognosis, diagnosis and prescriptions for his clients. Tom retold how he had heard *Nyar Loka* explain to someone why they were unwell and what they needed to do to get well. He dared me to accompany him to his relative's place to witness and prove to myself that *Nyar Loka* was not a figment of his imagination. Curiosity took the better of me, and I agreed.

 We had been chatting for a while with Tom's healer relative, he was recounting how many people from all walks of life consulted him with all manner of health complaints. He continued to explain that his healing powers were derived from *Nyar Loka*. She who would communicate with the spirits both unborn and the departed, find out the cause of any malady, and then intercede with the same spirits to allow healing. *Nyar Loka* would diagnose the reason for illness and prescribe a remedy. Tom's relative did not claim credit for the diagnosis or the management of the treatment but stated that without *Nyar Loka* the regular streams of clients would dry up. Mid-sentence he casually announced the arrival of *Nyar Loka*, whom he had informed us, had been away. A chill ran down my spine, and the bravado that had brought me to the healer's place evaporated at the thought that I was in the same room with a spirit. I was more rattled by the realisation that the spirit had returned 'home' and none except the healer had noticed.

After a short pause, probably to allow *Nyar Loka* to settle, Tom's relative receded behind a curtain partition. I guessed he was checking in on *Nyar Loka*, and this added to my distress. Though I was here I was ill-prepared to be confronted by a spirit. After a short while, I heard the rhythmic sound of a rattle accompanying a mournful dirge-like song. It went on for a short while and suddenly a shrill esoteric voice began to speak. It could have been all in my mind, but I felt a chill descend upon the room. The spirit- for I was sure that was her - seemed very irritated at being summoned.

'What is it? Why have you disturbed me' the shrill voice asked?

'*Nyar Loka* we have guests. They have come to greet you.

I could recognise Tom's relative's voice on the other side of the curtain. I was distressed that our presence was announced to the extremely vexed spirit.

'What guests? What do they want? She answered.

I was beginning to think that a spirit should know that curiosity is what had led us here. I also made mental notes that the spirit and Tom's relative did not speak at the same time.

'Guests, have come to see you. Will, you not salute them?" I had never before been saluted by a spirit so I was not sure how one responds to a spirit's greeting.

'I greet you. The shrill voice saluted. Tom looked at me to suggest that we should acknowledge the greeting.

'We greet you back' we replied in unison afraid of being engaged individually.

Nyar Loka was not a very talkative spirit, and so Tom's relative went about interrogating her, and she would respond without hiding her annoyance.

Then suddenly she snapped, 'You are annoying me. I am exhausted.' and the conversation ended. The singing and the rattling continued for a short while after which Tom's relative reappeared from behind the curtain.

When he returned, he casually told us *Nyar Loka* was sleeping.

Tom's relative did not cut the picture of a typical spiritual healer. He was young, chubby and was dressed in blue jeans and interspersed his storytelling with English. Tom believed in the spirit enough to communicate to me about her diagnostic and treatment ability. The sceptic I was still convinced to visit the spirit house and was terrified by the spirit's 'presence'. This phenomenological encounter is premised on a worldview recognising the world of the living and spirits as one. If I needed to tick a box for: Have you ever spoken to a spirit? I would tick, yes.

We see here that language expresses socially constructed reality about what constitutes health, wellness and illness, how to communicate about health, to whom and in which manner. There is a socially constructed notion of how health communication occurs. The narrative takes the discourse on health and wellness a notch higher.

Brown (1995) does not contemplate within his social causation description is illustrated in the encounter with *Nyar Loka*. It is most probable that the latitude of his worldview as demonstrated in his typology of conditions and definitions (Brown 1995, 41). The worldview occupied by Tom's relative,

Tom and I go beyond that which he contemplates therefore in order to theorize and advance health communication scholarship and understanding this reality must be part of the discourse. Herein lies relevance and ground up evolution of theory that makes my argument.

A System in need of freedom: The Colonial Education System

To problematize the question of decolonization and decoloniality, it is important to clarify that the experience and process of colonization inflicted on the colonised, their institutions and structures create trauma. Sertima, quoted by Ifejola (2016) describes the impact aptly,

> No human disaster . . . can equal in dimension of destructiveness the cataclysm that shook Africa . . . the threads of cultural and historical continuity were so savagely torn asunder that henceforward one would have to think of two Africas: the one before, and the one after the Holocaust. (2016, 435).

The inherent violence and destruction are contained in the use of the word, 'holocaust'. A significant arm of the colonial strategy was the systematic onslaught on and denigration of the culture, belief and value systems of the colonised. All things related to indigenous culture were characterized as barbaric, inhuman, retrogressive and barriers to development. The ideal colonial individual was expected to renounce their culture, worldview, values and morals and adopt that of the colonizer. Education and religion were the soft-power strategies used to achieve this transformation. At the community level, indigenous traditions, practices and behaviours were systematically denounced as inimical to development through the use of persuasion or administrative fiat. The practices were rendered illegal, restricted and slowly marginalised. A delicate mix of soft and hard power was used to gain colonial ascendancy. Practices and behaviours that the indigenous found difficult to abandon ended up being driven underground thus earning high stigma. Eurocentric education, faith and administrative sanction played a major role in entrenching colonialism. In this regard the experiencing of *Nyar Loka* and how that encounter forms an interesting health communication would not qualify as legitimate area of scholarly attention and a source of learning. This discredits a viable epistemological avenue for research.

The denial of the truth in such phenomena derived from colonial approach to scholarship results in *Epistemicide* as well as *indigenous pedagogicide*

leading to the total discrediting of local sources of indigenous knowledge, bearers and carriers of the said traditional knowledge, the approaches used to disseminate the knowledge and means of knowledge generation thus creating an existential crisis. Does decoloniality take the post-colonised back to the period before the establishment of colonies, or way back in history even before the encounter with the European coloniser.

Decolonizing Education

Decolonization itself can only occur if it is embedded within a transformational agenda that seeks to democratise and liberalise the political and ideological space (Mampane, Omidire, & Aluko, 2018). It is the act of shifting power and dominance from a colonial, or a colonially derived power structure, to its successor post-colonial entity which unfortunately might not have voided itself of colonial trappings. Superfluous changes such as seen in Africanization should not be confused with decolonization. Nyamnjoh warns against assuming that the elevation of indigenous persons to positions in the academy is synonymous with decolonization (Nyamnjoh, 2019). Of more importance to this discussion are the attempts to indigenise the curricula, pedagogical structures and epistemologies. However, we find that these efforts have been unsuccessful because of the underlying dominant worldview that retains the Euro-American character, the tradition of knowledge generation has remained intact as well as the epistemological order that informs it. The deeply disturbing question is, why is worldview so obvious yet very problematic? The answer lies in the separation of politics from education that the post-colonial leadership imposed on the African academy.

Among the most overt attempts at decolonizing education in Africa, and indeed in the former colonies, was driven by Mwalimu Julius Nyerere the founding president of Tanzania. Nyerere adopted a philosophical approach to the question of education, its nature, character, role in the development of the individual and the nation at large. His existentialist view of independence included freeing the former colonial nation beyond political independence, but to liberate them from dependence and the ideological control of the colonial powers. In Nyerere's view, education is meant to build upon and reinforce the moral and philosophical notion of wholesomeness encapsulated in '*utu*'[1][i] and to solve problems such as

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[1] *Utu* is humanity. It is the root upon which we have *mtu* – person, *watu* – people and *Ubuntu* –the idea of humanness. This is an African philosophy that emphasizes the unity of people premised on a recognition of their shared humanity. The Ubuntu

poverty, ignorance, moral decadence, false beliefs, social disintegration, economic dependence, exploitation and social injustice (Sanga, 2016: Nyerere, 1967).

Nyerere argued that education must be functional, and fully embedded in the political ideology. Nyerere's choice ideology was an African version of socialism that was translated as '*Ujamaa*' or communalism. The idea of *ujamaa* is derived from the word *jamaa* which means, relatives or extended family. The *ujamaa* philosophy and ideology expected that people should treat each other as kindred, and the term *Ndugu* – kindred, was the preferred term of address for everyone. It signified that all Tanzanians had a common progenitor – the nation. The title *ndugu* suggested 'equalness', and was meant to counteract the colonial '*bwana-mkubwa*' (Master) that signified the overlordship of the colonial rulers. *Ujamaa* philosophy and worldview is premised on the belief in the oneness of the people the indivisible continuum of humanity as described above. Fundamentally the adoption of *ujamaa* was the first strike at decolonizing the minds of the Tanzanian people.

The ujamaa philosophy expressed in the Arusha Declaration (Nyerere 1967) gave birth to a treatise on decolonization of education titled, Education for Self Reliance (Nyerere, 1967). This approach to education sought to replace the colonial philosophy of education whose aim was to create a cadre of locals who would perpetuate colonial domination.

Education for Self Reliance (ESR) championed an educational philosophy emphasizing relevance to the larger society and inculcation of values of service on the educated who had hitherto been elevated above the masses. ESR called for a pragmatic problem solution, unlike colonial education that was deemed to dwell too much on abstract and non-application (Nyerere, 1967; Sanga, 2016). It was redemptive in so far as colonial education tended to alienate learners from their communities and turning them into black Europeans. Nyerere argues that the colonially educated subject suffers from self-loathing and lack of confidence hence decolonization of education meant re-embracing one's culture and identity. De-colonized education was meant to generate critical thinking and consciousness. The system was criticised for being designed to 'remove the native from the African and make them as distant from their culture and worldview as possible (Kassam

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philosophy emphasizes that an individual's identity and sense of being is derived from belonging to the group hence individual identity and being ness is subservient to the group.

1994). Throughout the colonies, education was premised on the establishment of colonial and capitalist society and was meant to transmit the values of the coloniser and prepare the recipients to serve the colonial state (Kassam, 1994).

At the pedagogical level, Mwalimu Nyerere rejected the notion that education is synonymous with schooling and that the passing of examination and possession of academic papers is a measure of one's intellect. The colonial system reified books and schools thus creating an impression that education and knowledge are only found in books or reside within schools and with formally educated people. It dismissed any non-formal way of learning or generating knowledge and fail to acknowledge that before colonialism there were systems of knowledge creation and epistemologies. Subversion of the Euro-American colonial education was meant to create critical thinkers with an inquiring mind and an ability to learn from what others did while rejecting or adapting to one's own needs and basic confidence in one's position (Nyerere 1967). Tied to schooling is the idea of career based on fulfilling certain traditions not related to finding solutions to socio-economic challenges. The 'publish or perish' mantra elevates the act of publishing and the number of papers above relevance, innovativeness and robustness while at the same time perpetuating domination by the Euro-American world view. The resultant conformity of communication studies as well as other areas of academic pursuit, has resulted in less robust research dominated by ill-conceived and irrelevant research projects with cookie-cutter' similarities that do not allow for the exploration of theory or practise outside of the dominant paradigms (Nyamnjoh, 2019). The proverbial 'standing on the shoulders of the elders' becomes an excuse to avoid opening new areas of research. Chu (1988) as quoted by Miike (2002) is highly critical of the domination of quantitative studies as encouraged in Western scholarship where he argues studies are conducted on relatively irrelevant subjects but employing very rigorous methodological approaches. Chu controversially states, 'We tend to tackle only those research problems that can be handled by quantitative measures and statistical tests. We often let methodology determine our choice of research topics. This tendency is sometimes referred to as "the tail wagging the dog" (Miike 2002).

Decolonization calls for an epistemological revival with more creative research methodologies that allow for a genuine and active community to input into knowledge production. The communication field would greatly benefit from Participatory Action research methods that would engage the targets of research to input into theorization.

Decolonizing Communication Studies

The seven traditions within which communication theorizing takes place frames the discipline for any student, and sends a message that anything that does not emanate from these traditions is not legitimate and theorization would only happen within these traditions. At the core of communication studies are the study of theories of communication and once communication theorization is organised along with these traditions, it 'ring-fences what is legitimate theorization and what is not. The process of theorization is a product of the interaction between the individual, encompassing the world-view, and their society. It follows that one cannot theorize outside of their world-view and without reference to their immediate society because "Theorizing begins with a heightened awareness of our own communication experiences and expands that awareness to engage with communication problems and practices in the social world' (Craig and Muller 2007, ix). This means that the student of communication who is inducted into the discipline through these great traditions is already railroaded into a world-view that they might not share, or which is unfamiliar. Hence their attempts at theorization are crippled from the outset. The traditions encapsulate approaches that a scholar brings to the discipline, and therefore from an epistemological point of view the confinement to the traditions is not as innocent as it might sound. Put more prescriptively, "Learning communication theory means learning these traditions, how to use them as lenses for examining communication problems differently, and how to participate in specialized forms of discourse by which the traditions of communication theory constantly grow, develop and change" (Craig and Muller 2007, x).

The communicative encounter with a spirit raises several important issues with implication to the understanding of communication and health communication within a non-Eurocentric context. First is the conceptualization of health, wellness and illness that differs from the world view. Then there is the idea that spirits can indeed provide insight into illness and healing and more so that communication with spirits is possible. How does one treat health promotion within the context of where those who consult such mediums get well and are satisfied? Where does that interface with conventional western medicine and germ theory? The encounter calls for deep reflection because approaches adopted within communication studies determine whether such encounters contribute to the evolution of health communication praxis and health communication theory relevant to the African continent.

Returning to the story of the traditional healer, Tom's relative who Ekeopara (Ekeopara and Ugoha 2017) would define as a 'Practitioner of Therapeutic Spiritualism (2017, pp. 35-36), *Nyar Loka* the spirit and I, it is not difficult to imagine an off-hand dismissal of the veracity of the story, or the communication between the parties. How does one explain Tom's recounting of the story to me, and my getting persuaded enough to take a trip to witness a spirit speak?

How does one understand the apprehension felt when the spirit arrives and I am in the same space as she is? What does one make of the communication happening, albeit behind curtains, between the spirit and Tom's relative, and the spirit and I? Finally, is it too outrageous to imagine Tom's relative engaging with a client who receives a diagnosis from *Nyar Loka* after communing with the spirit world yonder. When Tom's relative finally communicates a prescription that the client dutifully follows, which commonly referenced health communication theory can adequately explain the dynamic?

Visitations to traditional healers are as commonplace today as they were maybe hundreds of years ago. More than half of the population in the middle-income nations globally seek services of traditional healers (DeJong, 1991; Ekeopara & Ugoha, 2017; Offiong, 1999; Abdullahi, 2011; Asuzu, Akin-Odanye, Asuzu, & Holland, 2019; James, Wardle, Steel, & Adams, 2018; Nxumalo, Alaba, Harris, Chersich, & Goudge, 2011), though there are studies that raise doubts on the percentages (Oyebode, Kandala, Chilton, & Lilford, 2016). The point is that more people visit traditional healers than do modern western medicine providing facilities.

Apart from traditional healers, a significantly large number of Africans resort to the use of faith healers. The intersectionality between faith, traditional healers and modern medicine best exposes a worldview held by an individual. In the story above the conceptualization of wellness, health, illness and healing are firmly embedded in the way that one perceives life.

The complexity of the world view is illustrated by the following retelling of a real event that the speaker experienced.

The stepmother of Wambugu had been sick for some weeks. Despite taking herbs, her condition was getting worse. Wambugu, by then a young man in the 1950's, was asked by his father to accompany three other old men to a renowned medicine man to find out the cause of his stepmother's problem. Before they got to the home of the medicine man, their leader asked them

to collect six different sticks each of which represented a possible cause of the sickness. These were to be given to the medicine man on arrival and were to be used during the diagnosis. At the end of the session, the medicine man told them that the cause of the woman's suffering was an unpaid dowry. According to Wambugu, his father later paid the remaining dowry and the woman recovered her health (Ndung'u 2009, 92).

What does a health communication student make of the experience of the community for whom this is a real experience with health care, health communication (the sticks) and the idea of the diagnosis and treatment? What of the story of *Nyar Loka* shared above? Total scepticism and lack of appreciation for the veracity of this claim means that one cannot research this lived experience, understand the point of view of those who live through the experience and communicate about it. How does the communication student immersed in Euro-America tradition engage in theorizing from this experience?

Practical steps leading to decolonizing Health Communication Studies

Recentering:

The re-orientation of the communication curriculum will be the priority in the decolonization process. There has indeed been rhetoric in this direction, but this has not been backed up by a serious paradigm shift (Nyamnjoh, 2019). In this case, the communication curriculum needs to introduce philosophic pluralism that allows students of communication to discover world views as opposed to Euro-American world view only (Asante, 2009; Asante, 1991; Manthalu & Waghid, 2019). The Afrocentric and Asiacentric world views must be added on an equal platform with the Euro-American. The Afrocentric and Asiacentric will be playing catch-up, but in the last two decades, scholarly material has been produced such that the lack of material can no longer be used as an excuse.

Corollary to this paradigm shift is the need for re-orientation of faculty to support the students in this journey of exploration. A dearth in intellectual guardianship steeped in these multiple world-views, or at least cognizant of their centrality in decolonization has been noted (Ifejola, 2016; Miike, 2002; Nyamnjoh, 2019) but this is not insurmountable. Faculty members will need to be re-oriented and accept to learn along with their students. The decolonization paradigm shift detailed by Nyerere (1967) urged the educated elite to accept to be learners not only of what colonial education

denied them but their own communities' world views and epistemologies. They will need to unlearn the perception of centrality of the Euro-American epistemologies and explore the alternatives.

The paradigm shift in the decolonised communication epistemology has to accept an exploration of the intersectionality between non-Eurocentric cosmology, ontology and axiology as the case might be, to locate the student within the mental ecosystem of the community in which they belong. This will allow the student of communication to process and interpret the deeper meaning of the communicative acts happening around them on a day-to-day basis. This will be the first step towards theorization. Non-Eurocentric communication theories can only be built from an understanding of the saliency of the communicators and the environment within which they are engaging.

The epistemological order has been identified to be the most significant stumbling block to decolonization. Communication studies cannot be premised on abstract theories that as we have discussed above, hardly represent the world view in which the communication student lives. Communication studies that do not have an experiential component do not allow the student to engage with the material. For instance, a health communication student needs to appreciate the actual communication between a health care provider and a client, the health educator and the student, the health promoter and the community and the health social marketer and their client/customer. This experience will allow for an interrogation of the health communication models and theories that have faced criticism for being off-target (Airhihenbuwa and Obregon 2000).

To date, socio-psychology has dominated the contextualization of communication studies and this paper proposes that religion (African traditional religion – ATR in the case of Africa), philosophy, sociology, anthropology and history needs to be deliberately added to the communication courses. The disciplinary silos fail to appreciate the intersectionality that culture is and as argued before communication is not just an expression of culture, it is a manifestation of it. Studying communication devoid of an appreciation and understanding of this complexity is inadequate. Decoloniality will have to embrace an interdisciplinary approach.

 What is germane in this chapter is how the conceptualization of health, wellness, illness and the management of disease in an African context and within an African worldview can contribute to the communication discourse and health communication theory.

Conclusions

It needs to be appreciated that the decolonization of Education, the Communication discipline and even Health Communication will not happen without opposition. All disciplines that have tried to re-centre away from the Euro-American hegemonic hold have encountered resistance be it the development of Africentricism (Chawane, 2016) or the evolution of Africana studies (Carroll 2014). Some of the pitfalls have been structural and others have been caused by the insufficient commitment of those charged with the decolonization agenda (Nyamnjoh, 2019). African American scholars have gone through criticism for attempting to introduce different approaches for analysing the experiences of Africans in the diaspora. As long as they continued to use the European and American models and theories, their contribution to scholarship was without controversy, but when movements that sought to bring on board an African worldview began to gain traction, they faced challenges because of the Eurocentric hegemony (Carroll, 2014). This will happen in Africa and indeed in Asia.

Decolonization will also face the challenge of refocusing research to concentrate on social, economic and political problems facing the post-colonial nations. In a majority of cases, funding for research happens to originate from the West, and therefore the research agenda is controlled by the funders. Unless African nations especially can mobilize funds to support research, the substance and the epistemological approaches will conform with the priorities set by the Western world. The lack of resources dedicated to research also affects research capacity. The universities starved of resources are unable to mount robust personnel development programs to build the capacity of upcoming researchers and therefore the available funds tend to circulate only among the senior researchers. This coupled with the pull towards engaging in consultancies and moonlighting (Nyamnjoh 2019) the necessary mentorship and skill transfer suffers. There is a need by the independent governments to realise that having overcome the political manifestation of colonialism, there are still vestiges that need liberation from. Most important is Education and because communication is what defines a nation, the study of communication needs to be decolonised fast.

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CHAPTER 5

(RE)INTRODUCING *MEDU-NEFER*: ANCIENT EGYPT'S RHETORICAL ART

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One of the most unique features of pre-Hellenistic African approaches to rhetoric is the linguistic and cultural conflation of the concepts of goodness and beauty. *Medu-Nefer* (MDW NFR)[1], the rhetorical art of ancient Egypt is one such approach. MDW (*Medu*) means word (Cannon-Brown 2006, 41) and NFR (Nefer) means beautiful (Carruthers 1995, 144), but depending on context, *nefer* can also mean morally good (Karenga 2014, 11), perfect (Grossman, Haspelmath, and Richter 2015, 75; Obenga 2004, 42), and even happy (Obenga 2004, 38). How is this possible? Why would an advanced civilization with a 3000-year history as a global superpower, like ancient Egypt (KMT)[2], refrain from making a qualitative distinction between all these terms? How could civilizations of such realization and longevity culturally produce the kind of achievements in science, mathematics, architecture, philosophy, ethics, and the arts (including rhetoric) using such a conceptual amalgamation? The answer to this question suggests conflation is not accidental, but a central feature of a broader, distinctive, and wholistic rhetorical style that fueled the intellectual and cultural achievements for which ancient Egyptians are renowned. Furthermore, by limiting rhetorical theory to the study of interpersonal and public persuasion, we have effectively colonized it by imposing an overly narrow ancient understanding

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[1] Ancient Egyptians did not utilize vowels in their script. Egyptologist John L. Foster (2001) laments: "The ancient Egyptians did not write the vowels of their words; and since the language died out, these so far are lost to us: we cannot for certain pronounce the language, even though we can understand and translate it" (XVI).
[2] KMT is the name of the country we now call Egypt but in ancient times, its people called KMT meaning "The black land" or the "The ancient black people of the land" (Hilliard, 1960, p. 10).

of the ends of human communication that largely represents the values and idiosyncrasies of Western rhetorical theory beginning with the Greeks.

The present inquiry departs from prior analysis on ancient Egyptian rhetoric by interrogating the concept of MDW NFR as it applies to ancient Egyptian rhetorical ends. Hereto, many scholars have focused their analysis of Egyptian ancient rhetoric on instruction regarding matters of persuasion (Fox 1983; Lipson and Binkley 2004; Sweeney 2004), following the end goal of ancient Greece's concept of rhetoric. Contemporary rhetorician Thomas Rickert explains the reason for this colonialist mindset:

> The phrase "in play," however, marks the historiographic point: there is no consensus on these issues, although there is a dominant narrative, which is that the Greeks named and codified rhetoric. Because of this, most understandings of rhetoric fall out from the Greek umbrella, even in attempts to move beyond or before them, of which there are a growing number. Still, there may be aspects of this issue that are inescapable—our vocabularies, our histories, our legacies, are quite sedimented in the culture we inherit. This suggests one reason I want to ply a two-way street here: to situate rhetoricity before the Greeks, yes, but also to lay the groundwork for a different understanding of the Greeks themselves (Rickert 2016, 352–353).

Using a materialist, bottom-up perspective, Rickert (2016, 357) explores cave images as early forms of rhetoric or displaying a type of "germinal rhetoricity." In his analysis, Rickert discusses the germinal rhetoricity of some Paleolithic African cultures but falls short of identifying them as fully-developed approaches to rhetoric. He says, "In the 30,000 or more years separating Blombos from the Homo sapiens who evolved further in Africa, or migrated out of Africa into Europe, Asia, and other areas, social complexity and symbolism came more fully into their own" (Rickert 2016, 356). Rickert's ultimate analysis concludes that "connections to the Neolithic, and then Sumer, China, Egypt, and more beckon to be explored" (2016, 369), but he does not engage the idiosyncrasies and technical aspects of *Medu-Nefer* as a fully formed rhetorical style with end goals, techniques, and aesthetics all its own.

However, in doing so, the most unique and interesting aspect of pre-Hellenistic rhetoric, the conflation of goodness and beauty as epistemic and rhetorical categories, has been neglected by scholars and thus colonized. Rhetoric, of course, is necessarily tied to both ontological and epistemic truths or beliefs. When Aristotle (Suen 2015, 7) conceptualizes human beings as "speaking animals," he is defining what it means to be human as

well as privileging one aspect of our human experience in the world. Similarly, argumentation and persuasion techniques for "human animals" will differ fundamentally from cultures in which human beings express their divinity through speech. Ancient Egyptians for example, conceptualized humans as divine creatures and thus speech, more precisely beautiful speech, takes on a different set of aims and verbal and nonverbal means to achieve those ends. Therefore, the present inquiry explores what this conspicuous conceptual fusion of beauty and goodness tells us about the values and communicative practices of the ancient Kemites (Egyptians). What decolonized view of rhetoric is revealed by interrogating the aesthetic and ethical dimensions of *Medu-Nefer* as rhetoric beyond mere persuasion?

That there is such a lingual consolidation on cardinal concepts should already be a matter of great interest to rhetoricians and ethicists. Contemporary speakers of English, Spanish, and other languages have more or less clear distinctions between the concepts of beauty, goodness, perfection, and happiness. In modern parlance, these terms may be at times associated with one another, but they are not typically connected semantically or etymologically. For example, a person may be considered to be beautiful, but we would not use the same term to describe them as happy or good or perfect. Were the Kemites (ancient Egyptians) engaging in semantic confusion? Were they too primitive a society to have developed meaningful differentiations between these terms? The short answer to these questions is no. As historian and towering Africana scholar Jacob H. Carruthers (1995) explains, there is a relationship between beautiful speech and the MDW NTR language:

> Good Speech, however, was the domain of humanity. Individuals could choose between Good Speech and not-good speech as in *mdw dw* (evil speech)... and *tftf* (idle chatter). Only Medew Nefer [mdw nfr] was in accord with Medew Netcher [mdw ntr]. In fact, it is through the consistent practice of Medew Nefer that human beings finally attained Medew Netcher, Divine Speech (Carruthers 1995, 40).

The present is an inquiry into the rhetorical techniques of *Medu-Nefer*, the prevailing rhetorical approach of ancient Egyptians. By analyzing *Medu-Nefer* as a "craft" or "artform," we argue for the schematization of *Medu-Nefer* devices according to five conventions that are prevalent and unique to its rhetorical style: (1) Its composite/compounded worldview; (2) Its onto-cosmological focus; (3) Its promotion of ecological facilitation; (4) Its foundationalist epistemology; and (5) Its two-dimensional (zero-level) ethical commitments. Through the examination of key texts ranging from sapient texts, tomb inscriptions, stelae, and autobiographies as Kemetic

artforms subject to the conventions of other Kemetic art forms, we are better able to move beyond a discussion of the ethical underpinnings of ancient Egyptian speech, and into a schematization of its particular and signature communicative theoretical imprint. Lastly, such analysis can further the goal of decolonizing the study of ancient rhetoric. The project of decolonization has been described as one in which:

> Within the academic community, the purpose is to serve as an avenue where new methodologies and new technologies relevant to the proper study of people of African descent can develop socially, politically and intellectually, after which the transformation of new knowledge into practical social application is administered to and by the community (Pellerin 2009, 48).

The present inquiry answers this call by further decolonizing the concept of rhetoric by broadening it from its present overly narrow focus on persuasion to aesthetics and spirituality.

The Original Decolonizers of Medu-Neferian Rhetoric

In recent decades, criticisms of the Greek paradigm of rhetoric as persuasion have risen to a serious challenge. Foss and Griffin (1995, 2) denounce a "patriarchal bias" in the narrow conception of rhetoric as persuasion as they make their case for inserting invitational rhetoric into the scope of rhetorical theory. A separate debate amongst scholars of rhetoric and poetics has considered the scope and identity of rhetoric. In 1982, Weiss published an energetic case for a return to Aristotle's definition of rhetoric in which rhetoric is conceptualized as a faculty, a power, which produces literature, as opposed to rhetoric being a branch or category of literature only dealing in persuasion. Weiss argued:

> When rhetoric is defined as persuasion, only that which persuades is called rhetoric. So that critics arguing a distinction (or the lack thereof) do so only in so far as they see any elements of persuasion having taken place. The distinction along these lines, then, is merely relative, contextual, and less than desirable from the standpoint of anyone desiring consistency or clarity (1982, 24).

Scholars in Africana Studies, Area Studies, Communication, and other fields have done work that enables multi- and inter-disciplinary research scholars to now have access to multiple studies into the character and idiosyncrasies of *Medu-Nefer*. Prominent figures in Africana and rhetorical studies like Karenga (1989; 2012), Asante (2011), Karshner (2011), Crawford (2007), Lipson and Binkley (2004), Jackson and Richardson (2003), Fox

(1983), and Smith (1971) have etched in our understanding insights into the Kemetic approach to "Good Speech." In the interest of brevity, we will focus on some of these works while omitting the excellent work of other decolonizers of *Medu-Nefer* such as Hutto (2002; 2008), Blake (2009), Meltzer (2008), Codita (2012), Butner (2007), Golson (2017), Bochi (1998), among others.

The present inquiry draws to a more significant extent on the research by Karenga (1989; 2013; 2012), Fox (1983), Crawford (2007), and Karshner (2011). Their collective insights form the basis for our own approach to *Medu-Nefer* as an art form. Firstly, the concept of technique and art developed from a conflation of its own. The ancient Greek word *techn*é encompasses two qualities: technical understanding (skill) and art form (Roochnik 1998, 13). From Isocrates to Socrates, to Plato and Aristotle, the word *techné* is understood to have had a dual meaning requiring both knowledge and skill to achieve the level of *areté* or excellence.

Nefer as *Techné*

One of our contentions in this inquiry is that the term *nefer* has a similar quality to *techné* in that the plurality of its meaning signals not an error in reasoning or unsophistication in thinking but a different set of cultural values in which special attention is given to the promotion and celebration of a compound or composite view of human beings that engages aesthetics and ethics in perceived axiologically and ontologically beneficial ways. While today we have determined that understanding and skill ought to be treated as separate concepts, ancient Egyptians found value in promoting both equally as inseparable components of the same practice. Once again, we draw a parallel to classical Greek culture. In perhaps one of the most controversial aspects of the Aristotelian approach to virtue ethics, Aristotle argues for the theory of the "Unity of the Virtues" that claims that a person either possesses all the virtues or none. Critics find this aspect of Aristotle's treatment of virtue ethics an unrealistic view of human beings. These critics use this theoretical flaw as a basis to call for revised virtue approaches or a different approach to ethics altogether (Lemos 1994, 85).

As far back as 1983, Fox outlines five fundamental canons of ancient Egyptian rhetoric: silence, good timing, restraint, fluency, and truthfulness (Fox 1983, 16). Importantly, he is also emphatic in his view that "eloquence is craft" (*hmwt, hemut*) (Fox 1983, 12). An interesting fact about the lives and nature of the work of artists and craftsmen in ancient KMT is that while Egyptian artworks are considered to be of the highest influence to Western

art and exceptional beauty in their use of color and composition, none of the artworks found so far are signed by the "artist." This is very telling of the way in which Kemites viewed themselves in relation to art and ideas. As Smith (1971, 4) rightly asserts, ancient African civilizations highly valued collectivism. Additionally, Kemetic society valued art for its functional role. It is said that Egyptians did not believe in art for art's sake (Davis 1983, 127) and instead they viewed the artist as a conduit of divine communication (Baines 1989, 479). Today, those masterpieces we encase behind glass walls in most major museums around the world are unsigned. One likely answer is that engaging in Kemetic art and/ or craft was a way to symbolize the reigning values of the day, not a vehicle for personal fame. Moreover, the author of the artwork is an afterthought because the focus should be on what the painting or sculpture represents, not who made it. Lastly, and importantly, the working conditions in those artists' workshops resembled what we would consider today an assembly line (Roundhill 2004, 95). One artist molded the piece, another decorated it, another painted it, and so on.[3] Ultimately, the artwork reflected the composite work of many hands and minds working on a homologous final product.

Today we have dichotomized expertise and skill. However, *Medu-Nefer* is but one example of the kind of practice that in antiquity was considered to be dependent on both factors equally and unequivocally, especially when it came to art. While there have been other instances throughout history in which rhetoric was perceived more as an artform that a repository of knowledge (Roman rhetoric is one example), contemporary research into rhetorical practice tends to privilege its technique and bestows the title of rhetoric to those traditions that explicitly outline rhetorical artifacts (Simons 2004, 157). As Fox (1983) argues in his canonical essay "Ancient Egyptian Rhetoric":

> Egyptian rhetorical thought differs most sharply from the Greek in not being analytical and introspective. It does not examine exemplars of rhetoric in an attempt to isolate forms of argumentation, organization, or style, nor does it look within itself to find ways of generating new rules from existing principles. Lacking its own procedures for expansion and for internal critique, Egyptian rhetoric could not become an independent discipline. It had to remain a variety of rules scattered among general moral and practical

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[3] Evidence of the practice of artists working in a fashion reminiscent of an assembly-line has also been found by archeologists researching the Italian and Dutch Renaissance painters who employed painters to do the more mundane parts of a picture (Bambach, 1999).

counsels. By classical standards, Egyptian rhetorical theory is clearly unsystematic and inchoate (Fox 1983, 21).

Thus, from a contemporary lens, *Medu-Nefer*, with its strong ethical imperatives and seeming lack of rules, would fall into the category of an organizing principle or spiritual/religious pursuit, but not a rhetorical approach in the contemporary sense. Perhaps this sort of objection is not unlike or unrelated to the arduous task other scholars have faced when attempting to establish other non-Greek approaches to rhetoric such as rhetorical ecologies (Edbauer 2005), ambient rhetoric (Rickert 2013), or agential realism (Barad 2007).

In the face of such strong criticism, *Medu-Nefer* scholars have remained relatively undaunted as they have continued to expand and deepen the study of *Medu-Nefer* by identifying more of its principles, mechanisms of internal critique, organization, and style. Among these, the seminal work of Maulana Karenga (2014, 25) stands out for its identification of principles such as *serudj* (restoration) into our current understanding of *Medu-Nefer*. By analyzing *Medu-Nefer* from the proper Afrocentric context Karenga found that one function of *Medu-Nefer* speech is to actively help restore the balance and harmony of the community through the reasoned use of speech. Furthermore, Karenga has found that "African rhetoric is a rhetoric of community, resistance, reaffirmation, and possibility" (Karenga 2014, 6).

On Morality and Beauty

Of particular interest to this inquiry are Karenga's findings on what he terms the "morally good" and "aesthetically beautiful" Kemetic rhetoric (Karenga 2014, 11). His work acknowledges the multiplicity of the meanings embedded in the term *nefer* and offers insight into the symbiotic relationship between these terms and the practice of *Medu-Nefer*. It is worth noting that the word *nefer* itself reveals a broad concept of beauty that today would be akin to "pleasant to the eye," "functional," and even "imperishable." This is a concept of beauty deeply rooted in collectivist and communitarian values and such a discovery can only be made through the engagement of ancient African philosophy and contemporary manifestations of this ancient wisdom. Asante notes, "African rhetoric is a rhetoric of ethics that emphasizes and respects the dignity and rights of the human person, the well-being and flourishing of community, the integrity and value of the environment, and the reciprocal solidarity and cooperation of humanity" (Karenga 2014, 212).

Contrary to those critics who view Medu-Neferian rhetoric as lacking in cohesion and standards, Karenga reminds us, "Rhetoric of communal deliberation, discourse, and action, [is] oriented toward that which is good for the community and world" (Karenga 2014, 213). In this way Karenga's work crystalizes the ethical imperatives that rule *Medu-Nefer* and successfully argues for a more expansive understanding of this rhetorical art by highlighting its restorative function and its communitarian foundation.

Clinton Crawford (2007, 124) further chips at the critique of *Medu-Nefer* as inchoate by linking the rhetorical practice to the wider philosophical pursuits of its time. Much like the Greeks who anchored their rhetorical styles in their philosophical knowledge so did *Medu-Nefer* spring from and remain internally consistent with KMT's own onto-cosmological philosophical knowledge. For while scholars before Crawford (2007, 122) correctly identified *Ma'a*t as the organizing principle of the practice of *Medu-Nefer*, it is Crawford who takes it a step further and meaningfully connects it to the Seven Principles of Tehuti outlined in the *Divine Pymander*.[4] Authored by Hermes Trismegistus and first translated to English in 1650, this book is considered a sacred text of hermetics and esoteric knowledge. Scholars identify these laws as those upon which Egyptian civilization was built (Budge 2010, 8).

Medu-Nefer as the Means to Achieve *Ma'at*

In the context of the present investigation, these laws or universal principles merit some discussion as their presence is tangible in the techniques of *Medu-Nefer* and while it is true that, more than any other, *Ma'at* provides the ethical framework of *Medu-Nefer*, there are other influences at play with their own moral imperatives. By understanding the character and content of these laws, the reader will be better able to appreciate the internal consistency binding *Medu-Nefer* with the reigning metaphysical knowledge of the time.

Mentalism

The first of the Principles of Tehuti is the principle of mentalism. Kemetic people believed that everything is perception and that it is through our cognitive apparatus and sense perception that we apprehend the reality of

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[4] The seven principles are: The **Principle** of Mentalism; The **Principle** of Correspondence; The **Principle** of Vibration; The **Principle** of Polarity; The **Principle** of Rhythm; and The **Principle** of Cause and Effect. (Crawford 2004. 118)

what surrounds us. The notion that all is mind does not diminish the belief in the materiality of our human condition, but it reminds us that perspective and interpretation are unavoidable. This is similar to Debra Hawhee's (2015, 13) deployment of sensorium or "feeling rhetoric" as a useful category for theorizing rhetoric. In the case of *Medu-Nefer* as a feeling rhetoric, it reminds us of the human fallible claims to truth and as restorative speech, *Medu-Nefer* teaches us that through rhetorical attunement our words ought to remind us of the proper relationship human beings have to the natural environment, to the cosmos, and even to the social order.

Curiously, a convention of ancient Egyptian visual art is that human figures almost always appear larger than that which surrounds them in a painting or a relief. Take for example the wall painting in the Tomb of *Nebamun*. The painting depicts female clappers, musicians, offering carriers. The painting is estimated to date back to 1375 BCE during the New Kingdom, Dynasty 18, under the reign of *Tuthmosis* IV to *Amenhotep* III. [5]

At first glance one might be tempted to infer that the reason the authors of this painting foregrounded human bodies and human activity in this scene is to show human dominance or superiority to other natural features of the landscape such as trees, vegetation, wild animals, or even the sky. This is in fact incorrect since by foregrounding human figures in the scene depicted, the artists are reminding the observer that what we see and cognize is not the thing itself but a mental apprehension of the thing. Before enlightenment rationalists debated the nature and role of perception in human knowledge,

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[5] Tomb of *Nebamun*; female clappers, musicians, offering carriers. ca. 1375 BCE. Artstor, library-artstor-org.ezproxy.gvsu.edu/asset/KOZLOFF_1039786209

Kemites more than a thousand years before Plato and Aristotle thought it important to routinely remind us that as humans we are subject to our perceptual apparatus and thus we must remain vigilant in our beliefs and conclusions as they are tied to our ability to perceive and sense the world around us. Once again, contra Fox (1983, 9) we see examples of the ways in which *Medu-Nefer* as an Egyptian artform indeed provides procedures for internal critique and expansion. In the next section, we will provide examples of the linguistic mechanisms by which Kemites used to regulate their own sense of scale and proportion to the world.

Correspondence

The second principle is correspondence. The famous phrase "As above so below" is most relevant here. Not unlike later enlightenment rationalists and analytic philosophers, Kemites believed that the world is knowable through the study of phenomena. In Memphis Theology, *Ptah* (who is neither male or female) is said to have created the world through their speech. This theology purports that *Ptah* created the world out of chaos upon first thinking so with their heart and then through their tongue by articulating with perfect precision what was in their mind. Such a narrative, in fact, provides the model by which human beings are to ideally communicate. The communicative goal of *Medu-Nefer* is to first cultivate the right sort of inclination and attitude followed by the articulating those inclinations and attitudes with clarity and faithfulness to one's thoughts. A second aspect of the principle of correspondence is that from studying the known, we can also learn about the unknown. Similar to the Kantian argument contra Scottish empiricists, Ancient Egyptians believed that the observable, quantifiable, measurable rules of physics can help us elucidate transcendental universal truths and precepts. In both cases, we have explicit admissions of the fallibility and limits of human knowledge and a prescription for humility that allows us to have the correct proportion in relation to the mysteries of the world around us and the vastness and complexity of the universal spirit/mind.

Vibration

The third principle is vibration. Ancient Egyptians believed that all matter and substances around us are in a process of constant motion and change. A thousand years later the Greek pre-Socratic Heraclitus (1962, 252) will proclaim that "changing it rests," when describing the state and motion of the waters of a river; the principle of vibration communicates a principle

quite similar. In the Kemetic worldview, all things in the cosmos are in a process of constant vibration and the reason why some objects appear still is because they are vibrating at a low frequency while things that appear to be in motion vibrate at a higher frequency. This principle also serves as a reminder that our perceptive apparatus can sometimes deceive us as things that appear to be still in reality are not. Of course, this principle applies to human beings too, as cosmic beings, and the imperative being issued here is one which invests with superiority vibrating at a higher frequency and therefore manifesting to our perception its character and nature.

Polarity

The fourth principle is that of polarity. From the Dual Hall of *Ma'at* where human souls make their appeals to enter the fields of blessed as *Maa Kheru* (True of Voice) to the conspicuous pairing of two *neters* (forces of nature) for every human pursuit, to the depiction of Pharaohs (kings) wearing two crowns: one of Upper Egypt (lands to the South) and one of Lower Egypt (lands to the north), everything in the cosmos possesses a duality. In the portrait below, the *neter Atum* (also known as *Tem*, *Temu*, *Atem*) is depicted as enthroned, bearded, wearing a kilt belted with a girdle from which hangs a bull tail, and most importantly wearing the two crowns: the crown of Upper and the crown of Lower Egypt.[6]
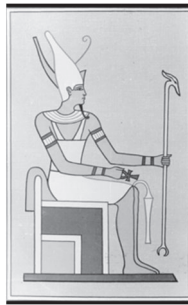
Thousands of years later, the French philosopher Jacques Derrida will assert that language is predicated on what he termed "binary oppositions" that supply the conditions by which we can create concepts and use language (Sleeter and McLaren 1995, 51). In Derrida's view, we can only make sense of the color white, because we also have a concept of the color black that

[6] Artstor,
library-artstor-org.ezproxy.gvsu.edu/asset/AWSS35953_35953_31678893

supplies the contrast that allows us to make sense of both terms (Sleeter and McLaren 1995, 105). In other words, without a concept of blackness, we could not even begin to make sense of a thing called whiteness as in such case we would lack the conceptual binary necessary to understand it.

This cultural interest in dualities heightens an interest in paradoxes. The sapient texts themselves are said to be built on the use of paradox and irony (Arletter 2011, 80). For example, if everything is half-truth, then everything is also half-lie. This principle is evident in Medu-Neferian practice. Take for example the dualities in which the evaluative criteria of *Medu-Nefer* are based. *Medu-Nefer,* as was mentioned previously, is beautiful or good speech. However, *Isfet* is its binary opposite in the language of Derrida. *Isfet* is evil or chaos and given the fact that for ancient Egyptians one can speak and do *Ma'at*, evil and chaos are definitely outcomes to be avoided in the practice of *Medu-Nefer*. Instead, Kemites believe that speakers engaged in *Medu-Nefer* ought to use language as Karenga (2014, 25) rightly asserts as "restoration." Restoration here is meant in the sense that our words, collective and individual, can serve to bring about justice and importantly help restore a harmonious coexistence in the community. Additionally, terms like *Sia* (perception) and *Hu* (authoritative utterance) and *Hekka* (magic) provide a sharp contrast to one another as one deals with our cognitive ability and the other the ability to express those perceptions with high fidelity. Hence, the term *Maa Kheru* (true of voice) is used to describe the model behavior, communicative and otherwise, to which human beings should aspire, to be "true of voice" to get to the point in one's moral development and mastery of speech where what we think, feel, and say are perfectly aligned. Thus, while becoming true of voice is the end goal of our engagement with *Ma'at,* the *neteru* (forces of nature) supply the personified models for how we can achieve said end goal. This interpretation contradicts the criticism that *Medu-Nefer* lacks exemplars after whom humans can mold their moral character.

Gender

The fifth principle is gender. As mentioned previously, in the Kemetic worldview everything has a duality and perhaps no other duality figures more prominently in Kemetic culture, and in *Medu-Nefer* itself, than the notion that gender is in everything. The *UCLA Dictionary of Egyptology* (University of California, Los Angeles) defines duality as:

> a way of thinking that creates meaning by conceptually juxtaposing opposite
> or complementary realities (whether cultural, philosophical, or of the

natural world) in a static or dynamic relationship and serves as a mechanism
to make sense of, and explain, the functioning of the world.

In other words, everything in the cosmos possesses some feminine and some
masculine traits. This notion is exemplified in the symbolization of the
forces of nature (*neteru*). Worthy of note is the fact that the *neter* that
symbolizes writing and scribal pursuits is personified as a woman, *Seshat*.
The aforementioned duality is manifested by Thoth (Djhuty), the male
counterpart to Seshat's scribal divinity and who complements Seshat by
representing knowledge. Another consort of Thoth (Knowledge) is the neter
Ma'at. She symbolizes the virtues of justice, balance, and harmony is
represented by a winged, kneeling feminine figure.[7]
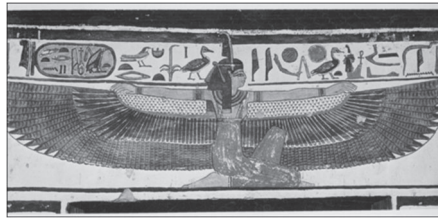
Let us also note that based on the two examples hereto provided regarding
genderization practices in Kemetic culture, women are not symbolically
represented as confined to the domestic sphere nor marginalizes them from
pursuits that require an exceptional levels of intellect and skill, such as
scribes and arbiters of human justice. It is also worth noting that ancient
Egypt has been shown to have afforded its women the right to inherit
property, the right to divorce and other civil rights (Allam 32) that one does
not associate with the type of genderization practices in the west that largely
dispossess and disempower women's intellect and agency.

> "The very nature of the universe exists as a gendered metaphor, and the
> creator god had within him both the male and female potential. It also
> highlights the importance placed on semen in the creative act. Women were
> important as vessels who kept and protected.
>
> Thus, the genderization of male and female that pervades the practice of
> *Medu-Nefer* reflects the notion that it is when opposites come together and
> work symbiotically that life is created and maintained. Both genders are
> symbolic of a binary that makes the other possible and can only make sense,

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[7] The Goddess *Ma'at*--2Am.128. Artstor,
library-artstor-org.ezproxy.gvsu.edu/asset/AWSS35953_35953_31702333

be understood and even be possible when this duality is present and acting together.

The very nature of the universe exists as a gendered metaphor, and the creator god had within him both the male and female potential. It also highlights the importance placed on semen in the creative act. Women were important as vessels who kept and protected the seed.

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The very nature of the universe exists as a gendered metaphor, and the creator god had within him both the male and female potential. It also highlights the importance placed on semen in the creative act. Women were important as vessels who kept and protected the seed. The most obvious expression of this is the belief that the sky goddess Nut swallowed and protected the sun god on his nightly journey through the underworld.

Rhythm

The sixth principle is rhythm. The Kemetic worldview yields that all cosmic things rise and fall. By implication, then, our human experience contains highs and lows. Inspired by the flow of the River Nile itself, this cultural wisdom extrapolates from the seasonal rise and fall of the river to the series of fluctuations to which all life on the planet is susceptible. In this ancient context, Aristotle's subsequent idea of mimesis is already in use as Kemites derive both pleasure and *katharsis* (Golden 1983, 153) from recognizing these patterns in nature's rhythms also apply to humans as part of nature. By recognizing that there is a certain pattern to these shifts, Kemites promote the ability to contextualize and grasp a more accurate perception that is also in correct proportion to the temporary nature of these events. By cultivating such a disposition, we facilitate our ability to generate proportional responses to life's events in speech and in action.

Cause and Effect

Finally, the principle of cause and effect adds an element of forward-thinking and accountability to the practice of *Medu-Nefer*. Speech acts themselves are predicated on the idea that speech acts have an effect on the community and our own dispositions and that everything has a cause (an exigency, if you like). Thus we are responsible for the way in which our words perform their restorative function. As a reminder, restorative functions work to maintain and renew harmonious relationships in one's community. For this reason, beautiful speech functions as effective or excellent speech when it creates and sustains the social order. In short, Crawford's contribution to the study of *Medu-Nefer*, while notable in other respects, is uniquely helpful in connecting *Medu-Nefer* to more than just the ethical ideal of *Ma'at*.

Speech as Magic

The next inquiry into *Medu-Nefer* will introduce an important cultural element that while related to *Ma'at* has its roots in the Memphis Theology and emphasizes the creative power of speech. Such characterization of *Medu-Nefer* will help us more clearly understand the unique valuation of speech practices in ancient Egypt and the attribution of magic to excellence in the practice of *Medu-Nefer*.

In Karshner's (2011) essay "Thought, Utterance, Power: Toward a Rhetoric of Magic," he challenges conventional thinking of rhetoric as persuasion. Additionally, Karshner draws direct connections between onto-cosmology and the Kemetic view of "good speech." At the outset of his inquiry, Karshner echoes Karenga's ideas about the restorative imperative of *Medu-Nefer*. He says, "Thoughtful, reasoned speech was the mechanism for reestablishing the order that was manifested in the reasoned creation of the universe" (Karshner 2011, 53). However, the type of order that *Medu-Nefer* promotes is not one that is established independently of human perception. Instead, Karshner concludes, "Rhetoric, then, is more than persuasive speech. It is also an expression of a linguistically constructed world" (Karshner 2011, 54). Of special interest here is the connection between *Medu-Nefer* and the first Principle of Tehuti regarding the cosmos being mental. Symbolism is mental, representation is mental, as is the type of practice of abstraction that enables the human use of language.

Karshner's analysis also clarifies the relationship between *Ma'at* and *Medu-Nefer*, "Maat was the onto-cosmological principle that connected the divine

order of the cosmos with the social order of justice and the ethical reality of human beings" (Karshner 2011, 58). In other words, *Medu-Nefer* is not synonymous with *Ma'at*. It is a tool in the service of *Ma'at*. Assman offers one of the clearest examples of speech directives of *Medu-Nefer* by quoting from the *Hymn to Amun Ra*:

> [hu] is in thy mouth,
> [sia] is in thy heart,
> and thy tongue is the shrine of Justice [maat] (Assman 2018, 219).

Here we have an example directly from *Medu-Nefer* writings that shines a light on *Medu-Nefer* offering specific instruction on what *Medu-Nefer* looks, feels, and sounds like in practice. In this context, *Medu-Nefer* is also a vehicle through which we can dually apprehend and express communal and cultural truths. *Ma'at* is arrangement. It provides the order of priorities and sets the criteria for beautiful speech, but *Medu-Nefer* provides the linguistic means by which to manifest *Ma'at* into the community and the world at large.

Karshner's analysis also lays bare for the reader the onto-cosmological foundations of *Medu-Nefer*. He explains, "An onto-cosmological narrative expresses the fundamental beliefs of its cultural background and reveals the ontological concerns of a group situated in a specific time and place" (Karshner 2011, 55). One of our contentions in this inquiry is to join Karshner in challenging whether rhetoric can only be characterized as the art of persuasion. Karshner's analysis challenges the notion that ontological concerns and cultural background of old and contemporary civilizations on the planet must align to those of ancient Athenians. For it seems entirely possible that different cultural backgrounds and cosmo-ontological concerns may identify and rely on a different type of organizing principle other than persuasion. Another way to pose this question is to ask whether there are "alternatives on what makes a skilled speaker" (Hutto 2002, 213). Karshner (2011, 56) provides an answer to the specific case of *Medu-Nefer*. He states, "To have command of the word, an individual must know the formative and performative power of speech reflected in the magical vocabulary that emerges from the onto-cosmological narrative." Why? Because as is the case with Kemites, particular onto-cosmological narratives yield a different set of priorities for members of a group and it is these narratives that supply the particular organizing principle that will resonate more strongly with a cultural group.

Magic is depicted in KMT's various stories of origins as being connected to communicative acts. The word *Heka* is often translated as magic or spell.

The world is ordered out of chaos through the combination of *Ptah*'s heart and tongue working in tandem to produce a fantastical act of creation and creative expression. Karshner (2011, 56) explains, "Heka, then, is not merely "hocus-pocus" but the vitality behind the process of invention and production that establishes the order of existence." Consequently, individual speakers are invited to engage in the practice of creative and free expression of their personal quest for truth: The *ka* (soul) represented the "essential self of an individual" (Karshner 2011, 56) and in this view to become True of Voice one must master the art of speaking one's cosmic authentic truth.

The former four approaches wield the strongest influence in the present investigation by collectively opening the door to a new understanding of *Medu-Nefer* as artful speech. Such an application of the beautiful allows us to examine specific pieces of written and spoken Medu-Neferian rhetoric to explore its cohesion, organization, and specific techniques. The second and final section of this essay will engage such evaluative criteria with the goal of identifying specific conventions and devices that might have aided speakers in communicating in creative and authentic ways through the process of creating and performing spoken and written art.

Medu-Neferian Rhetorical Devices

Having reviewed and analyzed contemporary research on *Medu-Nefer*, we contend that as an artform, *Medu-Nefer* exhibits and teaches the conventions and techniques of other artforms of its time. In tone and character, *Medu-Nefer* is closer to a skill set than it is to an ethical framework or "stable body of knowledge" in the language of Socrates to describe *techné*. The following five devices are proposed for its preponderance in Kemetic literature and their connection to larger systems of belief in Kemetic culture:

(1) **A composite/compounded view of human nature -**. Both in *Medu-Nefer* and other arts humans are promoted as having the ability to take on multiple perspectives at one time. In the visual arts this might be represented as the figure of *Toth* (*Djiehuti*) who is typically depicted as possessing a healthy human body with the head of a hawk. In the "Papyrus of Anhai*"* from the *Book of the Coming Forth By Day*, *Toth* in his role as god of wisdom is shown as having the birdlike ability to rotate his head nearly 180 degrees and thus quite

literally the ability to look at a situation from many different points of view.[8]
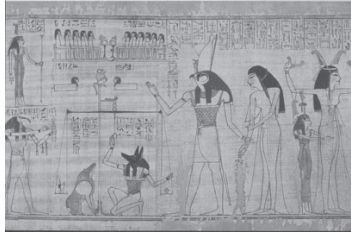
In literature, the *Book of Khun Anup* (also known as the *Tale of the Eloquent Peasant*), a text from the Middle Kingdom, features a passage in which the central character, a peasant, laments, "Justice has fled from you. Driven from its place. The judges do wrong and right-speech has become one-sided" (Karenga 1989, 31). While this volume of the sapient texts is well known for illustrating the pervasiveness of *Ma'at* in ancient Egyptian society, the writer also warns of the dangers of losing the ability to look at an event or circumstances from more than one side or perspective. As a result, to be one-sided becomes negligent, ineffective speech.

(2) **Two-dimensional descriptions of being**- As seen in the various paintings cited earlier in this essay, ancient Egyptian art is famous for making use of a two-dimensional technique in which the function of a portrait is not to communicate likeness, as one might expect in European forms of portraiture, but to capture the easily recognizable, essential features and character of the subject of the portrait. For example, the *Book of Declarations of Virtue* contains a passage in which the protagonist exclaims, "I am a listener, one who listens to *Ma'at* and who ponders it in the heart" (Karenga 1989, 98).

(3) **Onto-Cosmological narratives**- Indeed, much of the rhetoric as well as visual arts for which ancient Egypt is known involve depictions and tales of its *neters* (forces of nature) complete with their origin stories. Among the many architectural achievements of Kemites is the Temple of *Ramesses* the II. Inside it, a room now

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[8] Papyrus of *Anhai*, Book of the Dead: ms. pap. 10472: *Toth* in his role as god of wisdom. c.1100 B.C. Artstor,
library-artstor-org.ezproxy.gvsu.edu/asset/ARTSTOR_103_41822003021977

designated as Sanctuary West features seated statues of *Ramesses* II and patrons *neteru Harmakhis*, *Amon Re,* and *Ptah*.[9]

This is but one example of the myriad ways in which artforms functioned as reminders of KMT's onto-cosmology but such a theme is not unique to the architectural arts. *The Book of Rising Like Ra* contains a passage in its section "Book of Vindication" that shows the same desire by king and peasant alike to be associated symbolically with the *neteru*. The passage reads, "I stand up as Horus, beloved son and avenger of his father. I sit down as *Ptah*, God who laid the foundation of the universe. I have grown strong as *Toth*, wisdom exalted" (Karenga 1989, 107).

4) **Ecological Facilitation**- As discussed previously the cosmo-ontology of KMT defines human beings as manifestations of the divine. However, such an esteemed position was not the exclusive domain of human beings. Features of the landscape, wildlife, and celestial bodies were considered manifestations of the divine all the same. This is a time in pre-history when the Cartesian dichotomy of man and animal had not yet become popularized all over the world. Instead, human beings were seen as interdependent with the natural environment. Even to the casual observer, the presence of depictions of animals, both friend and foe, permeate ancient Egyptian art. Many of those representations show a distinctive admiration of many different kinds of animals for their particular attributes. From protective cats, to tenacious dung beetles, to dangerous hippopotami, non-human others feature prominently in Egyptian art, often in whatever relationship it was known to have with its human neighbors. However not all depictions are friendly. "*Papyrus of Ani*"

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[9] Temple of *Ramesses* II. Artstor, library-artstor-org.ezproxy.gvsu.edu/asset/HARTILL_12310114

in the *Book of the Coming Forth by Day* depicts the *neter Ra* beheading the serpent *Apep*.[10]

As one might expect the written word features nonhuman others just as often and equally as meaningfully. In the *Book of Wise Instruction*, there is a passage contained in the section titled the "Book of Prebhor*"* that offers a glimpse into the extent to which Kemites understood that knowledge of the natural world and its creatures is as valuable to a human being as any system of laws or speech act: "A small snake has poison. A small river has its dangers. A small fire should be feared. A small document has its dangers. A small cord binds. A small truth defends its owner" (Karenga 1989, 70).

(5) **Foundationalist theories of epistemic justification**- Some readers might be surprised to discover that in spite of the fact that Kemet is considered to have held a foundationalist view of epistemic justification, it is also well known that for Kemites image is reality. Foundationalist theories of epistemic justification are often associated with theories of correspondence. So how is this tension resolved? The answer lies in the belief ancient Egyptians held that we can only access the world through our sense of perception. Put differently, appearance is all there is because perception is all there is. Again, it is important to remember that this proposition does not negate the existence of a material environment; instead, it suggests that what there is, can be known through the way in which it is perceived.

In Kemet, image was reality, and its art dramatized this feature of our condition with surprising regularity. Contemporary scholars have made great strides to better understand the curious practice of Kemite visual artists

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[10] "Papyrus of Ani," *Book of the Dead*: ms. pap. 10470: *Ra* beheading the serpent *Apep*. c.1250 B.C. Artstor,
library-artstor-org.ezproxy.gvsu.edu/asset/ARTSTOR_103_41822003021951

to make use of composite or aspective techniques of representation to make this point in their work. Aspective images are those in which for example, the silhouette of a man is shown as facing the viewer directly forward by positioning the figure in question with its chest facing directly forward. However, upon close examination, the viewer would do well to note that the face of the figure is on profile, but its arms are drawn to appear as though we are facing the figure's back. Such a technique was utilized to destabilize the viewers' perception by reminding them that for everything we are looking at, there are other things that by necessity remain hidden from view. This promotion of perspective-taking is one that runs through the sapient texts as well as the visual representations popularized by the sumptuous, colorful reliefs that are instantly recognizable as Egyptian even to the uninitiated.

In the funerary stelae below made of wood the deceased (*Djed-Khonsu-iuf-Ankh*) appears barefoot, playing the harp before enthroned falcon-headed god (*Re-Horus*); deceased with shaven tonsure, wearing full-length plaited and transparent garment, kneeling, but facing left.[11]

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[11] Stele (Wood; painted; ht. 12"). Artstor, library-artstor-org.ezproxy.gvsu.edu/asset/AWSS35953_35953_31678539

The same advice of precaution is given to speakers in other wisdom literature volumes; although in promoting the same disposition of caution and perspective-taking, the written literature emphasizes the practice of listening as a communicative skill. In the *Book of the Moral Narrative* which contains the *"Book of Khun-Anup"* (also known as "The Eloquent Peasant") a passage describes the social benefits of reserving judgement and listening to all sides before speaking:

> There is none quick of speech who is free from hasty words and none light of heart and mind whose thoughts have weight. Be patient that you may learn. Be patient that you may learn righteousness and restrain your anger for the good of one who enters humbly. No one excellent achieves excellence and one who is impatient is not leaned on. Let your eyes see and your heart take notice (Husia Year, p. 33).

Conclusion

The present inquiry has explored the concordances between the themes and techniques utilized in ancient Egyptian art and its communication manifestation, *Medu-Nefer*. We found that artful speech in a Medu-Neferian context is one that highlights and reminds ourselves and all rhetors to emphasize, promote, and celebrate those aspects of our human experience that endure. In this respect one can say that *Medu-Nefer* advances a rhetoric of permanence that invites private individuals grounded in a collective mindset to observe and practice the moral precepts of thinking, doing, and speaking *Ma'at*. Things that have the highest value in this cultural context are those considered to be imperishable. In this way the moral ideal of *Ma'at* functions to connect its practitioners to the universal spirit that is living of mind and *Ma'at* functions as a grid to the craft of artful speech. Much like *Ptah* did upon the creation of the cosmos out of chaos, beautiful speech allows all individuals in a community to make their individual and collective contributions to controlling and ordering chaos.

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CHAPTER 6

DECOLONIZING COMMUNICATION RHETORIC: A CASE STUDY OF CARIBBEAN FEMINIST DISCURSIVE PRACTICES

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The woman's tongue, the wasp and the tamarind tree sting the most
—Jamaican Proverb

Introduction

In this essay, I explore the intellectual contributions of locally produced epistemologies derived from the Caribbean, as they pertain to feminist rhetoric in the field of communication. The study of communication in the Caribbean has largely focused on mass media and how information communication technologies can be used for social and behavior change. This was an intellectual investment driven mostly by the practical and political concerns of being part of a traditionally marginalized part of the globe, namely the Global South. Societies from this geopolitical region were and still are, conceived of as being troubled, not appropriately westernized and in need of development. This idea was especially popular during the early years of communication studies in and about the Caribbean. Many nations were newly independent from their respective imperial overlords and there was much local and international interest in how these countries could achieve national progress in line with Bretton Woods' institutional standards. Academic attention was encouraged (especially through international funding) and vigorously pursued in investigating how mass communication, and later ICTs, could play a role in helping national governments achieve national development goals (Brown 1981; 1976; Brown and Sanatan 1987; Cuthbert 1976; 1977). This line of study gained and maintained academic currency for several decades. It also produced

important scholarship regarding the position of mass mediated information communication technologies and their relationship to questions of cultural identity, ideologies of globalization and information communications flow in the region (Gordon 2009; Dunn 2001; 1988).

As it pertains to feminist studies in the Caribbean, there are many productive lines of inquiry ranging from literature to sociology. For more than five decades, scholars have grappled with essential questions such as what a Caribbean feminist epistemology looks like (Reddock 2007; 1990) as well as how Caribbean feminisms may help fuel interrogations of race, class, gender and patriarchy (Mohammed 2009; 1998). Caribbean feminist literary criticism has been particularly fertile ground for developing critical analytical frames through which to examine the sociopolitical realities of post-independent Caribbean societies. Such writings have been innovative in their offerings of "diverse expressions of woman centered Caribbean experiences" (Balutansky 1990, 539) and have had in common "a deeply rooted spirit of resistance to the status quo in their respective societies" (O'Brien 2000, par 7).

As categorical dimensions of Caribbean studies, mass communication and feminist scholarship have received merited academic attention. What has not received much scholarly consideration are areas of feminist communication studies, especially in the subject of rhetoric. Further, from a theoretical point of view, much of the work produced in Caribbean mass communication and feminist studies tend to be rooted in U.S. and European derived frameworks that were developed to analyze different sociopolitical realities. Commenting on existing models of Caribbean feminisms, Paravisini-Gebert (1997)observed that "[a]ll too frequently, reliance on these approaches (whether postfeminist, postcolonial, deconstructivism) led to de-historicized interpretations [of women's lived experiences]" (4). Similarly, the general theoretical focus of mass communication studies related to the region rely on perspectives developed for the historical materiality of phenomena occurring elsewhere. I am not attempting to say that these works lack validity or import simply because they rely on European or American originated theoretical frameworks. I myself have used such theories in my own work with constructive results. What I am proposing to do in this essay is to explore the intellectual contributions of locally produced knowledge to Caribbean communicative experiences.

The benefit of this exploration is twofold. First, this line of inquiry expands the investigation of communication phenomena in the Caribbean to include analysis of the role of discourse in local communicative practices. The latter

is yet to be given adequate scholarly consideration. Second, the discussion examines the idea of a Caribbean feminist discourse specifically grounded in the philosophical domain of communication and rhetoric. The value of examining Caribbean produced feminist discourse in this way lay in the opportunity it provides to explore the latter's contributions to the canon of rhetoric in communication. Additionally, by investigating feminist discursive practices from the perspective of communication studies, I argue for the foregrounding of locally produced knowledges in attempts to theorize about the material reality of Caribbean communicative phenomena. The epistemology of the "vernacular" intelligentsia, if you may, should be regarded as pertinent and central to our theoretical understanding of the embodied experiences of those being spoken about.

Given the scope of Caribbean lived experiences, there are some limitations to the arguments I propose. For one, the linguistic and cultural diversity of the Caribbean means that there are important rhetorical communication nuances that affect discursive practices across the region. There is no universal "Caribbean communication" per se, since there is the Anglophone, Francophone, Spanish speaking and even Dutch Caribbean, each marked by the influence of their distinct European colonizer. Notwithstanding, one can talk about communication within the context of the Caribbean as a historically situated space with certain shared socio-cultural and political experiences, exploring how that heritage may inform certain rhetorical traditions. Further, issues of race, class, gender and sexuality, as affected by colonialism and post-colonialism, create distinctive experiences for different groups of citizens in Caribbean societies. Andaiye's (2002) observations about feminist praxis in Caribbean settings allude to this point:

> [I]f we cut gender off from the other power hierarchies, that is if we work to end relations among women, while ignoring the power relations among women, we will not succeed in transforming the power relations between women and men because we are not aiming at the whole power structure, of which the power relations between women and men are only a part. (11).

Andaiye's comments serve as a reminder that issues such as race and class cannot be ignored or glossed over by feminist or any other type of scholarship.

The present discussion does not significantly survey these important distinctions. However, it still offers an important contribution to the literature on Caribbean studies in that it serves as a starting point for future theorizing about feminist rhetorical communication in the Caribbean that is informed by indigenous epistemologies. As a starting point, my rhetorical

examples are drawn mostly from Jamaican women reggae artists whose work I argue, consciously and subconsciously embody Caribbean feminist ethos. Through their work, these performers have explicitly and implicitly engaged in Caribbean feminist thought production, largely unacknowledged by formal scholarship. They do so through what I describe as a "popular" poetics of resistance that often intersects with the politics of gender and class.

This body of work provides rich analytical resource through which to explore critical questions pertaining to feminist communication patterns and strategies that have evolved in Caribbean settings. These include questions such as, On what values are locally derived feminist discursive practices built? What sets of verbal and nonverbal language/communication rules govern gender relations? What kinds of borderlands do emerging discursive practices traverse? Are there counter points to feminist communication theories developed in the Unites States and Europe that are produced by this rhetoric? However, before moving forward with an examination of these questions, it is important to position the use of the terms Caribbean feminist discourse and Caribbean feminisms in general. This is to help contextualize the idea of an existing indigenous Caribbean feminist ethos, the latter being of theoretical import to the overall discussion.

Caribbean Feminist Discourse

Caribbean feminisms have historically been grounded in what Caribbean writer Velma Pollard (1991) describes as the conflict between women and the social system. The social systems with which Caribbean women often found themselves in conflict were tinged by the dynamics of colonialism and post colonialism respectively, features that made their political experiences decidedly different from those of their American or European counterparts. The resulting entanglements have informed feminist movements and theoretical engagements from as early as the late nineteenth century. Early movements led by pioneers such as Amy Ashwood Garvey, Amy Bailey, Una Marson among others, were driven by issues of Caribbean nationalism and Pan-Africanism in the wake of growing efforts to dispatch colonial rule from Caribbean shores and establish political self-governance. The genesis of Caribbean feminisms is also simultaneously grassroots and middleclass (Ford-Smith 1986; Rosenberg 2010), making the resulting tensions between the two social domains central features of feminist theoretical evolution in the region.

Discursively, the writings of Caribbean women literary scholars have featured heavily in Caribbean feminist studies. The voices of writers such as Jamaica Kincaid, Edwidge Danticat, Lorna Goodison, Velma Pollard and Lakshmi Persaud to name a few, are recognized as articulating a "feminist subversion" of authority (Cooper 1995, 87), patriarchal or otherwise. This discourse involves a transformative rewriting of the self, according to Cooper, and does not pretend to be authoritative. In fact, Cooper goes on to state that, "the preferred narrative mode of many feminist writers is the guise of intimate, understated domestic writing…or testimony" (87). Cooper's description of what she sees as distinct features of a Caribbean feminist discourse reflected in the writings of some Caribbean women writers denotes the experimental and transgressive nature of the works. Cooper herself engages in similar feminist discursive practices in her own scholarship, much of which challenges patriarchal and cultural norms related to women's sexual agency and what she regards as the vulgar body.

Far from being monolithic, Caribbean feminist discourse is embedded in a multi-modal thought production that demands acknowledgement of its plural nature. This is why I use the term Caribbean feminisms, emphasizing the multiple strands of thought that inform feminist praxis. Unlike the schools of thought that endeavor to be mutinous in their anti-colonialist and nationalist agendas, threads of Caribbean feminist thinking adopt what Pollard (1991) expresses as a more "gentle" approach. Accordingly, Pollard "does not consider Caribbean women writers to be feminist in the harsh or strident connotation of that term" (Interview 1991). This sentiment is a variation of the idea that Caribbean feminisms explore and embrace the multi-sided nature of gender relations and reflect the "complex actuality" (Baugh 1990, 9) of the world inhabited "rather than a doctrinaire or separatist feminism" (9). This is a position which sometimes conflicts with sister movements in the U.S. and Europe. Ideological bifurcations are particularly evident in the areas of motherhood, which many Caribbean women writers have embraced as very compatible with feminism.   As Baugh explains, this idea "is typical of the emergent mainstream of (Anglophone) Caribbean feminist discourse in that it does not exhibit any of the separatist/isolationist tendencies which some metropolitan feminist critics have found it necessary to regret in their sisters" (11).

Other scholars have challenged this idea, warning against the potential essentializing of Caribbean women's voices. Kutzinski (2001), for example, views Caribbean feminist scholarship as being hostile to "poststructuralist and postmodernist theories associated broadly with Euro-American feminist work and queer theory" (166), pushing back on what they see as the

reductionist and problematic "politics of authenticity" (167). Kutzinksi's arguments are accurate to a point. That Caribbean feminist discourses at large do not engage queer theory nor sufficiently challenge heterosexual norms is fair. However, many scholars have and continue to ground our work in critical and post-modern intellectual traditions of Euro-American theory (Gordon 2009; Reddock 2007; Cooper 1995), feminist and otherwise. Attempts to locate feminist praxis and theoretical wrestlings within an indigenous epistemological framwework, as scholars such as Mohammed (1998) have tried to do, should not be read as professed hostility towards Euro-American perspectives but as a necessary intellectual emancipatory project. It is not without benefit for feminist discursive explorations to be anchored in understandings of local Caribbean societies or to develop a homegrown standpoint through which to evaluate our experiences. Neo-colonialism is real and the threat of intellectual marginalization that it poses must be confronted.

Nonetheless, the primary focus of this essay is not to suggest a resolution to these debates. It is to explore the idea of a Caribbean feminist rhetorical tradition from the point of view of communication studies. Using the lyrical performances of women reggae artistes from the Anglophone Caribbean as the basis of analysis, I explore the idea of woman's tongue, a dialectical tool used by some women to assert and contest voice, while negotiating the politics of gender and class. Conceptually, woman's tongue denotes the potency of the female voice as an expression of incisive social critique (Cooper 2010). To systematically answer the research questions posed earlier in the discussion, I rely on rhetorical analytical tools. In general, rhetorical analysis is a form of textual analysis that involves the close reading of a text. For the purposes of this discussion, particular attention is paid to the ways in which verbal and nonverbal communication connote and denote meanings as well as how they signify cultural relations.

The Values at Play When Caribbean Women Speak

Caribbean women's communication is often criticized for being abrasive, aggressive and loud, our accents only adding to that sense of dis-ease which our discursive styles seem to inspire among our decriers. Levied by detractors both within and outside the Caribbean, this reproach of our communicative expressions is rife with colonial overtones. The Victorian values governing the proprieties of women's speech lurk just below the surface, as does the essentializing hierarchy of White racial superiority. As such, the censure imposed upon our communication patterns reflect

stereotypes of Afro-Caribbean women developed during slavery, which sought to pathologize all aspects of Black womanhood (Jefferson-James 2020). Liberally described in colonial writings as a "superordinate Amazon who could be called upon to labor all day," (101) who lacked a "developed sense of emotional attachment to progeny and spouse" (101), the Black Caribbean woman was narratively construed as immoral and utterly aberrant. The communication styles associated with these women are therefore shrouded in this general pessimism. Discursively, the values at play establish our verbal and non-verbal expressions in relation to the cult of Euro-American, White cultural propriety. When we communicate, we are doing so at the borderlands of respectability and often outside the realm of acceptable, White middle class displays of womanhood.

Caribbean women's vernacular communicative expressions are especially fraught with these tensions. Socio-culturally, there are gendered and class related rules that guide women's rhetorical performances in the Caribbean. These values derive from European colonial systems of social stratification, which devalue creole language in general, but reprove it in women especially. Women, mainly those from the upper and middle classes, are socialized and expected to use formal language, which is usually the mother tongue of the former colonizer. In her observations of the relationship between language and gender among children in Guadeloupe, Schnepel (1993) observes how:

> among young children in creolophone households, it is not uncommon to find little boys who know no French; and in francophone households, little girls who are unfamiliar with Creole… to understand this solidarity of language-and-gender, one must grasp the particular complicity which ties Creole to the sexual… In a general way, Creole is connoted with being "common" (vulgaire), "dirty" (malpropre), or "badly brought up" (malélivé)." (254)

These attitudes toward communication reflect Caribbean society's notions of respect and respectability, as well as gendered propriety (Mühleisen and Walicek 2008). They denote the strategic application of language to order and classify in ways that assert power as well as demarcate one's status. Vernacular communication is thus seen as a threat to femininity and social prestige.

In Jamaica, this language ideology is exemplified in the phenomenon of "uptown" and "downtown," a system of class stratification that hails straight from the plantation. These social categories are used to describe where one "belongs" in Jamaican society. They are vestiges of the two main competing

value systems that inform Jamaican cultural life, namely, that which is rooted in the country's African heritage and the other which is informed by the values of the European ex-colonizers (Gordon 2015). Racist social systems developed under plantation slavery created a stratified social structure based on the devaluation of African culture and the privileging of Europeanism (Shepherd 1986; Williams 1994; Beckles 2004). From this, hierarchal distinctions, originally based on race, now skin tone, privilege those with lighter skin and a middle-class background. As such, "uptown" and "downtown" become social status markers, the former associated with elite, Eurocentric and "refined" tastes and the latter with "ghetto," Afrocentric and coarse aesthetics (Gordon 2015).

This schema holds deep implications regarding femininity and propriety. Nonverbally, markers of "uptown" culture, such as having lighter skin, communicate standards of beauty, economic success, upward social mobility, access to resources and social standing. As one writer to the local Jamaican newspaper, *The Gleaner*, pointed out "[t]he 'browning',[1] as any Jamaican knows, is that fabled ideal of female beauty and male power in our society: the just-right mix of black and white" (Moss 2012, January 22). Additionally, "Patwa,"[2] or Jamaican English, is affiliated with the lower classes or "downtown" culture. It is often regarded pejoratively and in opposition to the Queen's English, which is valued as the lingua franca of the upper classes. Thus, at the intersections of gender, class, colorism and stigmatized vernacular communication styles, there are constitutive implications for when Caribbean women speak. Communicatively, depending on how elements of the matrix intersect, a woman's identity may be constructed as valued and desirable or marginal and objectionable. A woman from a lower social stratum, who is perhaps of a darker hue and communicates in the vernacular, signifies a different social worth than one who embodies idealized Eurocentric physical and communicative aesthetics. What then do the rhetorical dynamics of women reggae artistes tell us about this discursive milieu?

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[1] The term "browning" refers to light skinned Jamaicans:
[2] Patois

Woman's Tongue: Unapologetic

she finds a woman's tongue
and clacks curses at the wind
—*Lorna Goodison* (2017, 27)

Woman's tongue is the local name for the fruit from the tamarind tree, the flesh of which is very tart. Tamarind season is also a native phrase for the period just before crops are harvested when food is scarce. It is therefore a time of waiting and most certainly, endurance. Goodison's poem titled, "Tamarind Season", tells the story of a woman waiting for a change of fortune (Chamberlain 1993). She does not wait patiently, however, and "clacks curses at the wind" to communicate her displeasure. Her tamarind tongue conveys her discontent and struggle, as well as her inability to accept the vagaries of the season passively. In these two lines, I find a powerful allegory that captures the language ideology delineating the communication practices of many Caribbean women. This ideology is based on a counter poetics that centralizes directness and resistance as features of a rhetor's communicative performances. It is a pattern of communication that is as unapologetic as the bite of the tamarind fruit and which is expressly demonstrative. It is the essence of what I am referring to as woman's tongue, namely, a Caribbean feminist rhetorical epistemology born out of the region's specific discursive milieu discussed in the previous section.

According to Morgan (2002), "language ideologies are mirrors and tools that probe, reflect, refract, subvert, and exalt social and cultural production, reproduction, and representation" (37). Language ideologies therefore empower the rhetor to de/re/construct communicative norms and challenge existing power structures. In the context of the Caribbean, woman's tongue exemplifies a rhetorical philosophy of subversion that highlights a feminist stance against constraining gendered and class-based communication practices. As such, it delights in the vernacular and the "vulgar" at times, relishing the ability to shock and affront social conventions regulating communicative interactions. To illustrate this point, I turn to the lyrics of popular Jamaican dancehall artiste Tanya Stephens, whose body of work highlights many aspects of woman's tongue ideology. Specifically, I focus on how her rhetoric produces a "rude girl" poetics that rejects "uptown" models of femininity. In challenging middle class notions of womanhood, Stephens' lyrics recast the sexual politics of gender, metaphorically putting women on top and in positions of agency.

Tanya Stephens: Direct Counter Poetics Challenging
the Politics of Gender

Derisively, Tanya Stephens tells men repeatedly through her songs, "oonuh nuh ready fi dis yet."[3] It is a line from the song *Yuh Nuh Ready Fi Dis Yet* that conveys her lack of conviction about men's oft vaunted sexual prowess. Like the woman from Goodison's poem, "Tamarind Season," the persona in Stephens' song is impatient and unapologetically vocalizes her frustrations through this refrain. Clacking "curses" at the perceived want of dexterity among the men that women encounter, the vocalist chants:

> Have yuh ever wonder what mek a girl cum[4]
> A woman fus fi satisfy before yuh say yuh done
> Yuh caan say a thing if yuh end up a get bun
> Caw yuh nuh ready fi this yet, bwoy

In this stanza, the tone is biting and the language direct. There is no ambiguity about what is being communicated. Plainly, men are being warned that the current sexual status quo will not hold. They must be intentional about their partners' sexual pleasures, as the first two lines indicate, or risk being cuckolded as suggested by the third line. This is a common theme throughout Stephens' rhetorical repertoire, that is, to boldly interrogate the sexual braggadocio of many Jamaican men. Philosophically, the artiste's discursive performances accomplish two things. First, they challenge the Western notion that women's communicative acts are typically indirect (Lakoff 1975; Tannen 1990) and second, they disrupt Caribbean notions of hierarchical gendered communication produced through colonial conditioning.

Regarding the first point, communication scholarship is replete with studies that categorize women's conversational style as primarily implicit. According to Palczewski etal (2019), the primary characteristic attributed to this communication style is "rapport talk" (64), meaning that when women talk, the focus is on collaboration and showing empathy. This kind of indirect communication is deployed to soften claims or requests made by women speakers and uphold rules of feminine politeness (Palczewski etal, 2019). However, Stephens' rhetorical approach or woman's tongue, violates

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3   You are not ready for this
4   Have you ever wondered what makes a girl come
         A woman should be satisfied before you are finished
         Please don't complain if your partner cheats on you
         Because you are not ready for this, boy

these norms. There is nothing polite about her lyrics nor does she hedge in expressing women's displeasure. In fact, her communication choices most reflect what would be described in the literature as a "masculine" conversational style, which is direct and assertive. Contrary to Lakoff's (1975) arguments that women strategically learn to use indirect talk to better accomplish their goals in patriachal settings, Stephens' poetics is characterized by direct talk that straightforwardly states what she thinks, feels and wants. It is not a rhetoric that tries to persuade the listener about her point of view. It simply states what is, aggressively, not unlike the sharpness of the tamarind.

In this respect, the ways in which woman's tongue function create important counterpoints to communication theories developed in the Unites States and Europe. These differences may in part be explained by the oral nature of Caribbean communication practices. The "oraliteracy" (Cooper 1995, 82) of Caribbean language patterns is typically delegitimized or go unrecognized in Western hierarchies of knowledge. The latter tends to equate orality with illiteracy while privileging scribal communicative conventions. These discursive rules governing language, predominantly established in Europe, were exported globally via colonial expansionism. Such regulations established a dichotomous relationship between native languages encountered, many of which were oral, and the European languages eventually imposed. Scribality, or the written word, therefore became the yardstick by which literacy and subsequently knowledge was measured.

Not surprisingly, rhetorical patterns defined by oracy are not accounted for in many communication theories emanating from Euro-American schools of thought. They dis(miss) the fact that "oracy is not merely the absence of literacy; it is a way of seeing, a knowledge system" (Cooper 1995, 81). Regulative and constitutive rules recognized in the current literature as governing the vocabulary of language (McCornack 2019) give primacy to scribal communication and are not always applicable in contexts such as the Caribbean. Subsequently, Stephens' direct talk or unconcern for rules of politeness differ starkly from ideas about women's rhetoric as established by Tannen (1990) and others. The vernacular in which Stephens often talks is oral in nature. Combined with the historical specificities of the Caribbean as a cultural space, this oracy produces different communication pragmatics or social rules than those generally documented in the current literature. These departures readily create room for epistemological evolutions that reflect the contextual communication realities of places such as the Caribbean as in the case of woman's tongue and the feminist rhetorical performances of women such as Tanya Stephens.

Regarding established hierarchies of gendered communication, the frankness of Tanya Stephens' lyrics defies ideologized representations of language that deem explicit sexual talk by women inappropriate. Her language is not only explicit in its directness but also in its provocative textual, sexual politics. She dares to talk openly about sexuality, which is usually the province of men, and does so irreverently, further making her communication indecorous. In the song, *Handle de Ride*, Stephens brazenly chides:

> Yuh couldn't handle de ride[5]
> See it deh now
> Yuh gone pon de broad side
> Hold down yuh head from me ya waan hide
> Hit the curb and all a slip and a slide

The lyrics convey a woman's deep disappointment with the sexual performance of her partner. However, instead of dutifully "faking it" as many women are encouraged to do culturally, she points out the shortcoming in spectacular fashion. She compares the efforts of the male persona in the song to a poorly maneuvered vehicle, going in every possible direction except where it ought to be heading. This constant mockery of men's sexual abilities is an expression of woman's tongue that deeply challenges patriarchal norms that exalt traditional masculinity as always performed successfully. Such talk for a woman is impolite and usually associated with a ghettoized femininity. Also, the fact that this discourse uses vernacular language further challenges its "respectability." As Schnepel (1993) recounts, there is a certain complicity that ties Creole, or other local Caribbean languages, to the sexual in a way that formal language is not. The two language domains, namely Creole and formal European lingua, "evoke the respective positions of the man and the woman in relation to sexuality: virility of the male versus modesty or reserve of the other" (254). In other words, vernacular expressions and their associations with crassness and explicit sexuality are acceptable forms of communication for men but not for women who wish to be esteemed. Socially, for women, that type of lexical engagement is considered undignified and so lowers their prestige, especially since the vernacular is considered the language of the common and lower classes.

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[5]   You couldn't handle the sexual experience
        See now
        You are now on the soft shoulder
        You are holding your head down because you want to hide from me
        You've hit the curb, swerving all over the place

However, Stephens' discursive displays defy class. First, the women personae in the songs are neither explicitly "ghetto girls" nor "uptown" brownings. This is a noted ambiguity about their social class, which highlights the universality of certain problems induced by local gender politics. The issue of a woman's sexual gratification, or the lack thereof, is not bound by social status. Any woman may be confronted with this issue. Vernacular language therefore seems a decidedly apropos means of conveying this mutuality. Developed in colonial plantation society, Jamaican "patwa" may be considered a vehicle through which the society's most visceral experiences are captured and conveyed. It is that repository of collective trauma and triumph, transmitter of local traditions and culture, and locus of the familial and communal. It therefore seems appropriate that Stephens uses this common language to communicate a collective predicament. In this respect, woman's tongue expresses deep regard for the vernacular. I am not arguing that woman's tongue as a feminist rhetorical strategy only values local language, nor that local parlance is the primary location of its epistemology. I am however suggesting that woman's tongue recognizes the potency of the vernacular and deploys it politically.

Tanya Stephens' rhetoric strongly resonates with the idea of woman's tongue as I have tried to outline it, especially as it relates to one of the concept's most compelling features. That is, the articulation of a rhetorical agency that is both transgressive and liberatory. Take for example, the fact that the personae from Stephens' songs do not seem to be in the business of chasing propriety. They appear to be more intent on commanding respect than in pursuing respectability. As such, Stephens' discursive performances reflect and also contribute to a Caribbean feminist thought production that is grounded in demolishing skewed hierarchies of power which continue to inform gender relations in the region (Mohammed 2000). The sharp sting of woman's tongue, mischaracterized as abrasive and emasculating by some detractors, signifies a language ideology of resistance, and one that mobilizes all the survival instincts borne out of waiting out the tamarind season, to apply it to the necessary dialectic of the feminist inquiry. The discussion now turns to the final section in which I explore the grassroots politics often articulated by Caribbean feminist rhetoric. Here, I argue that the goal of woman's tongue is not civility. Its primary focus is political contestation in order to produce social change and renewal.

Woman's Tongue: Restorative Fire

> That survivor over there
> With bare feet and bound hair
> Has some seeds stored
> Under her tongue…
> —*Lorna Goodison* (2001, 132)

In this Goodison poem titled *Survivor*, we have another iteration of woman's tongue. It paints for us a vision of Caribbean women's communication as restorative and resilient. Through the lines, we envision perhaps, woman post tamarind season. Her tongue is no longer clacking with frustration but pregnant with poetry. Drawing attention to Goodison's depiction of women's language as agentic and conceptional, Siklosi (2020) describes the poet's writing as creating a "flourishing feminist portrait" (par. 9). This idea is aptly illustrated through Goodison's connection of woman's tongue to notions of fertility and healing. However, this is a healing that occurs through fire, wherein the Phoenix-like survivor disperses fiery restorative seeds via her poetics. In this regard, woman's tongue is understood as a fiery grassroots feminist rhetoric that is concerned with language's reparative abilities in addressing the social ills created by an elitist political power structure. To illustrate the point, I turn to the lyrics of reggae singer Queen Ifrica, a self-styled lioness whose music is widely recognized among Jamaicans for its militancy and fiery brand of political dissent.

Queen Ifrica: Grassroots Political Contestations

Queen Ifrica's particular poetics may be described as operating simultaneously as a voice of resistance as well as communal identification (Baugh 1986). Not only is her rhetoric blistering, it also reverberates as that of a poet who is able to speak from inside the condition of the people. This because she seems to speak in a voice in which "the communal and the personal are always shading into one another" (15). This is not surprising given Ifrica's Rastafari worldview. Rastafari is a Jamaican religion with roots in the local peasantry and African revival spiritual philosophy (Chevannes 1994). According to Chevannes, Rastafari religious belief took root in the social unrest of 1930s Jamaica. These historical beginnings have in part marked the movement with a strong social justice and fiery doctrine. As such, Rastafarians philosophically coalesce around the big idea of securing emancipation from "the system of social, cultural and … economic oppression on which modern Jamaica is built" (1). These tenets infuse

Ifrica's discourse with a distinct grassroots ethos. She is a woman of the people who, as Wilentz (2000) suggests of cultural workers, aims to heal self and community from the socially constructed malaise she identifies, through her woman's tongue discourse. The song *Genocide* provides a poignant illustration of this philosophy:

> Queen Ifrica come again to tell di yutes dem di truth yea yeah[6]
> Defending di poor all across di earth
> Babylon did a guh dish yuh dirt
> Again yow
> Babylon a use might and a try fight right
> A seek justice fi genocide yeah
> Blood sucking vampires unuh crawl by night
> Bun dem filthy ways JAH JAH nuh like yeah

In this song, the themes of restoration and communal identification are prominent. Metapoetically, the singer is on a quest for justice, signaling the artiste's intention to seek some form of restitution for the predations of a "genocide" unleashed by "Babylon." In an Iliad-like journey that takes her "all across di earth," to battle demons or "blood sucking vampires" on behalf of the poor, Ifrica assumes the role of a poet-healer, trying to instigate recuperation from the collective trauma of "genocide." I argue here that genocide is a metaphor for the social, economic and political oppression that many ordinary citizens encounter at the hands of tyrannical or neglectful authority figures. Moreover, it is a symbolic reminder of the systemic nature of this oppression, the immensity of its destructiveness as well as its racial undertones.

To help reconcile this incalculable trauma, the poet-healer relies on a restorative rhetoric that is primarily symbolized by her quest for justice. It is also represented by the imagery of fire that comes in the last line of the stanza where she promises to "bun dem filthy ways." Here, under Ifrica's tongue are seeds of fire. The suggestion is that when planted, they will cleanse the earth of the social diseases left by genocide in order to make

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[6]   Queen Ifrica is here once more to tell the youth the truth, yes, yes
Defending the poor from all across the earth
Babylon [oppressive systems] was planning to make your lives hell
Again yes
Babylon uses might to defend against the truth
I seek justice for genocide
Bloodd sucking vampires lurk under the cover of darkness
We will burn their filthy way, Jehovah doesn't like it

room for a fresh start. In essence, Ifrica wishes to raze the old social and political structures to make room for a new, more wholesome imaginary. The imagery of fire is also a testament to the singer's Rastafari roots. In Rastafari culture, fire is a mechanism of cleansing and healing and is often invoked to signify members' intentions to rid society of oppressive forces. Together, the tropes of healing and pursuit of justice evident in Queen Ifrica's rhetoric communicate what I suggest are identifiable features of woman's tongue, namely, its restorative and agentic capacities.

As with the woman from Goodison's poem quoted earlier in this section of the discussion, the personae in *Genocide* is a survivor. They too have endured the ravages of oppression along with the downtrodden for whom they seek reparations. This sense of survival *along with*, I argue, establishes a sense of connection or communal identification with others, a motif that is indelibly etched in Ifrica's discursive performances:

> Forget de likkle pay[7]
> It done before mi reach home
> Mi naw go check mi neighbor fi no more loan
> Mi an hungry a no friend
> But is like seh tomorrow we go haffi par again
> Mi wish mi belly full
> Coulda meet we a de crossroads
> A no mi alone, mi know it woulda draw crowd
> Cause round every corner yu turn a de same concern
> We a hustle and naw earn.

In the song above, *It Hard*, the sense of shared experience that the singer feels with other members of the community is palpable. It comes through in the third line of the song in which the speaker references going to the neighbors for a "loan" during desperate times. Relying on one's neighbor in times of distress is part of the social capital paradigm that exists across many Caribbean societies, developed as a response to the vicissitudes created by

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[7]   Forget about the pay that is not enough
        It finishes before I even get home
        I am not going to the neighbors anymore to ask for a loan
        Hunger and I aren't friends
        But it seems that tomorrow we will be seeing each other again
        I wish I wasn't hungry
        We could meet at the crossroads
        I'm not the only one, I know that there are many others like me
        Because everyone where one turns it's the same concern
        We are working hard but still not earning enough.

the many colonially induced deprivations. Durston (1999) describes social capital as "the set of norms, institutions and organizations that promote trust and cooperation among persons in communities and also in wider society" (103). This understanding of social capital serves to reinforce the thematic concerns of community and commonality invoked in Ifrica's lyrics. Although the speaker from *It Hard* is hesitant to call upon their neighbor in this specific instance, the line makes it clear that they have done so before. They do not want to do it "no more." Their reserve lays in an understanding that the act of borrowing from an equally deprived neighbor is wholly unsustainable, not just for the speaker but for their neighbor as well. The enormity of the problem renders it so, as implied by the last three lines, which indicate the widespread nature of the issue. Thus, through her rhetorical practices, Ifrica establishes a sense of community by presenting the idea of hardship and survival as a shared experience. In doing so, the singer also lays out another dimension of her healing strategy, namely solidarity through cooperation.

In other songs such as *Peace and Love*, Ifrica invites the listener to "Come be a part of a brighter day," entreating the community to be part of the solution by sowing seeds of harmony. In another, *Can't Breathe*, she makes her commitment to the community clear; "I can hear my neighbour crying "I Can't Breathe,"/ Now I'm in the struggle/I can't leave." She repeatedly makes it clear as in the song *Lioness on the Rise*, that if it is ever required, she will "be on the front lines" defending her neighbors. This unquestionable commitment to the community that features throughout Queen Ifrica's cogitations may be read as part of the longstanding emancipatory impulse that have characterized Caribbean women since slavery (Barriteau 2001; Zlotnik 2012). This is an impulse which seems to propel them to be defenders of family and communiuty. As Shepherd (1991) writes:

> [B]lack women represented a strong challenge to the slave system, not only in terms of their participation in overt resistance but by their resistance to acculturative forces of an increasingly creolizing society. She kept kinship bonds strong and the African culture alive because of her central role in cultural transmission. (191).

What Shepherd desribes here resembles a feminist compulsion derived from the particular circumstances of life under plantation slavery, meaning that the actions of the women described in the quote are clearly concerned with, and are resisting, the distribution of power within plantation societies. It is not surprising then, that this impulse finds its way into some Caribbean women's discursive practices such as those embodied by Queen Ifrika's rhetoric.

Themes of community and survival highlight the strong grassroots ethic of Ifrica's discourse. This principle resonates in the concern for the plight of ordinary people, which is a consistent agenda of many of her songs. As such, Ifrica's politics resonates with many of the earliest strands of feminist thought in the Caribbean, such as that described by Shepherd above. However, it also departs from early twentieth century feminist movements that were led by and which championed the concerns of mainly middleclass Caribbean women (Reddock 1990; Rosenberg 2010). In this regard, woman's tongue as a rhetorical phenomenon draws attention to the issue of class oppression that still exists in Caribbean societies. It is not just concerned with sexism or patriarchy but oppression in multiple forms.

Conclusion

> Loose now
> the salt cords
> binding our tongues
> splitting our palettes
> causing us the speak blood
> curbing the vowels of possibility
> —*Lorna Goodison* (2017, 78)

So far, I have attempted to outline what I see as important features of a Caribbean feminist communication epistemology. Specifically, I have tried to locate this argument within indigenous modes of knowledge production that are germane to the Caribbean as a geo-political space. Conceptually, the idea of woman's tongue captures the rhetorical dimensions of feminist communicative practices found in places such as Jamaica. Woman's tongue organizes a set of discursive principles that are grounded in the historical specificities of the region, including resistance to slavery, colonialism, local sexist practices as well as classism. Woman's tongue is also a distinctive product of Caribbean women's voices as shaped by their very personalized, communicative responses to oppression. In describing this phenomenon, Zlotnik (2012) explains:

> There is evidence to suggest that slave women led one of the most fundamental forms of verbal expression: the song. They used this medium as they toiled in the fields using artistry and often malice, making penetrating statements about themselves, or heaping ridicule upon their masters. (156)

In other words, in many instances, the response of Caribbean women to oppression has been rhetorical. According to Zlotnik, documented accounts from European planters often described enslaved Black women as insolent,

and of hurling verbal abuses at their managers and overseers. Caribbean women's rhetoric then, as I have so far described, has its foundations in the verbal resistance that such women have seemingly been engaged in for centuries. Oppression, it appears, is that common denominator that ignites these communicative expressions and which looses the salt cords binding women's tongues, causing them to speak blood, whether it is against sexism, as in the case of Tanya Stephens' discourse, or political and class oppression in the case of Queen Ifrica.

In my discussion of a culturally relevant Caribbean feminist rhetoric as espoused through the poetics of Tanya Stephens and Queen Ifrica, I am not suggesting that this discursive phenomenon is a definitive or universal communicative practice. I am, however, offering this perspective as *one* of the ways in which Caribbean women speak from a feminist standpoint. I also suggest this perspective as a way of de-essentializing the rhetorical eminence of Euro-American communication philosophies in the study of communication phenomena in the region.   Additionally, I recognize a limitation in the predominantly heteronormative iterations of this feminist discourse, especially in the examples from popular culture on which I drew to illustrate the idea. For example, a number of Queen Ifrica's discursive performances have expressed notes of homophobia, as in the song *Keep it to Yu Self*, where the singer self-consciously outlines her disapproval of same-sex relationships. I do not believe that this limitation delegitimizes the contributions I offer in this essay. Instead, I encourage the reading of woman's tongue as *a* type of feminist communication practice that seems to privilege heteronormativity. This is an idea that certainly warrants further exploration. My intention here is not to reify this offered theoretical viewpoint in any qualitative way, but mainly to create a starting point from which to think about ways in which discursive elements of Caribbean women's communication practice may be explored and theorized.

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CHAPTER 7

OPPOSITIONAL GAZING THROUGH AFFECTIVE DISPOSITION THEORY: DECOLONIZING AFFECTIVE DISPOSITION THEORY WITH JUDAS AND THE BLACK MESSIAH

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Introduction

African American life has been depicted by entertainment media and has arguably become one of the most influential genres of popular culture today. Distinct characteristics of African American life – including social, politically and especially cultural cues – are the central differences between

Black-focused media versus mainstream media.[1] [2] [3] [4] In the film industry, the emergence of Black-oriented films has tried to contextualize the Black experience and connect with the audience.

From early on African American film writers and producers, like Oscar Micheaux, used films to counter the pervasive stereotypes about African Americans that were presented in conventional movie themes. [5] [6] These films revolved around the family struggles, relationships and societal pressures that are unique to African Americans. During the 1980s, a slew of acclaimed Black filmmakers–like Spike Lee, John Singleton and Allen and Albert Hughes –tapped into Black American life in urban settings that were previously undetected in the film industry.[7] [8] In the 21st century, Black film creators have continued to make culturally sound movie schemes that are embedded in the modern Black experience, [9] [10] [11] reflecting Afrofuturistic premises in alternative worlds [12] [13] and of course criticisms of American society [14] [15]–all of which are designed to elicit engagement and emotional connections from African Americans viewers.

The internet has created explosive growth in the media environment. This new media has allowed Hollywood the ability to promote, interact with fans, and receive real-time criticism and responses to their television and movie

1. Nielsen, "Black Influence Goes Mainstream in the U.S."
2. Richard Powell, "Black Art and Culture in the 20th Century."
3. Harry Shaw, "Perspectives of Black Popular Culture."
4. Tricia Rose, "Black Noise: Rap Music and Black Culture in Contemporary America."
5. Betti Carol Vanepps-Taylor, "Oscar Micheaux: A Biography: --Dakota Homesteader, Author, Pioneer Film Maker."
6. Anna Siomopoulos, "The Birth of a Black Cinema: Race, Reception, and Oscar Micheaux's within Our Gates."
7. Houston Baker, "Spike Lee and the Commerce of Culture."
8. Stephanie Patridge, "Philosophy, Black Film, Film Noir by Flory, Dan."
9. Tommy Lott, "A No-Theory Theory of Contemporary Black Cinema."
10. Ryan Judylyn, "Outing the Black Feminist Filmmaker in Julie Dash's Illusions."
11. S Craig Watkins, "Representing: Hip Hop Culture and the Production of Black Cinema."
12. Myron T. Strong and K. Sean Chaplin, "Afrofuturism and Black Panther."
13. Ytasha Womack, "Afrofuturism: The World of Black Sci-Fi and Fantasy Culture."
14. Thomas Cripps, "The Birth of a Race Company: An Early Stride toward a Black Cinema"
15. Manthia Diawara, "Black American Cinema"

creations.[16] [17] [18] The Hollywood film industry is getting new recognition through viewers' ability to share their thoughts and critique of films using social media. Lipizzi (2016) states how social media reactions can predict the success of movies. Electronic word-of-mouth can impact sales across different phases of movie screening.[19] For Black audiences, the new media environment has added their perspective and thoughts to the mass public, in ways that they could not before due to systematic barriers of entry.[20] [21] [22]Knowing that viewers' reactions to movies have a large impact on the film industry, and that Black audiences who were previously marginalized have emerged as prominent voices, research is needed to explore the content of viewers' reactions on social media platforms when discussing movies.

Social scientists have extensively studied audiences' reactions to the movies, with the relatively new field of media psychology adding a psychological perspective to studying engagement. A popular theory from media psychology that has been used to understand audiences and film interactions is affective disposition theory (ADT). This idea was first posited by Zillmann and Cantor (1977) to understand why audiences enjoy entertainment media and then was expanded by Zillmann (1996), who created a model of disposition formation. The basic premise is that audiences' enjoyment of media increases when "good" morally sound characters receive a positive outcome at the end. [23] [24] For characters who show poor behaviors, audiences want a negative outcome.

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16. Henry Jenkins, "Textual Poachers: Television Fans & Participatory Culture"
17. Henry Jenkins, "The Future of Fandom"
18. Henry Jenkins, "Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide"
19. Hyunmi Baek et al., "Chronological Analysis of the Electronic Word- of-Mouth effect of Four Social Media channels on Movie Sales: Comparing Twitter, Yahoo! Movies, YouTube, and Blogs"
20. Matthew Babcock et al., "Diffusion of Pro- and Anti-False Information Tweets: The Black Panther Movie Case"
21. Felecia Jones, "The Black Audience and the BET Channel."
22. Catherine Squires, "*African Americans and the Media"*

23. Arthur Raney, "Affective disposition theory"
24. Dolf Zillmann. And Joanne R. Cantor, "Affective Responses to the Emotions of a Protagonist"
25. Sophie Janicke and Arthur A. Raney, "Modeling the Antihero Narrative Enjoyment Process"
26. Jens Kjeldgaard-Christiansen, "The Bad Breaks of Walter White: An Evolutionary Approach to the Fictional Antihero"
27. Margrethe Bruun Vaage, "*Antihero in American Television"*

Affective disposition theory has faced criticism from scholars, who argue that it favors traditional hero/villain narratives and lacks in its examination of anti-hero plots. [25] [26] [27] We add to this critique and argue that ADT has been especially detrimental to the study of Black film because it explains a process of enjoyment from audiences that does not acknowledge the complexities innate in Black film typology. Furthermore, ADT proposes a White normative lens that would be insufficient to explain the audience engagement process for Black films that reflect distinctive social, cultural and political elements. Using the film *Judas and the Black Messiah*, this study analyzes audience responses to the characters of the movie using ADT as the guiding theory. We argue that Black movies need a theory that considers the complexity of the Black experience when analyzing viewers' reactions.

Viewpoints centered in Whiteness are pervasive in communication research and perpetuate an understanding of society that is compliant with White supremacy. When left unchecked and uncriticized, these ideological frameworks help to produce a mono-racial understanding of phenomenona, keep research stagnant in findings based on Whiteness, and suppress subaltern and minority voices. Criticisms regarding the centering of White masculinity have been illuminated by researchers, who argue that it is not only detrimental to communication scholarship itself, but also to future scholars who use past research to guide new developments in the field. [28] [29] Longstanding frameworks, like that of affective disposition theory, not only need to be re-evaluated to be applicable for modern research but also to decolonize the deeply entrenched foundational theories that are the building blocks in the communications field. For the advancement of the field and the inclusivity of research in the future, we will posit a critical framework to accompany ADT when examining Black films and argue that audience reception research needs to also focus on non-White viewers.

Black Cinema and Social Justice

Black films that focus on Civil Rights and social justice initiatives have been studied from several perspectives throughout the years. Although the

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28. Paula Chakravartty, Rachel Kuo, Victoria Grubbs and Charllton McIlwain, "#CommunicationSoWhite."
29. Eve Ng, Khadijah Costley White and Anamik Saha, "#CommunicationSoWhite: Race and Power in the Academy and Beyond."

literature is sparse, the following studies gives a brief overview of the current status of Black cinema.

In 1969 the Chicago Conspiracy trial was held, with Bobby Seale, a co-founder of the Black Panther Party, being charged with conspiracy for allegedly being a part of anti-Vietnam War protests. At the trial Bobby Seale continued to shout his innocence, leading to the judge ordering for him to be chained and gagged. Burris (2015) examines the portrayal of this incident in films, and particularly ideas of resistance. A political and psychoanalytic approach is used to suggest that films have tendencies to permeate Bobby Seale's struggle with an emphasis on power structures and their relation to oppression historically and presently.

Additionally, in their study Hafez (2018) investigates the ways in which the media, specifically movie representations of Malcolm X, had lasting impressions on the youth in relation to syncretic identity construction. At the center of this influence of hip-hop lies Malcolm X and the youth's ability to relate with him religiously and as a figure of hip-hop culture. The researchers interview seven of the Muslim youth from Austria and use their narratives to look at identity formation, specifically how they use Malcolm X and hip-hop to give meaning to their own lives. Ultimately, the researchers concluded by suggesting that the youth merged their religious culture with their youth culture and formed a subaltern culture that exemplified protest against practices of hegemony in their lives.

In 1995, the movie *Panther* was released and depicting the Black Panther Party as a group that demised in their fight to achieve racial, economic and social justice. The movie also portrayed White police officers as placing unjustified violence onto Panther members as well as the Black community and undermining Black empowerment movements. Hoerl (2007) used newspaper reports, news coverage and reviews of *Panther* that appeared in the seven months surrounding its release (from March 1995 through October 1995) to examine this questioning of *Panther's* historical accuracy. The researcher used nine newspaper articles, 20 newspaper reviews from U.S. newspapers, with widespread the CBS network program *This Morning* and NPR's national radio program *Morning Edition*, also to investigate this. The researcher analysis suggested that the reviews and reports indicate counter-memories to *Panther,* creating major challenges to the film relating to the ways critics' criteria of historical accuracy reflect ideological biases, which are then reinforced by the media.

In another study, using the 1988 Film *Mississippi Burning* (Hoerl, 2009*)*, extensively criticized the inaccurate portrayal of the FBI's investigation of three murdered Civil Rights activists in 1964. The researcher specifically looks at how this film invokes a sense of cinematic amnesia, and how through these reviews of the *Mississippi Burning* film, media executives, writers, and critics reinforce this process. Using journalistic reviews of the film to examine the interplay amongst media executives, writers, and critics who discuss their own ways in how historical events should be remembered in films and popular culture, which is rooted in racist practices by the film industry. The coverage consists of ten journalistic articles and twenty journalistic reviews of *Mississippi Burning* from US newspapers and *Times* magazine from December 1988 through January 1989. The dominant perspectives from the reviews reinforce cinematic amnesia and allows for films, such as *Mississippi Burning* to portray inaccurate depictions of civil rights activists.

Lastly, McElroy and Shipka (2015) examine reviews of three Hollywood films, *The Help* (2011), *Lee Daniels' The Butler* (2013) and *Selma* (2014), that depict the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s. The researchers state that because Hollywood is continually critiqued for its role in racial discourse and representations of Blacks, minimal attention has been placed on how film critics specifically discuss race in their reviews. By employing a textual analysis, the researchers examine the critical response to these three films in which emphasis is placed on how the reviewers rely on memory and history when forming their opinions. The researchers found that the reviewers respected the Civil Rights Movement and the overall Black experience, but also still questioned Hollywood's accuracy of the portrayals in these films.

Researching Black films has primarily focused on representations of characters, whether the film was depicted accurately or inaccurately, and the coverage and reporting of these films. Minimal studies have actually studied the discourse from the Black community about these movies specifically. This study will provide a better understanding of how Black viewers talk about and conceptualize Black films that focus on civil rights and social justice initiatives.

History of Affective Disposition Theory

Affective disposition theory has been used to understand audiences' engagement in videogames, [30] television programming [31] [32] and films. [33] [34] Traditionally, ADT examines the audiences' perceptions of characters in terms of morality, with them wanting favorable outcomes for characters with high morals and negative outcomes for characters with low morals. [35] [36] Zillmann (1996) broke down the process of audience engagement into seven steps: perception assessment, or the viewers' initial opinion about characters; moral judgment, the viewers' judgment of characters based on morality; affective disposition, the hopes that the likable characters get a good outcome and unlikeable characters a bad one; anticipation and apprehension, viewers compare their hopes to the actual event of the narrative; perception and assessment (2), the viewers' assessment of the outcome as it relates to moral expectations; response to the outcome, or the viewers' feelings towards the outcome; and moral judgment (2), the viewers' final approval of the narrative. The theory catapulted research on media entertainment and has heavily been used to understand audiences' reception of characters. [37] [38] [39] [40] And while the theory finds its use in providing a praxis for understanding audience engagement, its conception

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30. Peter Vorderer, Tilo Hartmann, Christopher Klimmt. "Explaining the Enjoyment of Playing Video Games: The Role of Competition."
31. Vassilis Dalakasm and Jeff Langenderfer, "Consumer Satisfaction with Television Viewing."
32. Carina Weinmann, Franziska S. Roth, Frank M. Schneider, Tanja Krämer, Frederic R. Hopp, Melanie J. Bindl, and Arlene Luck,""I Don't Care About Politics, I Just Like That Guy!" Affective Disposition and Political Attributes in Information Processing of Political Talk Shows."
33. Bradford Owen and Matt Riggs, "Transportation, need for cognition, and affective disposition as factors in enjoyment of film narratives."
34. Daniel M. Shafer and Arthur A. Raney, "Exploring How We Enjoy Antihero Narratives."
35. Raney, "Affective disposition theory."
36. Zillmann and Cantor, "Affective responses to the emotions of a protagonist."
37. Elly Konjin and Johan Hoorn, "Some like it bad: Testing a model for perceiving and experiencing fictional characters."
38. Paul Jose and William Brewer, . "Development of Story Liking: Character Identification, Suspense, and Outcome Resolution."
39. James Potter, "On Media Violence."
40. Dolf Zillmann, "Mechanisms of Emotional Involvement with Drama."

follows some of the ills of centering Whiteness that is embodied by communication scholarship.

At the time that the theory was created, the fight for America to become more progressive towards racial equality was widespread. During the 1970s, the Civil Rights movements had spurred a wave of calls for more inclusive and representative portrayals of African Americans on TV, news and film. [41] In academia, the rise of cultural and feminist studies worked to question social norms and call for diverse approaches to scholarly text. [42] [43] However, the convergence of race, culture and gender was not included in ADT's foundation. Zillmann and Cantor (1997) did not state that this process was the only way audiences enjoy entertainment, however, their lack of consideration for cultural differences amongst viewers positioned the audience as a homogenous group. This idealistic foundation of the ADT approach subsequently eliminates alternative experiences of enjoyment for film, like that of the Black population.

Morality and Affective Disposition Theory

The central theme of ADT is ideas surrounding morality and viewers' rapport of characters. Research shows that narrative that evokes feelings derived from morality increase audience engagement and subsequent enjoyment. [44] [45] However, Black Americans' discernment of morality has been marked by key differences that reflect their lived experiences. Ward (1995) explains that morality in African American communities has traditions of interdependence, care and valuing justice, that is derived from slavery where communal dependence was salient to survival. Studies have also shown that spirituality and religion can drive African American ideas on morality, [46] [47] with others adding that a hybrid of faith and collective

41. Clint Wilson, Félix Gutiérrez, and Lena M Chao, "Racism, Sexism, and the Media: Multicultural Issues into the New Communications Age."
42. Stanley Baran and Dennis K Davis, "Mass Communication Theory: Foundations, Ferment, and Future."
43. David Giles, "Media Psychology."
44. Bradford Owen, and Matt Riggs, "Transportation, need for cognition, and affective disposition as factors in enjoyment of film narratives"
45. Raney, "Affective disposition theory"
46. Frederick Harris, "Something within: Religion in African-American Political Activism"
47. Michèle Lamont and Crystal Marie Fleming, "Competence and Religion in the Cultural Repertoire of the African American Elite"

well-being ultimately defines morality and ethics in Black communities.[48] Critical Black scholars have used Black morality to question the "universality" of ethics and morals that reflect Western ideals and standards. [49] [50] And even empirical attempts have been made to distinguish African American culture and morals, from that of White Americans. [51] [52] [53] In order to understand perceptions of Black morality, scholarly approaches need to direct specific attention to non-Western ideals of ethics–a concept that ADT largely glances over.

In addition, affective disposition theory's reliance on the social scientific paradigm for its application has limited the assurance of its findings and leads to sweeping generalizations about audiences. This is seen in recent studies that utilize ADT to understand morality that does not investigate audiences based on racial, or even cultural differences. Grizzard et al. (2021) reviewed audiences' enjoyment per retribution level in a narrative plot. In their sample of 307 participants, nearly half identified as White, and of the 55% of other races only 8.5% identified as Black or African American. They concluded that audiences overwhelmingly prefer equitable retribution for immoral actions however, they find that over-retribution endings are the "most fun" and under-retribution endings are the "most moving."[54] However, they do not distinguish retribution likeliness per participant race and assume that the majority White sample is indicative of all audiences. In another study, Grizzard et al. (2020) conduct two experiments to find out how character interdependence relates to disposition. Again, their sample of 217 participants is majority White, with 18 identifying as Black. In a study on morally ambiguous characters and enjoyment, Krakowiak and Oliver (2012) solicited 313 undergraduate students and more than 80% identified as White. The researchers did not even report the breakdown of the remaining participants. Matthews (2019)

48. Pj Nel, "Morality and Religion in African Thought"
49. Ephraim Ibekwe, "Questioning Morality and Religion in African Thought"
50. Heidi Verhoef and Claudine Michel, "Studying Morality within the African Context: A Model of Moral Analysis and Construction"
51. Ziad Swaidan, Mohammed Y.A. Rawwas, and Scott J. Vitell, "Culture and Moral Ideologies of African Americans."
52. Lakeesha Woods and Robert J. Jagers, "Are Cultural Values Predictors of Moral Reasoning in African American Adolescents?"
53. Charles Wright, "Particularity and Perspective Taking: On Feminism and Habermas's Discourse Theory of Morality"
54. Matthew Grizzard, C Joseph Francemone, Kaitlin Fitzgerald, Jialing Huang, and Changhyun Ahn, "Interdependence of Narrative Characters: Implications for Media Theories"

empirical analysis on how audience disposition influences moral judgment followed the same procedure: an overwhelmingly White sample to make a generalized conclusion about audiences and engagement. In other studies testing ADT and audiences, the lack of demographic information collected other than gender [55] [56] is also reflective of the field's tendency to center Whiteness as the standard audience.

The lack of recognition of racial and cultural multiplicity in studies on morality and audiences, is also met with ADT never being applied to Black films watched by Black audiences in its more than 40-year span of existence. ADT is in much need of a re-assessment to not only make it appropriate to use for non-White media consumers, but to fill in the large gap in research that omits minority perspective.

Current Critiques on Affective Disposition Theory

Affective disposition theory has not gone without criticism. Scholars have found that ADT had shortcomings when applied to alternative film plots like that of an antihero film. An antihero film is described as a film where a protagonist is defined by their own self-interest, absence of heroic attributes and is at odds with society.[57] [58] Using the action-horror film *Perdita Durango*, Raney et al. (2009) found that ADT was not adequate enough to explain viewers' enjoyment of the movie. In their experiment, viewers not only liked the anti-hero protagonist but found that their actions were as morally appropriate as that of the hero.[59] Janicke and Raney (2018) investigated this further by conducting an experiment on undergraduate college students and identified that character identification, instead of moral judgment, predicted the liking of the antihero protagonist.

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55. Arthur Raney, "Punishing Media Criminals and Moral Judgment: The Impact on Enjoyment"
56. Ron Tamborini, Clare Grall, Sujay Prabhu, Matthias Hofer, Eric Novotny, Lindsay Hahn, Brian Klebig, et al., "Using Attribution Theory to Explain the Affective Dispositions of Tireless Moral Monitors toward Narrative Characters."
57. Chris Heckman, "What Is an Anti Hero? Definition and Examples in Film and Literature"
58. Vaage, "Antihero in American Television"
59. Arthur Raney, H Schmid, J Niemann, and M Ellensohn. "Testing Affective Disposition Theory: A Comparison of the Enjoyment of Hero and Antihero Narratives"

In addition, story schemas or the "set of expectations about the internal structure of stories" [60] also can disrupt ADTs process. Shafer and Raney (2012) found that a reliance on story schema can sometimes replace moral considerations in antihero films and can signal moral disengagement for viewers, which over time helps them develop alternative lenses to enjoy films. Moral disengagement is a familiar lens for researchers to rely on when ADT is inadequate in understanding both enjoyment of anti-hero plots and audiences' empathy towards immorality.[61] [62]

Outside of film entertainment, scholars like Sapolsky (1980) found that viewers' race was a bigger indicator of disposition and enjoyment rather than morality. Race and disposition have been studied as correlated across various fields of psychological research.[63] [64] [65] We contend the absence of race in the current interrogations of ADT has worked to uphold the hegemonic lens that subjugates Black experiences from media psychology research. The criticisms we offered are essential to deconstructing the current paradigms and adding new knowledge to the field.

Movies and Social Media Reactions

Researchers have analyzed audience responses to various movies, though very few consist of an analysis of Black films.

Vichare (2019) examined audience response to the Black Panther movie by analyzing fan forums on *SuperHero Hype*. A textual analysis was used to explore how fans felt before and after the movie before release in theatres, in relation to expectations of the films that was adapted from a comic. Results showed that some fans were debating boycotting the movie due to one of the actors' controversial comments about not wanting to date Black women. Fans also predicted scores that would be given to the soundtrack

60. Muriel Rands, "Story Schema: Theory, Research and Practice."
61. Sophie Janicke and Arthur A. Raney, "Modeling the Antihero Narrative Enjoyment Process"
62. Maja Krakowiak and Mary Beth Oliver, "When Good Characters Do Bad Things: Examining the Effect of Moral Ambiguity on Enjoyment"
63. Thomas Ford, "Effects of Stereotypical Television Portrayals of African-Americans on Person Perception"
64. Mary Olivier, "Influences of Authoritarianism and Portrayals of Race on Caucasian Viewers' Responses to Reality-Based Crime Dramas."
65. Dorothy Taylor, Frank A. Biafora, and George J. Warheit. "Racial Mistrust and Disposition to Deviance among African American, Haitian, and Other Caribbean Island Adolescent Boys"

used in the background of the movie, including Kendrick Lamar's song "All the Stars." In summary, fans discussed and criticized various components of the movie including music, CGI technics, costume design, actor's race and gender.[66] Though fans were critical of the film, they appreciated the efforts done by Marvel Studios to show the comic world in a motion picture and appreciated various components of the film including the concept of making the movie Afro-centric.

Boisvert (2020) analyzed discourses published on the official Facebook page of two U.S. television shows: *Sense 8* and *Billons*. The purpose of this study was to understand how interpretive communities form around gender-diverse TV series while questioning the influence a content provider may have on the reception of LGBTQ+ characters. Results showed that conversations around *Sense8* and *Billions* differed in that the comments; for *Sense8* commentary included passive criticism and progressive readings of the show while comments for *Billions* were more aggressive involving debates and attempts to solve gender ambiguities. This study gives examples of how movies and television shows can create political discourse including the issues minority characters face.

Another study that discusses political issues is Vertoont's (2017) examination of discourse around the television dating show *The Undateables*. The show focuses on the dating life of people with disabilities and launched in the United Kingdom in 2012. Vertoont (2017) analyzes blog posts, tweets and online press reviews of the British, Flemish and Dutch versions of the show. Results showed that hegemonic discourse was common: commentary overwhelmingly stated people with disabilities should date each other. In addition, abled viewers were based on prejudices such as people with disabilities and stated that they need help from nondisabled persons.

Some studies show that sometimes viewers' have appreciation for a show regardless of the plot. Martin (2020) analyzed the critical reception of *The Lego Batman Movie*. Multimedia storytelling was the context in which the authors focused on and how the movie appealed to nostalgia through metatextuality. The analysis explained how discourse around the cultural value of animation and discussions of morality, merchandising and commercialism. Child-centric narratives are seen as a vital part of American

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66. Jatin Vichare, "Audience Engagement with the Marvel Studios' Film Black Panther: Analyzing Fan Reactions Posted on an Online Forum."

popular culture. This study helps in understanding how some movies can create a positive feeling of nostalgia in audiences.

Perez and Reisezein (2019) analyzed the reaction of fans of *Game of Thrones* and the death of the main star, Jon Snow. The authors proposed an explanation of the cultural phenomenon in which viewers all over the world contributed to the discussion of the event. Using the theory of plot twists as surprise structures, the authors concluded that the reactions of fans can be understood as contextually adapted realizations of the characteristics evoked by the emotions of surprise and shock caused by unexpected negative events. The study analyzed forums responding to the show and concluded that fans had a negative response when their expectations were not met in the conclusion of the show.

Smit and Bosch (2020) examined Twitter comments pertaining to the popular South African television show, *Our Perfect Wedding*. The authors' main focus was on South Africa's "Black Twitter," which facilitated a space for recognition and group identity for Black South African television viewers. A qualitative analysis of the tweets demonstrates how Twitter is used for the performance and negation of class and race for the audience. The reactions to the show were largely dependent upon judgments around class, taste and language. Twitter users made frequent reference to the act of watching and emotional engagement throughout the show. This gives insight into how Black audiences sometimes enjoy the act of watching a show and may not always respond to the actual events of the show.

Overall, researchers have analyzed perceptions and critiques of Black audience members on media content, particularly television. Minimal research exists on Black audience members critiques, reviews, and overall perceptions of Black social justice films. There is also a gap in the psychologically process where viewers' critical engage with these movies.

Case Study: Judas and The Black Messiah and Affective Disposition Theory

To understand the pitfalls of ADT and Black film and audiences, we applied ADT constructs on tweets regarding the movie *Judas and the Black Messiah*. *Judas and the Black Messiah* was released in the movie theatres and HBO Max on February 12, 2021. The movie tells the real story of William O'Neal who accepted a plea deal by the FBI that consisted of infiltrating the Illinois chapter of the Black Panther Party. William O'Neal gathered intelligence on Fred Hampton which eventually led to the killing

of the party's Chairman. The movie's plot is rooted in the historical positions Black Americans have had to grapple with: a Black man is faced with the option to go to jail or betray members of the Black Panther Party in order to secure his freedom. Using the seven-part sequence of ADT, coupled with the current criticism on moral disengagement for anti-hero plots, the research questions are:

RQ1 What are viewers' perceptions of the main characters in Judas and the Black Messiah?

RQ2 What are viewers' reaction to (specific event) in Judas and the Black Messiah?

RQ3a What indicators of morality was exhibited towards the movie?

RQ3b What indicators of morality were exhibited towards Judas?

RQ4 To what extent do viewers display moral disengagement towards the antagonist in Judas and the Black Messiah?

Methodology

First, a content analysis was implemented on post from Twitter regarding the film *Judas and the Black Messiah*. Tweets were collected that used the hashtag #JudasAndTheBlackMessiah from February 12, 2021 to February 17, 2021. These dates were chosen because the researchers were interested in examining tweets from the film's opening week. The movie was released on HBO Max, an American video-on-demand streaming service owned by AT&T via the WarnerMedia, for users on subscription basis. The tweets were collected by using a Twitter archiver tool from digitalispiration.com through Google Chrome extension, which collected all tweets that used the hashtag #JudasandTheBlackMessiah. The tweets were downloaded into a google sheet and from there, different steps took place to code and analyze the data.

There were 11 codes used to analyze the data. Seven of the codes were from the seven constructs of the affective disposition theory process, and one represented moral disengagement. These codes were perception assessment (1), moral judgment (2), affective disposition (3), anticipation, apprehension (4), perception assessment (2) (5), response to outcome (6), moral judgment (2) (7), and moral disengagement (8). The definitions of each tenet, as prescribed by Zillmann (1996), were used to code the tweets. An additional three codes were created to capture content in the tweets that could not be

assessed under the seven tenets of ADT. These codes were promotional/review (9), rectified (10) and happiness (11). Promotional/review (9) was used to code tweets that indicated promotional content for the film or a review of the film from individuals and companies. Promotional tweets or reviews from the movie was removed from the sample. Rectified (10) was used to code tweets that contained content expressing the viewers' feelings of happiness for the film being made for its historical context. Lastly code happiness (11) was used to code tweets that displayed a generally positive reaction to the film without specifying any characters. The intercoder reliability, or the measure of judgement to ensure a consistent coding agreement amongst researchers, yielded a score of 90% between the researchers on the project. This allowed the researchers to proceed and code the data with the 11 codes.

As the researchers predicted that ADT would not suffice, a critical technocultural discourse analysis (CTDA) was then applied to further analyze the data. CTDA is a multimodal analytic technique for the investigation of internet and digital phenomena, artifacts, and culture. It integrates an analysis of the technological artifact and user discourse, framed by cultural theory to unpack semiotic and material connections between form, function, belief, and meaning of information and communication technologies. [67]CTDA requires the use of critical theory to explore underrepresented users. CTDA was used to understand how viewers used Twitter to talk about this Black political activist film and what the underlying meanings were in terms of their discourse in relation to ADT. This study frames the tweets being analyzed as a part of a Black digital public sphere where the sampled tweets represent discourse from a counter-public about a film telling a story about a counter-public.

Findings

When using this hashtag on Twitter for the opening week, researchers collected and analyzed a total of 997 tweets, 294 of which were coded as promotional/review (9) and removed from the data set. This brought the sample down to 703 tweets in total. Out of the 703 tweets, a total of 24 tweets from our sampling procedure addressed an ADT construct. This included four for anticipation and apprehension, five for perception and assessment (2), three for response to the outcome, and ten for moral judgment (2). One of the tweets related to moral disengagement. None of the sampled tweets indicated expressions for three ADT tenets (perception

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67. Andre Brock, "Critical Technocultural Discourse Analysis," p. 1012–30

assessment, moral judgment and affective disposition). Two of the research questions–relating to viewers' expressions of initial perceptions of the main characters and ideas surrounding morality–were unable to be answered with sampled tweets.

The majority of the tweets address moral judgment (2), which is the final approval or disapproval of outcome based on morality. The second-highest number of tweets was for perception assessment (2), which is viewers assessing if the outcome matches their moral expectations. Table 1 summarizes the tweet frequency per category on Appendix A. The findings are split into sections to detail what was found for codes 1-8 in relation to ADT. An additional discussion about code 10 and code 11, the majority of the tweets, are examined in the discussions.

Anticipation/Apprehension

Most of the viewers knew how the movie would end but were still shocked to see the ending. Watchers showed some anger towards the ending events. For example, one user wrote:

> *Just watched Judas and the Black Messiah and it is an early favorite movie of the year. Painfully relevant, phenomenal performances, masterfully directed and an ending that is infuriating even knowing what's coming. Not an easy watch but well worth it. #JudasAndTheBlackMessiah*

Another viewer stated: "Judas & The Black Messiah was a great movie... but REALLY pissed me off... especially the ending (even though we all know how it would end). #JudasAndTheBlackMessiah." Though the users knew how the movie ended, they showed some apprehension for the story to end the way it did as if they hoped for an alternate outcome.

Perception Assessment

As some of the tweets previously showed, many users already knew the outcome of the movie. Therefore, it met the expectations of the audience, however, some users expressed how they did not feel the actions in the ending were right. For example, one viewer stated, "The fact that I knew how Judas and the Black Messiah was going to end. And, it still got me heated…" Another viewer expressed anger towards the ending insinuating that the expectations of the end were not met, stating: "Judas and the Black Messiah Was Fire. That Ending was sad af though #JudasAndTheBlackMessiah"

Response to Outcome

Some viewers showed that they empathize with Fred Hampton and have anger towards William O'Neal and his actions, one viewer wrote:

> *Judas and the Black Messiah is the best movie I've seen so far in 2021. Really frustrating and disgusting how William O'Neal (FBI Informant) played a role in the 1969 assassination of Fred Hampton. #JudasAndTheBlackMessiah*

Some users also stated their lack of empathy for the power structures in the movie's plot such as the police force. A tweet in response to the FBI department in the movie stated:

> *You are a powerful institution, but scared of a 21 year old talking about unity. Sounds pathetic if you ask me, I give Judas and the Black Messiah a 5/5. This cast killed it. #JudasAndTheBlackMessiah*

Moral Judgement

When giving their thoughts on the final outcome of the movie and evaluation of morality, users expressed anger towards the story's plot. Tweets such as "your skin folk aren't always your kinfolk" and "I just watched Judas and The Black Messiah. I'm angry all over again" show the overall feelings of users to the story's plot. Some users were confused about how to feel about the final outcome of the plot. One viewer wrote: "Just finished Judas and the Black Messiah. A film filled with such emotion. I have so many thoughts and feelings right now. Still unsure how to express all of them. Please go and watch it."

Other viewers tweeted:

> *Movies like "Judas and the Black Messiah" leave me with so many mixed emotions. On one hand, I'm so impressed with how focused and passionate this young brother was about the cause. #JudasAndTheBlackMessiah #HBOMax*

These tweets show some apprehension to the plot, but unsure how to feel about the complexity of the story.

Moral Disengagement

There was one tweet analyzed that was coded for moral disengagement. This tweet stated:

> *Judas and the Black messiah is extremely good. A true tale of a manipulated soul turned evil to be a pawn for the evil of the white man for the take down of a true Revolutionist and hero. #JudasAndTheBlackMessiah #Messiah.*

This tweet speaks to how viewers went through a process of convincing themselves that ethical standards do not apply to oneself in a particular context. The viewer blamed Whiteness as a system, particularly in the context of the police and FBI manipulating William –a young-poor Black man – into being an informant, only so he could have money to survive. William made many poor decisions, which ultimately ended in Chicago police murdering Fred Hampton. Though this was the case, viewers justified this behavior which the process of moral disengagement explains.

Discussions

Not every tenant of ADT was observed in the data. The main components of ADT that were present were perception assessment, response to outcome, and moral judgment. Being that the movie is based upon actual events, fans knew how the movie would end, but some were still angry at the outcome. Fans also acknowledged that racism in power structures such as the FBI department being the main cause of the events that unfolded in the film.

Many of the comments expressed the importance of having a movie showing the experiences of Black Americans and their complex experiences with racism. Not many fans were very critical of specific characters stating if someone was morally wrong or right. Neither did many of the fans criticize the movie plot due to their appreciation of a Black film telling the history of Black experiences. Of the 703 tweets analyzed, 105 tweets indicated descriptions of rectification. These posts subverted the typical ADT process and focused on the benefit of the entire film as enjoyment, rather than individual characters. These tweets looked like this:

> *Judas and the Black Messiah had so many incredible messages in there. Solidarity. Struggle. Understanding. Pain. Laughter. Community. I'm fired the hell up! #JudasAndTheBlackMessiah*

> *The best part about Judas and Black Messiah is that it is historically accurate and doesn't mince with Fred Hampton's words and the communist*

program he envisioned to better the lives of the historically oppressed. #JudasAndTheBlackMessiah

Due to the stringent nature of ADT, enjoyment derived from historical depictions of Black liberation is not captured. And due to ADT's focus on individual characters and morality, the central themes of collectivity and struggle that are deeply rooted in Black morality and engagement can go unlooked. More than a one-seventh of the tweets collected would be ignored and subsided when using ADT, although they represent the innate reflections that are central to Black audiences.

In addition to tweets expressing the process of rectification, code 11, that assessed users' general sense of happiness of the film being made, could also not be conceptualized by the use of ADT. Three-hundred and nineteen tweets were coded with 11, which was the largest portion of the data set. Taking a critical approach to analyze this Twitter discourse suggested that users were overwhelmed with emotion and felt that this film was very timely considering the racial and political climate today. Examples of these tweets stated:

> *Just watched Judas and The Black Messiah, while watching my sister watch Judas and The Black Messiah. The constant transition of shock, disgust, hope on her face let me know this is not just a movie but a movement. Please watch this movie. #judasandtheblackmessiah.*

> *Really enjoyed Judas and the Black Messiah. Some Police was lying and murdering back then with no charges and still to this day lying and killing PRESENT DAY. #JudasAndTheBlackMessiah #judasandthemessiah #FredHampton.*

The individual approach in ADT, only focusing on characters, does not allow researchers to analyze psychological processes of users' overall feelings of a film, specifically from a Black context. As mentioned above, tweets expressed how *Judas and The Black Messiah* gave viewers feelings of pride, unity, a sense of Black liberation, and overall happiness that a story unveiling the structures of Whiteness being detrimental to the Black community was told during such a political time.

Critical Approach to Affective Disposition Theory

In the previous sections, we described the shortcomings of ADT as applied to a Black film and responses from Black audiences. This data has shown us that contemporary Black audiences' reactions to Black cinema are still

steeped in their unique cultural and historical experiences. One theory that emphasizes the relationship of race, society and power is critical race theory,[68] which as a collection of approaches, has been used to counter-hegemonic ideals and center non-White perspectives to understand society. [69] [70]

A standout ideology from CRT is bell hooks (2012) ideation of an "oppositional gaze." [71] hooks explain how the Black "gaze," or the viewpoint of Black people, has been suppressed, rejected and often illegitimatized due to the racist structure of society at large.[72] Thus an oppositional gaze is a basis to giving agency to Black consumers and producers, and to combat White supremacy by acknowledging that Black-oriented standpoints are valid. Table 2 (see Appendix B) lists the seven constructs of ADT and how it can be reconceptualized through the basis of oppositional gaze. The core of re-evaluation, which we are terming "Oppositional Gazing Through Affective Disposition Theory" allows for 1) audiences receptions of the morality of narrative plots to be assessed, 2) a centering of lived experiences in relation to seeing representations in film, 3) an assessment of critiques of film characters and plots as interrelated with viewers receptions, and for this approach to be applied on Black audiences have not been ignored in ADT research. Each construct of ADT is broken down by its definition, the issues that arise when applying to Black-oriented themes and audiences, and an amended application with an oppositional gaze backing. Through this revaluation, Whiteness is decentered and audiences can be understood as active receptors who understand media through their idiosyncratic lens that incorporates their culture, history and opinions. More so, this type of critical analysis can help future studies on the enjoyment process of Black audience to add new insight to the communications field.

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[68] Delgado and Stefancic, "Critical Race Theory: An Introduction"
[69] Kimberlé Crenshaw, Neil Gotanda, Gary Peller, and Kendall Thomas, "Critical Race Theory: The Key Writings That Formed the Movement"
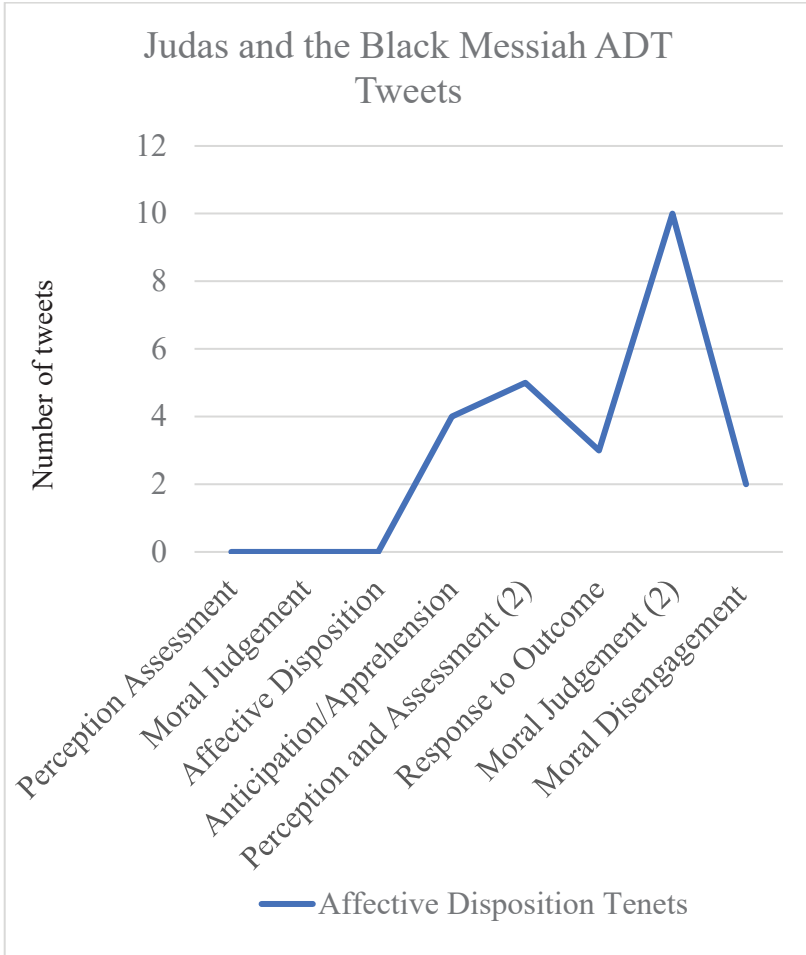[70] Delgado and Stefancic, "Critical Race Theory: An Introduction"
[71] bell hooks, "Black Looks: Race and Representation"
[72] bell hooks, "Black Looks: Race and Representation"

Appendix A.

**Table 1. Tweets per ADT Tenet During Opening Week
of Judas and the Black Messiah**

Appendix B.

Table 2. Oppositional Gazing Through Affective Disposition Theory Principles and affiliated focuses

ADT Construct	Definition	Issues with ADT	Oppositional Gaze application
Perception and Assessment	The actions taken by the characters are evaluated on a moral dimension	The idea of perceptions of characters is entrenched with simply looking at the portrayal. The art of looking has been denied to Black people, historically during slavery when "looking" meant punishment. To "look" today means that Black audiences' not only look at characters, but also the environment of the film in order to deconstruct it.	The audience analyzes the characters along with the plot, settings and schema in order to form identification with the film that can lead to moral ideations
Moral Judgment	Audiences morally consents of the behaviors of the characters, and establish positive affective disposition (begins to like) towards the character	Black audiences have alternative interpretations of morality that are not stagnant reactions.	The audience spectrum of both positive and negative feelings towards character behavior, and develop sympathy/ empathy for each party

Affective Disposition	Viewers hope for outcomes that each character deserves, i.e. characters receiving a positive outcome and & characters receiving a negative outcome	Black audiences often want alternative outcomes for characters, as their interpretation of each are more complex than positive and negative outcomes	Viewers' anticipation of outcomes is evaluated on a spectrum for each character
Anticipation and Apprehension	The events of the story are evaluated by audience: viewers compare the actual outcome with their anticipation	As critical spectators, Black audiences participate in a broad range of evaluation that are often rooted in, contesting, resisting revisioning, interrogating and invent on multiple levels	Multivariate levels of evaluation is collected regarding characters, plot, and/or setting
Perception and Assessment(2)	Viewers assess if the displayed results match their moral expectations	Morality is subjective especially when considering Black audiences and their experiences	Viewers assess if the plot, characters and/or setting meet their expectations
Response to Outcome/Emotion	Response to Outcome: The audience decides how they feel about the outcome	Black audiences, and especially women, should have the desire to critique representations they see in film. And often draw on their experiences in interpreting how they feel	The audience evaluates actions of the outcome of plot and characters and/or appreciation for the film

Moral Judgment (2)	The outcome is evaluated morally, and the cyclic appreciation process is restarted	Since morality is subjective, and Black audiences pull from outside sources in their reception of films, moral judgment is also a self-reflexive act that involves perceptions that go beyond the film.	The outcome is stated rather it be appreciation or critique to the plot, characters and/or setting

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CHAPTER 8

THE CONFLUENCE OF COMMUNICATION
CULTURAL DIALECTICS:
A CASE OF AFRO BRAZILIAN VOICE
AND BLACK LIVES MATTER

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For many worldwide, 2020 will be remembered not only by the COVID-19 global pandemic but also as synonymous with progress in the fight against racism. The world was grappling with the spike in fatalities from COVID-19 when what was regarded as a "modern-day lynching" of an African American man was televised globally. George Floyd, a 46-year-old black man, was assassinated during an arrest made "by four Minneapolis police officers. Floyd begged for his life as one white police officer knelt callously on his neck for eight minutes and 46 seconds" (Oriola & Knight, 2020, p. 9). George Floyd died. In response, anti-racism protests erupted in the United States and over 60 countries worldwide, echoing fresh debate about race relations. Protests were made from the Americas to Asia; a memorial service for George Floyd was held in Nigeria, and street protests took place in Japan, Paris, London, and Cape Town. From a national movement in the United States, #BlackLivesMatter[1] had become a global rallying call. Even the Parliament of the European Union voted to denounce racism and police brutality and condemned the murder of George Floyd (France 24, 2020).

The protests also resonated in Brazil, where organizers used demonstrations to speak against police brutality in predominantly black *favelas*[2] and racist policies by the far-right Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro (Lopez, 2020).

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[1] #BlackLivesMatter (BLM) movement was founded in the United States in 2013 in response to the acquittal of Trayvon Martin's murderer (BlackLivesMatter, n.d.).
[2] Brazilian shack or shantytown.

In fact, a week before the death of George Floyd, Brazilians were mourning one of their own. João Pedro Mattos, a 14-year-old, "was killed while playing with friends during a botched police operation in a *favela* in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The two deaths happened thousands of kilometers apart, yet millions of people were united in grief and anger. "Black lives matter here, too" (Watson, 2020, p. Para 2), Brazilians chanted in the weeks following the deaths.

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the unique impact of George's Floyd's death (and the protests that erupted in the United States) on the discourse of race relations in Brazil. Specifically, this chapter examines the complex line between western conceptual and dialogical dependency, explicitly dealing with liberation regarding race relations. In this unique moment in world history, there is an aggressive shift in Brazilians' awareness towards racism. The same act creates a change in Brazil's discourse of race relations from a sedentary position to a crusade. While there is a rapid uptick in using a decolonial framework, scholars caution not to condemn or entirely reject the western ideologies, supporting collaboration towards equity, inclusion, and social justice (Itchuaqiyaq & Matheson, 2021).

Western culture has been a force in constructing identity, policies, curriculum building, and culture globally, particularly in Europe and the Americas.   Correspondingly, this volume calls for a discussion of the decolonization of communication studies. Entrenched in the symposium of communication studies is symbolic interactionism and meaning-making, which will provide a theoretical foundation to explore the complex dynamic of race relations and Western influence. Humans can carry negative socially constructed marks once enacted by symbolic interactions and the constant negotiations humans make to define and redefine their sense of self (Trammel, 2019). This chapter will particularly explore the blurriness between western dependency and autonomy. In matters of race, it is convoluted to assume that all Western dependency is harmful and detrimental.   For instance, the voices that emerged particularly among the African American counterparts led to the awakening and autonomy of Afro Brazilians and their progress towards liberation.   This chapter is organized as follows: First, it will provide an overview of western dependency and how it has influenced culture in the Americas, followed by a discussion of race relations in Brazil, a summary of Mead's and Blummer's approach to meaning-making, and a discussion on how George Floyd's death served as a conduit to a new race relations discourse in Brazil.

When All You Know is Seen Through Western Lenses

The core of the world's politics, economy, and culture has been centered in the west (Farrar & Giroux, 2010). The concept of 'the west,' though, is problematic since large areas of Europe were not particularly advanced, compared with parts of Asia or Latin America, until the middle of the 20th century. Hence, talking about 'North Atlantic societies' makes more sense (History Extra, 2016). Therefore, in the current chapter, "West" is being used to refer to the influences of North America.

Western dependency is a well-discussed topic in various disciplines, often perceived as harmful. In general, the call for decolonization asks to investigate and question continuing colonial power imbalances, power dependencies, and colonial legacies (Gluck, 2018, Para 3). Gluck (2018) provided a sound examination of the decolonization of communication studies and the media. The scholar claimed that "the need to de-westernize and decolonize communication and media studies is based on criticisms on a dominant elitist "western" axiology and epistemology of universal validity, [which leaves] aside indigenous and localized philosophical traditions originating in non-western settings" (Para 1), which is a valid concern. The scholar emphasized the skepticism among critics who warned against a persistent influence of foreign-imposed concepts such as modernity and development, universal assumptions, and the use of specific categories and ontologies to deconstruct and understand the media around the globe. "While the West is understood more as a center of power than as a fixed geographical entity, de-westernization asks for a revision of the power relations in global academic knowledge production and dissemination" (Gluck, 2018, Para 2). Decolonization as a framework aims to emphasize empowerment while breaking away from dominant western and US-centric ways of studying culture, communication, and identity and the relationships among them (Lengel, Atay, & Kluch, 2020).

Cultural imperialism and hegemony have significantly influenced the Brazilian culture. The concept of "allies" among countries in the Hemisphere was perceived as a positive force after World War I, which led to a North American cultural domination. What was initially meant to be political, commercial, and military domination, between 1947 and 1989, the United States' culture was introduced in Brazil through movies, displaying the American lifestyle, which became desired and accepted by the Brazilian population. Moreover, foreign products began to be seen as synonymous with progress and modernity. The entertainment industry became the primary means of spreading the American culture, influencing habits,

fashion, and language. For instance, western music is often better known than national music (American Project, 2020) and widely used in the popular soap operas soundtrack – and it is imperative to acknowledge the unique role of music in the socialization of cultures and language. For example, Celasin (2013) found that children learn to communicate with peers and develop social habits through music.

The western influence is also observed in marketing and promotion. For instance, in anticipation of the Christmas holiday, many stores decorate their vitrines with snowflakes and dress Santa Claus in heavy clothing and boots even though it is summer season in Brazil, a tropical country whose temperature can rise to $110°F$ with high humidity. Snow occurrences are rare in Brazil except in the high plains in the South region comprising Rio Grande do Sul, Santa Catarina, e Paraná in the winter. Therefore, the reality of a white Christmas is a foreign concept.

The influence has also reached the culinary. Increasingly, Brazilians are opting for fast prepared foods, usually frozen, processed, or fast foods. And in language, in addition to being a predominant language taught in schools K-12, English is presented in the daily lives of Brazilians (American Project, 2020). Words such as "print" (for screenshot), "fake news," "milkshake" are widely used concepts that were also introduced in Brazilian Portuguese dictionaries without a Portuguese-equivalent translation. This phenomenon is often called "anglicism," a word or construction borrowed from English into a foreign language. dos Santos (2016) examined the effects of anglicisms in Brazilian fashion blog entries on persuasion. The results showed that more positive attitudes towards the author were found among the high fashion interest group when anglicisms were present, and no difference among the low fashion interest group (dos Santos, 2016). While the western influence is noted, the killing of George Floyd and what proceeded his death served as a motivator for a cultural and social shift in Brazil. One could argue that George's Floyd death fostered a new discussion towards the liberation of people of color in Brazil. Before exploring the relationship between George Floyd's death and the discourse of race relations in Brazil, the next section will provide an overview of Brazil's race relations.

Brazil Race Relations and the "Western" Influence Brazil Never Received: Can the West Export Liberation, too?

The historical legacy of oppression in both countries has called for protests and dissents. In the postmodern world, protests are more widely shared due to the advent of the internet and social media. In the United States, protesters have taken to the streets, statehouses, and the Congress to advocate for women's rights, racial justice, and other issues. They do so not because these are newly emerging problems but instead because they are deep-seated and have yet to be addressed in a foundational way despite centuries of political struggle and reasoned argument (Ackerly, 2019).

In Brazil, protesters are taking to the streets as well; nevertheless, it is imperative to note the significance of what is happening in Brazil beyond the push for new policies. There is a shift in the realm of meaning, a shift in the conceptualization of race and what can be constituted by racism and racial injury in Brazil. As mentioned previously in this chapter, it is well known the western influence in marketing, entertainment, music, etc. However, the killing of George Floyd has aided a parading shift in the discourse of race rations in Brazil that is worth noting. Before explaining this shift, it is essential to briefly mention the history, legacy, and state of racial relations and racism in Brazil.

The State of Race and Racism in Brazil

Brazil's post-colonial discourse of a racial paradise was a landmark event that contributed to the continual state of ideological and social marginalization of Brazilians of African descent (Trammel, 2018). The racial democracy myth was a belief introduced in post-colonial Brazil that encouraged the miscegenation of races to allegedly provide upper mobility of freed enslaved Africans. This rationale led to the formulation of this myth that dominated much of the discourse of race relations in Brazil, to the point of boosting Brazil's reputation worldwide as a model of integration post-slavery. "This vision of racial harmony made Brazil the envy of the world" (Buckley, 2000, Para 1). Furthermore, it was a powerful source of national esteem, especially when Brazilians observed the sometimes-explosive racial resentment that has bedeviled the United States. Based on the concept of colorism, this myth supported that miscegenation would foster a lighter complexion among the Brazilian population, thus progress. In this thought process, miscegenation became an "asset" to gradually dissolve the number of *pretos* [blacks], merging them into the whiter stock (Hanchard, 1999).

Not different from any other territory settled by European colonizers, the post-colonial mentality in Brazil insisted upon the relationship between whiteness and superiority. Consequently, the hierarchy of colors explicitly privileged the whiter-looking individuals perceived as superior and more suitable for development and advancement. The myth also supported the notion that the absence of state-sponsored segregation and the attempt to construct a racially hegemonic society would lead to "racial order" (Htun, 2004).

Nevertheless, Brazil covers up a major discrimination issue, keeping people of African descent in a precarious situation (Ferreira, 2002). The racial democracy myth, which is still embedded in the Brazilian culture, builds a structure that makes the power relations between black and white populations undetectable (or underestimated or misunderstood). As a result, Brazil is a society where racism and ethnic-social inequalities are not often discussed. A common Brazilian belief is that the problem is not racism but poverty; that the inequalities are not race-based but based on social class (Ciconello, 2008)

Today, racism remains illegal in the Brazilian constitution, but the evidence of rampant racism in Brazil is overwhelming (Guimarães M., 2020, p. Para 4). Contrary to the overt structure of racism in the United States, Brazil's racism is covert, which has made it challenging to identify and reject it. Nevertheless, the legacy of racism in Brazil has been brutal. The United States exhibited a segregationist, conflictive violent pattern of relations commonly known as *Jim Crow*, which had precise rules of group affiliation based on biological reasoning that defined race (Guimarães, 1995). On the other hand, Brazil never established a legal regime of segregation which sustained the notion of racial integration" (Ciconello, 2008). Instead, Brazil exhibited a system of hierarchy layered with gradations of prestige, where social class (occupation and income), family origin, color, and formal education were bolstered by a dichotomy expressed as highborn/rabble and elite/masses (Guimarães, 1995), where the darker the skin tone, more on the marginalized and disadvantaged side a person would be.

Brazil's population is 55.8 percent black and *pardo* [brown skinned] people (Guimarães M. , 2020). While home to more people of African descent than any other country outside Nigeria, Brazil is rarely identified as a black nation. The country population has often identified itself as simply "Brazilian," different from more rigid racial categories used in other countries. Given a choice, many Afro-Brazilians "have historically chosen not to identify as Black — whether consciously or not — to distance

themselves from the enduring legacy of slavery, societal inequality (Traiano, He grew up White. Now he identifies as Black. Brazil grapples with racial redefinition., 2020) and stigma (Trammel, 2018). Wealth and privilege allowed some to separate even further from their skin color" (Traiano, He grew up White. Now he identifies as Black. Brazil grapples with racial redefinition., 2020, p. Para 20).

On the other hand, in the United States, because of the rigid structure of segregation and violent pattern of Jim Crow laws, African Americans found ways to rise while identifying themselves as African Americas, black or people of color; black organizations were either created or strengthened. One could argue that in the realms of self-awareness, black identity, and an overall sense of progress, African Americans have made a more pragmatic stride towards reparation from the negative impact of slavery in the United States than Afro Brazilians in Brazil. For instance, while there are over 100 historically black colleges and universities in the United States, there is only one in Brazil. In the literary realm, while the "Miseducation of the Negro" was being published by Carter G. Woodson in 1933, noting that blacks were being culturally indoctrinated rather than taught, Gylberto Freire in 1933, on the other hand in Brazil, was publishing "*Case Grande e Senzala e a Formação da Nova Identidade Brasileira*" which served as paramount to the enactment of the racial democracy myth which strengthened and enabled systematic racism.

The protests that erupted in Brazil and the United States were a reaction to anti-blackness violence and injustice that have reached widespread occurrence in both countries. The numbers of police killings in both countries are at exceptional levels "and on the rise. In 2019, 1,004 people were shot and killed by the police in the United States, up from 992 in 2018" (Amparo, 2020, para 6). The number of people killed by police in Brazil in 2019 was at least six times higher than that, even as the killing of police officers themselves dropped by half in 2019. Only in the state of Rio de Janeiro, police killed 1,810 people – roughly five per day, and almost twice the number of police killings documented in the entire United States. Furthermore, 80% of the people killed by Rio's police in the first half of 2019 were of African descent (Amparo, 2020). The Brazilian police force is regarded as the most violent globally, killing 17 times more black people than American officers (Damase, 2020).

Both countries also share a similar pattern of impunity. In the United States, the system protects police through obstacles such as resistance of police unions and biased administrative appeal procedures to hold them accountable.

For instance, in 20 years of work with the Minneapolis Police Department, Derek Chauvin – the police officer who asphyxiated George Floyd with his knees – had already faced at least 17 misconduct complaints, with virtually no consequences. Data collected by the St. Paul Pioneer Press showed that impunity was widespread. Approximately 46% of the time, law enforcement and correction officers were reinstated after an appeal for misconduct in Minnesota between 2014 and 2019 (Amparo, 2020). In Brazil, a similar pattern of impunity is observed, with no strict accountability in place for police misconduct. Administrative investigations of police misconduct are conducted by the police, with very little transparency and no independent evidence-seeking. Public attorney's offices, which have the constitutional mandate of conducting external oversight of the police activities, generally accept the police version of misconducts and killings, making police impunity widespread. Additionally, the accountability of police commanders and political forces such as governors for their ordered disastrous police operations are also excluded from the current policy debates (Amparo, 2020).

Nevertheless, progress towards eliminating racial discrimination in policing and other areas continues to collide with entrenched structural racism and relentless acts of racial injury. The end of 2020 in Brazil was marked by a black man beaten to death by security guards at a Carrefour supermarket in the southern city of Porto Alegre, sparking another series of protests in the country (Damase, 2020, p. Para 3). It is also imperative to note that although race helped successive Brazilian candidates win votes at the turn of the 21st century, the country is now run by an openly racist president. During his presidential campaign in 2018, Jair Bolsonaro declared descendants of slaves "good for nothing, not even to procreate" while using the slogan "my color is Brazil" (Damase, 2020).

Despite the challenges, the struggle of people of African descent is making inroads in educational circles, politics, and the press. As diversity efforts started to elevate previously marginalized voices in newscasts, telenovelas, pop culture, and politics, a growing number of Brazilians of African descent began to redefine themselves. Brazilians who long considered themselves white are reexamining their family histories and concluding that they are *pardo*. Others who thought of themselves as *pardo* now say they are black. According to the Brazilian Institute of Geography, over the past decade, the percentage of Brazilians who consider themselves white has dropped from 48 percent to 43 percent while the number of people who identify as black or mixed has risen from 51 percent to 56 percent," (Traiano, He grew up White. Now he identifies as Black. Brazil grapples with racial redefinition.,

2020). In an analysis of skin color and self-identification in Brazil, Trammel (2019) found that ethnic self-identification in Brazil was significantly influenced by the negative stigma attached to color pigmentation. The scholar argued that even a slight difference in skin shade would justify a self-identification to a category closer to being white, understood to be more esteemed.

This fluidity in self-identification was also observed in 2020, with a growing number of people identifying themselves as of African descent in the registration process for 5,500 municipal elections held in 2020. Candidates were required to identify as white, black, mixed, indigenous, or Asian. "More than a quarter of the 168,000 candidates who also ran in 2016 have changed their race, according to a Washington Post analysis of election registration data. Nearly 17,000 who said they were White in 2016 are now mixed. Around 6,000 who said they were mixed are now black. Moreover, more than 14,000 said they were mixed now identify as White" (Traiano, He grew up White. Now he identifies as Black. Brazil grapples with racial redefinition., 2020, p. Para 11). Some argue that candidates took advantage of a recent court decision requiring parties to distribute campaign funds evenly among racial categories. Nevertheless, in the days since the deaths of George Floyd in Minneapolis and Miguel in the northeastern Brazilian city of Recife, it became apparent that Brazilians began to be more willing to discuss the matters of race and acknowledge that structural racism could be the reason for its many inequities.

Looking Up to the West and the Renegotiation of 'Self"

Nevertheless, now, there is a shift. This shift in meaning and socially constructed ideals influenced by the West represents a complex yet constructive influence in race relations. This shift is exemplified not only by the swing of perspectives following the death of George Floyd but also with a broader acceptance and acknowledgment of black culture (music, entertainment, etc.) and lifestyle (more choice for natural hair, natural hair blogs, use of African clothing, etc.). What has been perceived as racism in the United States, for example, has historically been regarded as just humor in Brazil. An example of this is black face and jokes widely accepted in the Brazilian culture but publicly characterized as a racist act in the United States. Therefore, the shift in meaning has been imperative and critical. In the Brazilian cultural context of meaning, there has been a growing similarity with the United States in understanding what constitutes racism.

The negotiation of self can be understood through the lenses of George Mead's and Herbert Blummer's symbolic interactionism and their explanation of how symbolic construction precedes human interactions. Mead (1934) focused on how symbols and communication give rise to self, while Blumer (1969), who coined the term symbolic interactionism, focused on how having a common community of symbols allowed actors to create shared meaning and to act together based on that shared meaning (Frey & Sunwolf, 2004). As discussed previously, the racial construction of "racism" in Brazil has fostered a culture that glorified racial harmony in Brazil, rejecting racism as a widespread phenomenon. However, symbolic interactionism rests on the premise that human beings act towards objects and other people based on meanings derived from the social interaction they have with each other. These meanings are then modified through an interpretative process of the observer.

Blumer contended that human interaction is symbolic when the participants understand the meaning of each other's actions. It is astounding how people of African descent in the diaspora collectively created different interpretations on what constitutes "racism." Blumer grounded the symbolic interactionist approach in "root images" that (1) depicted the nature of human groups, (2) social interaction, (3) objects, (4) human beings as actors, and (5) human action. It is undeniable the role that social media played in disseminating the assassination of George Floyd and how it helped create collective shared meaning. In the present chapter, a focus on human action is imperative to note. Human beings' capacity to make indications to themselves allows the human individual to confront the world they must interpret to act, which is a distinctive characteristic of human action (Blumer, 1969/1986). In this case, human action is exemplified by the responses Afro Brazilians had in the wake of George Floyd's assassination. According to Blumer, human beings live in a world composed of objects[3] that result from human interaction. The objects are social creations formed in and out of definition and interpretation during an interaction. The meanings attached to the objects define the patterns of interaction, including verbal and nonverbal. This assertion is critical in understanding the process and pattern of symbol making, symbol modification, and action. According to Blumer, this world of objects is what human beings must confront. Consequently, from a symbolic interactionist framework, human group life is a process in which people form, sustain, and transform the objects of their world as they attach meaning to these objects. This collective creation of meaning represents the

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[3] "Object is anything that can be indicated, anything that is pointed to or referred to – a cloud, a book, a legislature… (Blumer 2002, p. 10).

meeting point, the confluence, between the West and Brazil's interpretation of racism.

The George Floyd's Legacy to the Discourse of Race in Brazil

What can be referred to as "Afro-Brazilian liberation" influenced by the North Americans came with the assassination of George Floyd. For most of the 20th century, Brazil prided itself on what it called its "racial democracy," in which tolerance and accommodation kept peace between groups despite the yawning socioeconomic gap between blacks and the rest of society. Today – and even more after the protests that erupted in the United States after the killing of George Floyd - in an extraordinary shift in how this nation views itself, Brazilians no longer deny the pervasive force of race in their society. This is not to devalue the work of many Brazilian activists and scholars who have advocated and written extensively about Brazil's myth of racial democracy and its adverse effects. What this chapter has pointed out is how the protests that erupted after the killing of George Floyd brought the conversations of race relations in Brazil from the academic journals and research university halls to the streets of Brazil and to spheres where, otherwise, talks about racism in Brazil were rejected. The protests that erupted in the United States in the summer of 2020 influenced the discourse of race relations in Brazil at least in three ways: direction, interpretation, and participation.

First, a new dialogical direction took form around discourses of race relations in Brazil, at least in the public sphere. Racial dialogues that used to be unique to the academic or the Brazilian black movement - which used to be small and included the minority of Afro Brazilians - became vivid among families, friends, and even from the church pulpits. In other words, the race relations discourse penetrated the everyday sphere. This was exhibited through numerous discussions on social media hosted by local churches, non-profit organizations, school friends, etc. Pre-George Floyd, any attempts to engage in conversations around race relations were often met with resistance and defiance. The myth that Brazilian issues were solely tied to class - and not a race - was still very apparent. A widely discussed topic in caucus groups, which proceeded after George Floyd's killing, opened doors for discussion in groups that were very resistant to these discussions previously. Following the symbolic interactionist approach, the introduction of new symbols and experiences can create shared meaning allowing actors to act together based on that shared meaning. While George

Floyd's death was not the first of its kind, it happened at an appropriate time, perhaps accentuated by the global pandemic, enabling a new shared meaning around race relations that pushed the conversation to a new dialogical course. This openness alone has given a new dialogical direction and penetration to Brazil's discourses of race relations. When pushing for the decolonization of communication studies, it is imperative to state that within the West, there is a voice and meaning that represent the intersectionality of shared experiences among people of color in Brazil and the United States. It is imperative to sort western voices; it is essential to acknowledge that "western," as a concept, has represented a dominating voice that excluded the perspectives and experiences of marginalized communities. Consequently, a look into the globalization of communication and race is warranted. There is a case of intersectionality that interconnects the experiences of African descent in Brazil and the United States.

It is imperative to note, however, that this new dialogical direction is not exclusive to Brazil. Even in the United States, there has been progressing in both judicial and historical domains. While in Brazil the new approach and advances were accomplished in the popular discourse, in the United States, the discourses surrounded policy change in the political sphere and the renaming of statues, bridges, and other landmarks as in the historical sphere. For example, in Georgia, House Bill 426, the hate crime bill, was signed into law on June 26, 2020, extending protection to targeted people because of their race, sexual orientation, or religion (Prabhu, 2020). "The killing of Ahmaud Arbery, a 25-year-old black man shot dead while jogging in February 2020, drew nationwide attention and energized efforts to pass this law" (Slotkin, 2020, p. Para. 2). According to the U.S. Department of Justice, until then, Georgia had been one of four states without a hate crime law (Slotkin, 2020).

On the historical side, many challenges asking for the removal or renaming of historical sites emerged. In the United States, statues of confederate champions, erected as a cold, calculated response to the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s, were defaced and attacked. Across Europe, there were calls to make visible the legacies of slavery and colonialism. In the Netherlands, bronze statues of colonial icons have been spray-painted. (Cornelius, 2021, p. 10). For example, in June 2020, Monmouth University in New Jersey removed former President Woodrow Wilson's name from one of its buildings and vowed to make more significant efforts to support diversity at the private university (Cervenka, 2020). The former president, who also served as Princeton University's president, denied African Americans admission to Princeton and re-

segregated the federal government when black had found job opportunities. He also spoke, demonstrating support of the Ku Klux Klan (Cervenka, 2020).

News stories illustrating historical marks that commemorate racist leaders also merged in the Brazilian press in June 2020. Journalist Weslley Galzo wrote about five statuses that celebrate racists in Brazil. For example, he cited Borba-gato (São Paulo), a leader in violent slavery practices against enslaved Africans and native Brazilians, among others (Galzo, 2020).

Secondly, in terms of interpretation, the events surrounding George Floyd's death have led Brazil to a new way of interpreting racism. Due to the myth of racial democracy, the belief that Brazil is free of racial discrimination has dominated much of the understanding of race relations in Brazil. In the aftermath of the killing of George Floyd and the eruptions of the protests, the discourse moved from "there is no racism in Brazil" to "How did we get here?". It has given Brazil a new interpretation of what can be understood or constructed as racism. In the public sphere, Brazilians of all races, especially Brazilians of African descent, were more predisposed to accept and acknowledge the prevalence of racism in Brazil. This was exemplified by families and communities coming together to share their personal stories via social media sites and other forms of communication. Nevertheless, a new meaning was also socially constructed in the United States. Even though there were other unarmed people of color unlawfully killed in the same year (E.g., Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery), George Floyd's killing signified "enough," in modern times, taking people, young and old, out of quarantine and social distancing in the middle of a global pandemic to protest. One of the symbolic interactionist approach premises is that objects are social creations formed in and out of definition and interpretation during an interaction. Perhaps due to the global pandemic and increasing focus on social media lives, presentations, and panel discussions, what used to be closed forums became public and readily available, which could have fostered the construction of a new shared meaning around race relations in Brazil. The increase in education and communication exposing structural racism and slavery helped Afro Brazilians experience a shift in understanding their struggles.

In the realms of participation, there was also a shift. Brazilians of all races and ethnicities were willing to participate in dialogues and the discourse. There was more willing to discuss the subject of race. Tugged along by a torrent of research, Brazilians have come to the startling conclusion in recent years that race affects everything, from education to employment to

justice (Buckley, 2000). If they were not talking, they were hosting panel discussions, asking questions, making a phone call to seek understanding. A similar pattern was observed in the United States. In Minneapolis, a group of Amish was protesting in support of Black Lives Matter. A group of European Descent women was seen forming a line in front of African American women protesting in Kentucky. As noted previously, human action is a specific part of symbolic interactionism. Human beings' capacity to make indications to themselves allows the human individual to confront the world they must interpret to act, which is a distinctive characteristic of human action. The reaction was exemplified through a participatory achievement both in Brazil and the United States.

Conclusion

While western dependency is worthy of being explored and investigated, the killing of George Floyd revealed the unique function of meaning and symbol-making among the African diaspora, be it in the United States or Brazil, that enables liberation – at least a new discussion toward liberation. The events that proceeded with the killing of Georgie Floyd impacted the black movement in Brazil (and in the United States) in direction, interpretation, and participation significantly. For most modern history, Brazil was subjugated to dominant ideals that often-silenced people of African descent. However, the events that proceeded to the killing of George Floyd gave people of African descent in Brazil a new voice that amplifies the unique struggles of structural racism and the call for justice and equality.

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CHAPTER 9

DIGITAL VIDEO FILM THEORY:
DECOLONIZING COMMUNICATION STUDIES

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Introduction

The Nigerian movie industry, known as Nollywood, has embraced video format to tell its stories. Nollywood producers predominantly do not make films on celluloid; rather they utilize video technology because it costs less (Haynes 2005; Okome 2001; Onuzulike 2018). The cultural aesthetic forms of video film constitute elements of social struggle; therefore, it requires a theoretical framework to understand the Nollywood video film phenomenon (Onuzulike 2010a, 2010b). By situating Nollywood within the contexts of the digital technology of film, television, and video theories, as well as cultural studies, I reformulate *video film theory* (VFT) to *digital video film theory* (DVFT) in order to further decolonize communication studies via the lens of the Nollywood film industry. The details are highlighted in the intellectual tradition of the digital video film theory section. Nollywood movies are conceptualized based on the framework of aesthetic and cultural aspects of Nigeria and Africa. Accordingly, whether a filmmaker utilizes celluloid or video, film will never exist outside of culture and aesthetics (Hill and Gibson 2000).

According to Barsam (2004), "celluloid roll film, also known as motion picture film or raw film stock, consists of long strips of perforated cellulose acetate on which a quick succession of still photographs known as frames can be recorded" (480). Haynes (2000) notes that the term "video film" infers "something between television and cinema, and they do not fit comfortably within the North American structures" (1). This study extends the definition by defining the term *video film* as any movie

or motion picture produced mainly in video while adhering to particular cinematic values and conventions.

Video film has changed the method by which Africans share their stories. In many ways, video film "itself stands for an example of technology that can be used for cultural explorations and representations, mostly for the individuals or groups who cannot afford celluloid" (Onuzulike 2007, 233). Nollywood video films "provide *videofilmic* (I define videofilmic as "relating to or resembling motion pictures just like *cinematic* or *filmic*") representations of Nigeria" (233). Thus, advancement of digital technology has improved video film productions. The improvement has taken the route of digitalization of media productions. These types of discourses of stability and change in film theory have given birth to the concept of digital video film theory (DVFT).

The purpose of this study is to formulate a theory that will assist in advancing and informing our understanding of the Nollywood production phenomenon (Onuzulike 2007) and other Global South productions (Herdin, Faust and Chen 2020). This, in part, will help in decolonize communication studies. The theory of digital video film is conceptualized based on the historical video, film and digital technology utilized by Nigerians to announce their presence in film production to the world. To build this video theory, this paper is divided into the following parts: (1) a brief history of the Nigerian film industry, (2) highlights of the intellectual tradition of DVFT, (3) examination of relevant theories—film theory, television theory, and video theory—that guide the (re) conceptualization of DVFT, (4) review the proliferation of video, (5) examination of the six layers toward DVFT: layers that are cultural, social, religious, political, economic, and technological, (6) highlights of cultural studies and the implication of hegemony, (7) situation of Nollywood within the concept of communication studies, and finally a conclusion.

The Nigerian Movie Industry

This section briefly highlights the history of the Nigerian film industry. For the purpose of this study, the Nigerian movie industry is viewed as having four developmental stages. They are closely related to the socio-economic and political stages in the general history of Nigeria. The five stages are: the Colonial period, from 1903-1960; the Independence period, from 1960-1972; the Indigenization Decree period, from 1972-1992; the Nollywood period, from 1992-2010; and the New Nollywood from 2010 - present.

The Colonial period commences with the earliest exhibition of film in Nigeria in August 1903, at the Glover Memorial Hall in Lagos (Onuzulike, 2009). The rationale for the colonialists' bringing cinema to Nigeria was in essence to implant political and colonial propaganda, and, to some extent, to initiate social events. The Independence period begins with the after effects of the exodus of the colonialists, The Nigerian Federal and States Film Unit took over film production and they continued in the mold of the colonialists by concentrating on mostly documentary films and newsreels. The Indigenization Decree period incorporated unsuccessful attempts by indigenous filmmakers who were trying to make films based on the Nigerian context, but were paralyzed by the foreign influence of the Lebanese and Indians who dominated the film distribution and exhibition sector in Nigeria (Mgbejume 1989). New Nollywood is referred to as a category of economically exclusive group of aesthetic films that adhere to new methods of production and distribution. The distributions can take the form of Cinema Theater and Netflix (Haynes 2014; Jedlowski 2013; Onuzulike 2014; Ryan 2015). Arguably, stages four and five are running concurrently at some levels for now.

The Nollywood era emerged due to several factors, one being the economics of the lower cost of video as opposed to celluloid (Adesanya 2000; 2002; Faris 2002; Haynes 2000; Haynes and Okome 2000; Larkin 2000; Onuzulike 2010b; 2018). Many trace the emergence of Nollywood to the movie *Living in Bondage* (1992), produced by Okechukwu "Paulo" Ogunjiofor, directed by Vic Mordi, and marketed by Kenneth Nnebue's Nek Video Links Limited in 1992 (Haynes 2000; Onuzulike 2008; 2018). *Living in Bondage* set the pace for the emergence of Nollywood. Others had produced movies on VHS prior to Nnebue's landmark film; however, those productions failed to widely penetrate the Nigerian market. Though, according to Haynes (2000), no one can claim exactly when the name "Nollywood" was first used to describe the Nigerian movie industry, it was "invented" by a non-Nigerian, and first appeared in a 2002 article by Matt Steinglass in *The New York Times*. The next section highlights the intellectual tradition of DVFT.

Intellectual Tradition of Digital Video Film Theory

Digital video film theory (DVFT), formerly known as video film theory (VFT), reflects the intellectual tradition of the discipline of communication and film. As a critical intercultural communication scholar and Nollywood film critic, I was perturbed by how the African film industries did not get

enough attention in the West and their institutions, and how non-Africans have told their stories. So, in the early 2007, I introduced video film theory (VFT) that speaks for Nollywood and other African film productions (Onuzulike 2007). It was formulated to address the issues of development communication (Quebral [1971]2006; 2012) and video film technology (Onuzulike 2015). Thus, digital technology has improved how the films are made and it has improved the quality production so much that the films are on Netflix. As a result, there is a need to reformulate the theory by renaming it "digital video film theory (DVFT)."

Overall, the theory emerged while I was primarily working on Nollywood film industries. Then and still, I deemed it necessary to interject and articulate an alternative method that speaks to Nigerian and other African film industries. Then the theory was born out of Nollywood and critical orientation, a tradition concerned with the power of cultural and mass media control of narratives of the people. In particular, it is concerned with how the West depicts and tells African stories, thus corroding their ability to tell their own stories. DVFT theory serves as a lens for decolonizing mass media and communication studies in general. My goal was to describe how the marriage of video and film has created an avenue for the Nollywood film industry to tell its own stories from its own perspective. DVFT theory stems from the critical traditional of decolonization of communication theory. In viewing DVFT theory from the Global South perspective, I thereby position the theory to de-Westernize, internationalize, and decolonize communication studies. The next three sections outline theories that guide the conceptualization of DVFT.

Film Theory

In their introduction to volume one of, *Film Theory*: *Critical Concepts in Media and Cultural Studies*, Simpson, Utterson, and Shepherdson (2004) note that "During the early decades of critical writing on film, one principal concern prevailed: a desire to map out the evolving contours of cinema as a distinctive cultural form" (19). They assert that Ricciotto Canudo, one primary writer who struggled with the "conditions surrounding 'the birth of the sixth art', as he describes it, goes so far as to situate cinema as an extension of the aesthetic manifestations practiced by all peoples: music, poetry, agriculture, sculpture and painting" (19). Along the same line, Dudley Andrew (1984) argues that "for this is the state of film theory as it has come to be, an accumulation of concepts, or, rather, of ideas and attitudes clustered around concepts. Film theory is, in short, a

verbal representation of the film complex" (3). The complexity may include the formality it faces before acceptance.

Another important history was offered by Robert Ray (2000) in his work, *Impressionism, Surrealism, and Film Theory: Path Dependence, or how a Tradition in Film Theory Gets Lost*, he states that the School of Frankfurt, also known as the Institute for Social Research, which by that time had become housed in New York, was funding Benjamin's work. He "had submitted three chapters of a book on Baudelaire," which was intended as a preamble to further tentative work ahead (65). Writing on behalf of the Institute, Benjamin's acquaintance Theodor Adorno declined it. "'Your study', Adorno wrote, in the now famous passage, 'is located at the crossroads of magic and positivism. That spot is bewitched. Only theory could break the spell' (Adorno, 1938/1980: 129)'" (Ray, 65). Ray (2000) notes that even though Adorno eventually felt sorry about this assessment, his conceptualization of it describes the history of film theory. "For what could be a more exact definition of the cinema than 'the crossroads of magic and positivism'? Or a more succinct definition of film theory's traditional project than to 'break the spell'?" (65). These assertions provide a background for what a new concept goes through in the quest for acknowledgement and implementation.

Television Theory

In his work, *Film and Video Theory in Television Production Manuals*, Gary Burns (1982) writes that the major film theorists have not had much to say about television; and he further asserts that television has inspired few theorists of its own; that is, whose major concern, like the film theorists, is aesthetics. He notes that one of the earliest forms of commentary on television is the production manual, "most of which are elementary surveys covering technology, program types, basic principles of perception, composition, and camera movement, etc.; and rules of thumb to use in producing programs" (3-4). Now, television has evolved into Digital Television (DTV) and High Definition Television (HDTV) formats.

According to Tpub.com, "Television is the offspring of three media - theater, film, and radio. Numerous technical advances include programmable television, unlimited channel access, stereo sound, vivid color, and video cassette and computer hook-up." The primary theory still centered "on the cathode-ray tube" (para. 1). Burns (1982) adds that this focus holds to a

much larger degree than an individual might rationally anticipate, given the several apparent

> …similarities between film and television in such areas as equipment, production technique and capability, and content. A major concern of film theorists since the early days of film has been its relationship to other arts which preceded it historically, such as still photography, literature, and theatre. (3)

Now, this concern has extended to television, video, and digital technology. Theoretically, this chapter contends that film's relationship to television, video, and digital technology continues to evolve as they are used to decolonize communication studies.

Video Theory

According to Cubit (1993), the term "video" commonly covers a vast range of media—a minimal list would include feature films on video tape, music videos, home video recordings (both with the VCR and domestic video cameras), closed circuit video surveillance, corporate and information video, video used for legal evidence in the police and court systems, and so on (xvi). According to Popper (1997), video inevitably seems rather shadowy. He posits that video is "still rather poorly defined halfway between TV and the museum." (68). He nevertheless elaborates that "it does suggest that as much as video offers a new kind of object for theory, it is also part of a profound transformation of the social and cultural conditions within which theory is produced" (68). He suggests that video provides dimensions for theory that can be insightfully utilized to transform the social and cultural dynamics of a people by which theory emerged.

Antin (1995) says that the hybridity of television and video is based on "shared technologies and conditions [of] viewing, in the same way the relation of movies to underground film [was] created by the shared conditions of [the] camera" (322). Yet, "an artist may exploit the relation very knowingly and may choose an aspect of the relation for attack" (322). Previously, in a point that has also been expressed regarding Nollywood, some critics have expressed **concern** about poor quality of the videos because it was in the developmental stage (Faris 2002; Oguine 2004; McLaughlin 2005). Now, the quality has improved, which is primarily attributed to better technology, training, and services (Onuzulike 2014; 2018). Nollywood movies are now screening on Netflix and other similar

outlets. The improvement of video technology has created an avenue for filmmakers in countering and decolonizing Eurocentric ideologies that have been forced on the people of Africa from the colonial era. As Munoz (1999) contends, "Video technology provided disenfranchised sectors of the public sphere with inexpensive and mobile means to produce alternative media" (118). Many different minority groups, who might be deemed as counterpublics, adopted such movies and documentary practices. Like Nollywood producers, these communities have utilized the video medium to make a mark in the world of cinema.

Proliferation of Video

The proliferation of contemporary video has occurred because video film made movie production affordable for many societies and communities; however, some critics might argue that the poor quality of video production is more important because poor quality video film is driving out high quality film and television. In his interview with Frank Ukadike, King Ampaw claims film is dying almost everywhere in the world. He argues that this is true even in Hollywood. "If large institutions like Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer [MGM] are selling their Hollywood studios for video production or television production, then it is an indication that film is dying" (208). Also, Ohanian (1998) notes that as video technology grew more reliable and less expensive, videotape became important in news and documentary production, in corporate communications, and eventually in consumer products. He says that videotape's picture quality also improved greatly, to the point where low-budget feature films such as *The Blair Witch Project* (1999) were shot on video and transferred to film for theatrical distribution. During an interview with Ukadike (1999), Ansah said that he "would not consider the proliferation of video as spelling the doom of film, especially where English-speaking Africa is concerned. It's only a poor man's stopgap measure. We must continue telling our stories even when money is hard to come by" (17). Furthermore, he says:

> Don't forget that we in the English-speaking African countries are not as lucky as our brothers in the French-speaking African countries, whose former colonial master created a film-supporting mechanism from which filmmakers can source funding for a film idea (as long as the idea is nonpolitical against the former master). (17)

In the same interview with Ukadike (1999), Ansah reiterates that film or celluloid is expensive, and ideally that is the format in which he would prefer telling his story. But, practically, no African filmmaker can afford

celluloid on his own in the present economic situation. He states, "Neither can we wait for our mismanaged economics to be revamped before telling our stories" (17).

There are other concerns about the quality of video production. As Geuens (1996) observes, "The main culprit here is the lack of resolution of the video image and the fact that its contrast ratio does not match that of the film stock… Shadow detail, for instance, does not show up on the monitor, a situation that inevitably creates doubt about the handling of the lighting scheme" (24). Accordingly, Tashiro (1991) adds that,

> While film and video share common technical concerns (contrast, color, density, audio frequency responses, etc.), their means of addressing those concerns differ. The conscientious film-to-video transfer is designed to accentuate the similarities and minimize the differences, but the differences end up shaping the video text. (8)

To me, the main point here is that the proliferation of video has created an economical way for people who cannot afford celluloid to tell their stories. In other words, the proliferation of video and digital technology enables decolonization of communication studies through the lens of Nollywood.

Towards a Theory of Digital Video Film

The proliferation of digital technology has created an avenue by which cultural heritage can be easily explored. As stated earlier, the blending of cinema, television, and digital has created a new reality called DVFT. As the development of video film progresses, the world takes more and more interest in Nollywood movies. However, there is a need to build a theory from an African perspective to understand the Nollywood concept. As previously stated, the cultural aesthetic structures of video film comprise components of social struggle. Hill and Gibson (2000) note that the aesthetic and cultural always exist alongside each other. The aesthetic aspects of a film on no account exist separately "from how it is conceptualized, how it is socially practiced, how it is received; it never exists floating free of historical and cultural particularity" (7). This indicates that films depict cultures and histories of a people.

Kolker (2000) notes that film and cinema are normal components of our lives; according to him, explaining, distinguishing, and analyzing them are not easy. Furthermore, not too many individuals acknowledge them. Easthope (2000) observes that, surprisingly, film theory had to endure a lengthy, difficult period before it could develop into a bona fide "theory of

film" (49). Similarly, Nollywood video film, as a new venture, faces some hurdles to its authenticity.

Unlike cinema, digital technologies encountered a world already well acquainted with a century of mass media development. Lister et al. (2003) note that alternative cinematic forms have fallen victim to the dominance of feature films, "but continued, marginalized, repressed or channeled into other media (they may now themselves be poised to take over). Animation is one such form, special effects are another" (149). Video film is on the verge of becoming an acceptable medium.

Also, the works of *videofilmic* practices of Nigerian's video filmmakers, Nollywood critics, and Nollywood enthusiasts have made a DVFT conceivable. As new technologies improve, there is a need for a theory to cover this aspect of the video film phenomenon. Therefore, I propose a theory called *digital video film theory* (DVFT), a theory that intertwines with the concept of digital technology. DVFT aims to decolonize communication studies in the audio-visual digital forms of communication in Nigeria. Succinctly, it describes the culture, economics, and technology of people who use the medium for social activism or telling stories. In other words, it is a theory of unvoiced to voiced in the motion picture industry. Of particular importance in the theory is the role of video in allowing those who cannot afford celluloid to tell their stories.

My formulation is drawn from the sense of cultural and identity expressions, the economy, and improved technology. I will follow through with some of the combinations in the application of film and other aesthetic theories. Investigative studies are needed to build the concept of DVFT. Commencing from the basic standpoint, the theory involves six core layers—cultural, social, religious, economic, political, and technological. Each layer provides a prism through which to view the "videofilmic" representation of various voices. These layers are entwined and two or more can be applied to a specific phenomenon.

1. *Cultural layer*: The cultural layer comprises utilization of video film as a tool to monitor and preserve the culture. For example, Carter (2001) observes that the Berber ethnic group, which has been marginalized by Moroccan cinema, is now using video film to voice and validate its cultural heritage. As Gabriel (2000) articulates, "From pre-colonial times to the present, the struggle for freedom from oppression has been waged by the Third World masses, who in their maintenance of a deep cultural identity have made history come alive" (298). As Gabriel (2000) observes:

> Just as they have moved aggressively towards independence, so has the
> evolution of Third World film culture followed a path from 'domination' to
> 'liberation.' This genealogy of Third World film culture moves from the
> First Phase in which foreign images are impressed in an alienating fashion
> on the audience, to the Second and Third Phases in which recognition of
> 'consciousness of oneself' serves as the essential antecedent for national
> and, more significantly, international consciousness. (298 - 299)

This type of ideology can be enhanced through the depiction and sustenance
of cultural inheritance in video film productions. The cultural aspect of
this theory is sub-divided into the culture of video film usage and the
culture of the user. In the culture aspect of video film usage, it is quicker
to produce movies on video than on celluloid. In the culture of the user, it
could be a depiction of his or her unique culture, making it possible to
access, for example, his or her cultural or group movies available through
the Internet.

2. *Social layer*: The social layer includes the investigation of societal
concerns, reform, marginalized groups' expressions, and innovations of
new ideas. A marginalized group could be ethnic- or gender-based. As
Abah (2009) observes, "Nollywood has tried to represent the disintegration
of societal values such as women's rights, civil society and governance"
(733). She believes that Nollywood video film is fit to mediate and
encourage social transformation.

3. *Economic layer*: The economic layer includes technology and equipment
costs, affordable casts, and producers. As Adesokan (2005) puts it, "The
videofilms are made for and by people who inhabit several spaces,
economically and culturally, and these spaces are constantly transformed
in social processes" (56). This economic aspect is the main reason that
many people can afford the equipment, and view video films. As the world
economy tumbles and celluloid cost increases, producers will soon join
others in producing their films on video, which can be transferred to
celluloid if they wish to do so.

4. *Political layer*: The political layer incorporates how video film as a
communication medium can be a platform for civic engagement and
political activism. It is ironic that it took the collapse of the Nigerian
economy, followed by the withdrawal of government funding of the
Nigerian film industry, for Nigerian filmmakers to find this alternative
medium to tell their stories. Video film can be utilized to engage in
political activism, to serve as a watchdog and to act as a custodian of
history. Abah (2009) notes that video film can be used through

"communication, coordination and collective action by groups of citizens who wish to change the [political] institutions and policies that govern them" (737).

5 *Technological layer***:** The technological layer refers to video film's mechanics and affordability. In the digital age, technology improves every day and this enables videographers and filmmakers access to the latest technology. Arguably, digital technology is an extension of video film technology, which has provided the avenue for professionals and non-professionals to make films to tell their own stories from their perspectives.

6. *Religious layer***:** Religion is embedded in African people and it plays a major role in African activities (Mbiti 1975). The film *Living in Bondage* (1992) is full of religious overtones, as are many later Nollywood films, and religion is often expressed in these films as a unique mixture of Western Christianity and traditional Nigerian practices (Onuzulike 2013). Through video film, religious understanding and tolerance can be explored.

Conceptually and in support of the six discussed layers, my formation of DVFT echoes thoughts of Saussure (1988) and Barthes's (1972) notions of semiotics, or the study of cultural products which function as a system of signs. My idea of DVFT theory may also bring to mind thoughts of Eisenstein's (1949) semiotics of cinema, a study that seeks to revive not only the syncretic nature of man's early cultural-aesthetic communication, but also its substantial reliance on the 'lower' sensual center of the brain for its psychological effect. My perception of DVFT may also give rise to thoughts of Norden's *The Cinema of Isolation* (1994), which is concerned with portrayals of people with physical disabilities (particularly in mainstream media), the relationship of film and society, movies as political commodities, and media stereotyping. My concept of DVFT, likewise, fits Postman's (1970) notion of media ecology, which he defines as "the study of media as environment" (161), as well as McLuhan's (1964) concept of "the medium is the message" (13), which denotes that the content of a medium is always another medium. DVFT draws attention to cultural studies. Still, my conceptualization of DVFT will not replace or supersede the work of film and cinematic theories. Instead, it further enhances our understanding of how digital video technology can be used by various cultures or groups to express their identities and decolonize communication studies.

Cultural Studies

Stuart Hall is credited for pioneering cultural studies. He argued the mass media maintain the view of people already in the positions of power (Hall 1980; 1986). Cultural studies theoretical tradition stems from the German philosopher Karl Marx. He is largely recognized for pinpointing how powerful individuals exploit powerless individuals. Unlike Marx, individuals in cultural studies have incorporated a range of perspectives into their thinking. Also, they have included other powerless and marginalized individuals such as ethnic minorities, women, gays and lesbians, the mentally ill, and children. Cultural studies is regarded as neo-Marxist because it slightly embraces Marxism. It heavily employed hegemony, which is how the elites marginalized the subordinates (West and Turner 2007; Hall 1996; Baldwin, Longhurst, McCracken, Ogborn and Smith 1999). For Maltby (2007), "cultural studies can be seen as a strategy to maintain film theory's ideological critique of dominant culture, while avoiding the totalizing constraints of cinepsychoanalysis's insistence on the ideological determination of the subject by the text and its apparatus" (545). Thus, the following section examines cultural studies in relation to of hegemony and ideology.

The Implication of Hegemony

Although cultural studies is modeled after Marxism, its concepts are predominantly grounded in Gramsci's theory of hegemony. Wood (1988) contends that Hall, one of the pioneers of cultural studies, is dominant in the application of hegemony. As West and Turner (2007) note, hegemony is "the domination of one group over another, usually weaker group" (304). Moreover, Littlejohn and Foss (2005) note that "hegemony theory crosses over from critical theory to cultural studies, but refers to somewhat different forms of domination in each." However, in "critical theory, hegemony refers to the domination of one class or group over others; in cultural studies, it designates the domination of a set of ideas over other ideas" (293-293). Farred (2003) notes that "through Hall's dissemination, Gramsci has become an intellectual template for cultural studies scholarship, diasporic communities, constituencies of the postmodern left, and, most importantly, for postcolonial thinkers" (177). Hall argues, the "dominant ideology perpetuates the interest of certain classes over others, and the media obviously play a major role in this process" (293).

This may manifest when certain images of folk culture are portrayed in Nollywood productions. Nollywood video filmmakers use their films to project ideologies. Oftentimes Nollywood filmmakers use their films to decolonize communication by projecting African communication styles. Of course, there may be some sprinkles of Eurocentric ideology, as no culture is static. As Littlejohn and Foss (2005) observe, "studies of media and identity are a good case of how hegemony is observed from a cultural frame" (293-293). Nollywood and other African cinema productions continue to use their voices through film in decolonizing communication by highlighting African communications style. Moreover, Littlejohn and Foss note that Gramsci's "notion of hegemony was based on Marx's idea of **false consciousness**, a state in which individuals become unaware of the domination in their lives" (395). Therefore, ideology is not imposed by one individual on another but is instead pervasive and unconscious. So even though an individual is interested and invested in retaining power, the person may not fully realize their actions may not silence subordinate voices. Nollywood and other similar productions have created a platform for diluting the hegemonic power.

Decolonization of Communication Studies and the Application

The proliferation and convergence of film, television, video, and digital technology has ushered in the emergence of Nollywood that led to the decolonization of communication studies. Situating cultural studies, Hall aimed to unmask the power imbalances within society and mass media whereby those already in positions of power utilizes mass media to maintain their ideology. The emergence of Nollywood has created the platform to challenge and decolonize mass media in Nigeria and beyond. When film arrived in Africa, the colonialists controlled the narrative. European funding of African filmmakers resulted in controlling the narrative of the productions. Ousmane Sembène, often referred to as the African film pioneer, was known for rejecting funding from the West because he refused to let them control the narrative of his films. In many ways, the emergence of Nollywood has provided the opportunity for Nigerian filmmakers to articulate their narrative in films. Other African countries have since follow suit in video film productions, which provided them the platform to control their narrative. Just like cultural studies, Nollywood challenges dominant ideology and helps "to raise our consciousness of the media's role in preserving the status quo" (333). Nollywood empowers Nigerian professional and amateur filmmakers to

tell their own stories. "For all, stripping the study of communication away from the cultural context in which it is found and ignoring the realities of unequal power distribution in society have weakened our field and made it less theoretically relevant" (335)

In terms of application, there are two major applications for the DVFT theory of communication and film studies. The first is using the theory to help scholars, filmmakers, film critiques, practitioners, and students critically use Global South traditions in analyzing films. The theory provides concrete suggestions for how scholars, filmmakers, and others allow the voice and the perception of the owners of the culture to be heard.

The second application of the theory involves using digital technology to produce film or any communication clips in decolonizing communication studies. This form of application is more practical than theoretical. This can be applied by scholars, filmmakers, film critics, practitioners, students, and others who may be involve in digital production that uplift the Global South and challenges their hegemony. This application calls for the filmmakers or digital video filmmakers to understand the use of some filmic perspective to shoot and edit their videos and films.

Conclusion

The meeting of cinema and television has created a new reality called video film, which in turn is being used to decolonize communication studies within the context of audio-visual digital forms of communication in Nigeria. It has revolutionized the Nigerian movie industry and led to this chapter's conceptualizing of *digital video film theory* (DVFT). The conceptual ground for DVFT is based on six layers of social action which are intertwined, particularly in application; these are (a) cultural (b) social, (c) religious, (d) political, (d) economic, and (e) technological.

This work has shown that the main factor driving the need for the conceptualization of DVFT is economic and pertains to the availability of cheap video film technology. Had it not been for the latter, Nollywood would likely not exist. The proliferation of video film in Nigeria leads to a number of further questions. For example, one may ask why video film has proliferated in Nigeria but not in the United States or other western countries? Will video and digital films take over for celluloid? Further research is needed to explore the future possibilities for video film.

DVFT as a tool of decolonizing communication studies has positioned Nollywood to help articulate Nigerian cultural heritage and African culture as a whole. By utilizing the framework of video film concepts, Nollywood could ensure that a voice is given to the voiceless in Nigerians. Nollywood as well as the government could subscribe to the emerging countries' body of cultural works, and specifically those from emerging countries that have demonstrated competency, instead of bowing down to the West.

In many ways, discourses of decolonization and change in film theory have given birth to DVFT; video film itself stands as an example of technology that can be used for cultural explorations and representations. Thus, as far as the camera is concerned, the video film revolution could be a significant source of progressive cultural or economic changes that within the film industry. The use of video and supplemental devices has helped to shape a new kind of cinema.

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CHAPTER 10

DECOLONISING COMMUNICATION
AND JOURNALISM RESEARCH IN NIGERIA:
MAKING THE TRUTH COUNT
USING LOCALLY DEVELOPED FACT-
CHECKING MODELS

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Introduction

This research was premised on the dynamics and interrelationships among the media of communication, communication (itself) and democracy. Communication is a pivotal process in a democratic system. A representative democratic system such as that practiced in Nigeria relies on the support of people. This popular support indicates the legitimacy of the mandate of the citizens and is channelled through the media of communication such as radio, television, newspapers, and lately, social media platforms and the internet. Communication holds a central position in representative democracy, and it must remain in that position for democracy to function. Communication between political parties and electorates is also necessary for the political system to progress. It is the voters' right to "be informed about political mandate, policy and alternative presented by the candidates or political parties; on other hand, political representatives need to know the wishes and demands of those whom they

are supposed to govern" because "citizens in modern democracies are represented through parties." [1,2]

As important as the media and communication are in a democracy, so is the quality or veracity of the information circulating in the democratic atmosphere, between politicians and voters. In essence, we can confidently say that if logically, the lack of media and communication cripples any representative democracy, the lack of verifiable political messages and information can, correspondingly, pollute the democratic system thereby undermining its development and sustenance. Therefore, a representative democratic process that is replete with information disorder, arguably, is a weak democracy.

To enhance the strengths of democracy and filter the filths of misinformation for freer democracy and better governance, information released into the environment must be verifiably sound. After all, there may not be better technology to curb the menace of misleading information in society than the media themselves that are used to pollute the democratic process. Strict adherence to regulatory codes, ethical journalism practice and fact-checking has been shown to be an effective panacea. [e.g., 3,4] However, adherence to media regulatory codes and ethical journalism practice largely relates to conventional media – broadcast and print – while excluding internet-based media which are largely unregulated, robustly popular, and mostly used in the circulation of misleading content and hate messages. Therefore, the need for comprehensive fact-checking techniques and tools cannot be over-emphasised.

The Nigerian Fourth (democratic) Republic is currently 21 years old. It began in 1999, after 16 years of military rule. However, since the emergence of the Trumpian fake news era in 2016, the Nigerian democratic atmosphere has been polluted with more devastating hate messages and misinformation which, aided by the 'supersonic' new media, threaten the nations hard-earned democracy. As constitutional watchdogs of society, journalists are tasked with cleansing the filths of misinformation and hate messages from the democratic atmosphere. The Nigerian Constitution may have provided

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[1] Rodney Ciboh, "Journalists and political sources in Nigeria: Between information subsidies and political pressures," *The International Journal of Press/Politics* 22, no. 2 (April 2017): 185.

[2] Doug McAdam, *Political Process, and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970* (University of Chicago Press, 2010).

[3] Ciboh, "Journalists," 185.

[4] McAdam, *Political Process*.

for free journalism and watchdog function of the press, and indeed, the mass media, however, how will those invested with the responsibility and duty of cleansing the fake news messing the political atmosphere discharge their duties and responsibilities of disinfecting the polity from the menace of fake news?

Fact-checking is a critical technique that is consistently recommended. However, with rapid technological enhancements, circulation of misinformation is becoming much easier with super qualities and incredible virality. All these factors make detecting fake news difficult. Hence, there is an urgent need for a multi-dimensional approach toward the development of fact-checking techniques and tools. Although advances are made globally in the development of scientific techniques of identifying fake information, some of those techniques may not work commendably well in a Nigerian context, which is typically characterised with social (e.g., ethnic sensationalism), cultural (e.g., religious sensationalism) and political (e.g., sensationalism based on the geopolitical region of origin of individual Nigerians) derision culture among its citizens. Hence, the need for decolonisation not only of fake news research but also political communication, especially its theoretical aspect, as an area of study.

With over 250 ethnic groups, Christianity, and Islam as major religions and six distinct geopolitical regions, Nigeria is a multicultural, multi-religious and multi-regional nation. The six geopolitical regions are largely abstracted based on ethnic, religious, and cultural divides in the nation. With an estimated population of about 200 million and 91 political parties, Nigeria is the largest democracy in Africa and one of the largest in the world. In addition, with an array of more than 1000 media platforms (both broadcast and print, according to the country's Information and Culture Minister Alhaji Lai Mohammed) and a robust population of active internet users of about 116 million (specifically, 115,938255 in March 2019 according to the Nigerian Communications Commission, NCC), Nigeria is the largest media and internet market in Africa.

Because of these characteristics of the country, the imperativeness to develop 'home-based' fact-checking techniques and tools that will accommodate the peculiarities of the Nigerian political terrain, socio-cultural setting, and yield context-compliant results capable of helping our news media industry and other entities involved in the collection, processing and dissemination of information for public consumption to systematically identify misleading information and 'dispolute' the 'infosphere' for a fairer democracy to prevail cannot be over-emphasised. To achieve these goals,

this chapter proposes a theoretical model called the Model of Mediated Nigerian National Identity Biases in Political Communication (MMNNIBiPC). [e.g., 5] The model was designed to provide a theoretical underpinning toward understanding the processes of misinformation in Nigerian polity to provide insight into how to identify and eliminate fake news, especially in the online environment. Specifically, MMNNIBiPC focuses on the incubatory phases of fake news; it was designed based on the social, cultural, and religious colouration of political communication in Nigeria.

Review of Existing Literature

Conceptualising Fake News

The Ethical Journalism Network (EJN) defines fake news as information deliberately fabricated and published to deceive and mislead others into believing falsehood or doubtful messages.[6] The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) defines fake news as "completely false information, photos or videos purposefully created and spread to confuse or misinform; information, photos or videos manipulated to deceive, or old photographs shared as new; satire or parody which means no harm but can fool people."[7]

Having had some understanding of the definition of fake news, an attempt was made to define various types of fake news. Wardle C. and Derakhshan H. [8] have proposed three themes of fake news: misinformation, disinformation and mal-information. According to them,

> misinformation is information that is false, but the person who is disseminating *(sic)* it believes that it is true. Disinformation … [refers to]

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5 Adamkolo Mohammed Ibrahim, "Theorizing the Journalism Model of Disinformation and Hate Speech Propagation in a Nigerian Democratic Context," *International Journal of E-Politics (IJEP)* 10, no. 2 (July 2019): 60.

6 Umaru A Pate., Danjuma Gambo, and Adamkolo Mohammed Ibrahim, "The Impact of Fake News and the Emerging Post-Truth Political Era on Nigerian Polity: A Review of Literature," *Studies in Media and Communication* 7, no. 1 (June 2019): 21.

7 BBC News, "World – Africa: What We've Learnt about Fake News in Africa," BBC News, November 12, 2018, http://bbc.com/news/world-africa-46138284.

8 Claire Wardle and Hossein Derakhshan, "Thinking About 'Information Disorder': Formats of Misinformation, Disinformation, and Mal-Information," in *Journalism, 'Fake News' and Disinformation: A Handbook for Journalism Education and Training*, eds. Cherilyn Ireton and Julie Posetti (Paris: UNESCO, 2018): 43-54.

information that is false, and the person who is disseminating (*sic*) it knows it is false. It is a deliberate, intentional lie … [that] points to people being actively disinformed by malicious actors. …mal-information…[is] information, … [which] is based on reality, but used to inflict harm on a person, organisation, or country. [9]

Cited in Siapera, [10] Wardle formulated a typology of fake news based on three key dimensions: (i) the type of content created and shared, (ii) the intentions of those behind it and (iii) the forms of dissemination. Wardle and Derakhshan cited in Ireton C. and Posetti J. [11] further proffered seven different categories of fake news, "which she places on a continuum": satire/parody, misleading content, imposter content, fabricated content, false connection, false context, and manipulated content.

1. Satire or parody: No intention to cause harm but has potential to fool.
2. Misleading content: The use of information to frame an issue or individual in a misleading manner.
3. Imposter content: When genuine sources are impersonated.
4. Fabricated content: The new content is completely false and is designed to deceive and harm.
5. False connection: When headlines, visuals or captions do not support the content.
6. False context: When genuine content is shared with false contextual information.
7. Manipulated content: When genuine information or imagery is manipulated to deceive.

However, she argued that "The intentions of the communicators are crucial as satire has no intention to deceive, while manipulated content has been developed with the objective to manipulate (*sic*) and deceive (*sic*)" (p.157).

Although none of these types of fake news is new, history is replete with instances of fake news e.g., "Propaganda, or fabricated or manipulated stories for political purposes, was extremely widespread in both WWI and WWII, while in more recent years, [newspapers] and celebrity magazines are pushing the boundaries of truth in their own ways", [12] which constituted more pernicious types of misinformation. More especially, with the professionalisation of journalism such "crude hoaxes" became less

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[9] Wardle and Derakhshan, "Thinking about," 45.
[10] Siapera, *Understanding*, 157.
[11] Ireton and Posetti, *Journalism*, 54.
[12] Siapera, *Understanding*, 157.

common in later decades until the 2016 US elections [13] as well as the 2020 US elections [14] that triggered it exponentially anew. Therefore, as Siapera [15] noted, old-school fake news and the current breed of fake news are similar except for a few differences. What differentiates them are three factors, "firstly, the ease by which people can create content, secondly, the distribution patterns across new and social media, and thirdly, the political economy of the online domain which enables and incentivises the creation of these forms of news." A fourth factor (especially concerning the Nigerian context) could be the urge (by social media users) to gain popularity, public (or friends) endorsement and a high rating.

Fake News and the Concept of 'Post-Truth Political Era'

Fake news thrives in Nigerian polity because truths based on facts are now becoming illusionary. Stories and news appealing to emotion and personal beliefs appear to be more believable and capable of shaping public opinion, a phenomenon that erodes the credibility of ethical news content. This situation perfectly matches what is lately referred to as the 'post-truth' era [16] when lies, rather than truths, prevail, a phenomenon that forms the second nature of many politicians. Unsurprisingly, though, lying is often attributed to politicians; many of them do not regard telling a lie as bad behaviour, an argument Colin Wight, a Professor of International Relations at the University of Sydney agrees with, saying "lying is not an aberration in politics". However, Professor Wight argues that "there is nothing new about politicians and the powerful telling lies, spinning, producing propaganda, [or] dissembling", a behaviour that is in tandem with Machiavellianism, that "all leaders might, at some point, need to tell lie" [17]

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[13] Craig Silverman and Lawrence Alexander, "How Teens in the Balkans are Duping Trump Supporters with Fake News," *Buzzfeed*, 2016, https://www.buzzfeed.com/craigsilverman/how-macedonia-became-a-global-hub-for-pro-trump-misinfo?utm_term=.jg3WljK8O#.hdLwyLR1x.

[14] Open Democracy, "'For Donald Trump, His Defeat Will be Fake News,'" *Open Democracy*, November 4, 2020, https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/democraciabierta/donald-trump-dorrota-noticia-falsa-en/.

[15] Siapera, *Understanding*, 157.

[16] Jayson Harsin, "Post-Truth and Critical Communication Studies," *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Communication* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).

[17] Pate et al., "The Impact of Fake News," 21.

Historically, this can be traced back to Plato's coinage of the term "noble lie", which refers to false information deliberately spread by a crème de la crème of the society, especially political elites to preserve social accord or promote an agenda. [18] The English Oxford Dictionary defines post-truth as "circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief". As Professor Pate noted, looking at the strong affinity between fake news peddling and social media vis-à-vis the skyrocketing levels of social media use among Nigerians,[19] in no time could the post-modernist Machiavellianism, noble lie, or untruth permeate the Nigerian polity and cause unimagined topsy-turvy, a phenomenon the Nigerian Information and Culture Minister, Lai Mohammed describes as "the greatest threat to democracy and security."[20] Hence, the need for urgent action to tackle the menace.[21]

Making the Truth Count through Fact-Checking

In the global race towards verifying contents and ensuring ethical journalism thrives, the need for journalists and news media to acquire fact-checking knowledge and skills cannot be over-emphasised. Dubawa is a prominent Nigerian independent verification and fact-checking platform. It is supported by the Premium Times Centre for Investigative Journalism (PTCIJ). Dubawa defines fake news or false information as fraudulent, inaccurate, or false verbal or visual messages disseminated for public attention through conventional or social media, hugely to mislead, misinform or misdirect. It is a fluid subject that is differently perceived, interpreted and understood by individuals depending on many factors. Fake news is often embellished, sensationalised, and made alarmingly attractive. Sometimes, it can be difficult to detect fraudulent news especially when such stories contain authoritative lies except through critical examination of the words mostly designed to capture and retain the attention of receivers in uncommon ways. Fake news is subtly and sophisticatedly presented to hide

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[18] George Ogola, "'Africa Has a Long History of Fake News after Years of Living with non-Truth,'" *The Conversation*, 2017, http://theconversation.com/amp/africa-has-a-long-history-of-fake-news-after-years-of-living-in-non-truth-73332.

[19] Itedge News, "Nigeria Goes after Fake News, Hate Speech as NBC Reviews Broadcasting Code," *Itedge News*, September 10, 2018, https://itedgenews.ng/2018/09/10/nigeria-goes-fake-news-hate-speech-nbc-reviews-broadcasting-code/.

[20] Abdullahi, Bolaji, "Democracy and the Challenge of Fake News," *TheCable*. March 13, 2017, https://www.thecable.ng/democracy-challenge-fake-news.

[21] Pate et al., "The Impact of Fake News."

its falsity with unverifiable sources or claims. Fake news violates contextual and multicultural realities through mischief and ignorance presented as valid information. [22,23,24]

Steinmetz cited in Pate and colleagues [25] notes that fake news debases the truth and causes "confusion of fantasy and reality" in the minds of the audience. Siapera [26] noted, three significant factors characterise the current brand of fake news. First, the ease by which people can create content; second, the distribution patterns across new and social media, and third, the political economy of the online domain which enables and incentivises the creation of these forms of news. She further notes that anyone with internet access can effectively produce and distribute the content of any kind of quality and that "people can avail of the various functionalities of computer software such as photoshop and create highly believable contents…. Fake news can travel very far on the internet." The 'public profile' of fake news rose to notoriety on the global political arena with the advent of the internet; the rise of populism politics in different parts of the world like the 2016 and 2020 US presidential elections [27,28]; the rise of tyrannical leaders, and the Brexit referendum. [29]

Furthermore, fake news is a complex phenomenon that can be defined based on three parameters as suggested by Wardle [30]: the type of content created and shared; the intentions of those behind this, and the forms of dissemination. Wardle further identified seven different categories of fake news in the following order: satire/parody, misleading content, impostor content, fabricated content, false connection, false context and manipulated content. Fake news is a real challenge in Nigeria especially given the country's fragile social setting, loose democratic culture, poverty, illiteracy,

[22] Dubawa, "Fake News: If It's Too Bad to be True, Maybe It Is," *Dubawa*, 2019, https://dubawa.org/fake-news-if-its-too-bad-to-be-true-maybe-it-is/.
[23] Ibrahim, "Theorizing."
[24] Carol S. Ting and Shawn G.Z.S. Wan, "What Lies Beneath the Truth," 2017, in Pate et al., "The Impact."
[25] Katy Steinmetz, "How Your Brain Tricks You," September 6, 2018, in Pate et al., "The Impact," 22.
[26] Siapera, *Understanding,* 57.
[27] Open Democracy, "For Donald Trump."
[28] Nathaniel Persily, "The 2016 US Election: Can Democracy Survive the Internet?" *Journal of Democracy* 28, no. 2 (April 2017): 63.
[29] Tarlach McGonagle, "Fake News" False Fears or Real Concerns?" *Netherlands Quarterly of Human Rights* 35, no. 4 (December 2017): 203.
[30] Wardle and Cherilyn, "Information Disorder," in Siapera, *Understanding*.

depressing human conditions, inflation, a weak economy, intolerance, and high tendencies for disunity among the peoples of the country. [31]

Nigerian Political Infosphere through Socio-Cultural Prism

As the watchdog of society, it is the journalists' responsibility to not only ethically and professionally gather information but also cross-check, fine-tune and verify the authenticity of the information before processing publishing or broadcasting it. [32] Gullibility plays a major role in people's succumbing to the lures of deceptive information. [33] To the practising journalist, this can be a whole days' task or even more especially if it involves investigative newsgathering. The literature has established several ways of identifying misinformation and fake news. In this paper, a focus is made on misinformation identification through procedural methods or techniques. Invariably, this entails the prior understanding of the social, cultural, and political contexts of Nigeria and Nigerians.

Using the perspective of the Social Identity Theory developed by Tajfel [34] and reviewed by Tajfel and Turner [35], the social, cultural, and political biases of Nigerians can be understood better. SIT premises that using social categorisation of one's 'in-group' regarding others' as 'out-group' and the tendency to view one's own group with a positive bias vis-à-vis the out-group, individuals define their own identities regarding social groups and that such identifications work to protect and bolster self-identity.[36] According to Tajfel and Turner[37] "three cognitive processes are involved" in assessing other people as "us" or "them", or "in-group" and "out-group" namely, categorisation, identification and comparison. This can provide a clue regarding the prevalence of 'us' versus 'them' misinformation in the

[31] Ogola, "Africa."

[32] Ireton and Posetti, *Journalism*.

[33] Joseph P. Forgas and Roy Baumeister, *The Social Psychology of Gullibility: Conspiracy Theories, Fake News, and Irrational Beliefs* (Routledge, 2019).

[34] Henry Tajfel, "The Achievement of Inter-group Differentiation. Differentiation between Social Groups," in *Differentiation between Social Groups*, ed. Henry Tajfel (London: Academic Press, 1978), 77-100.

[35] Henri Tajfel, John C. Turner, William G. Austin, and Stephen Worchel, "An Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict," in *Organizational Identity: A Reader*, eds. Mary Jo Hatch and Majken Schultz (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), 56.

[36] Saul A. McLeod, "Social identity theory," 2018, www.simplypsychology.org/social-identity-theory.html.

[37] Tajfel and Turner, "An Integrative," 79.

Nigerian infosphere, both online and offline, especially during election seasons.

Methods

Development of the Theoretical Model

This research work is based on qualitative methods of model building with a focus on "conceptual thinking and theory building rather than theory or hypothesis testing" in a constructivist grounded theory approach.[38] To generate the data for the designing of the theoretical model, 125 in-depth interviews were had with professional journalists, media management personnel, social media analysts and active social media users purposively selected in Maiduguri, Damaturu, Kano, Abuja, Lagos, Uyo and Port Harcourt cities in Nigeria. After critical reviews of extant literature, the data were analysed using memoing and a series of coding to identify core categories. Using the constructivist approach, the MMNNIBiPC model [39,40] was developed. The essence of the constructivists' approach to the development of a theoretical model is that the models were developed inductively from the data generated from the interviews. [41]

Fundamentally, the researchers used the journalism theories, [42] Social Identity Theory, [43] the Cultural Identity analysis, [44] and the communication process [45] theoretical sampling to focus and feed their constant comparative analysis of the data. [46] During this iterative process,

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38 Shahid N. Khan, "Qualitative Research Method: Grounded Theory," *International Journal of Business and Management* 9, no. 11 (October 2014): 224; Juliet Corbin and Anselm Strauss, *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory* (Sage Publications, 2014).

39 Ibrahim, "Theorizing."

40 Elihu Katz and Paul F. Lazarsfeld, *Personal Influence: The Part Played by People in the Flow of Mass Communications* (New York: Routledge, 2017).

41 Khan, "Qualitative," 224.

42 Denis McQuail, *McQuail's Mass Communication Theory, 6th Ed* (London: SAGE, 2010).

43 Tajfel and Turner, "An Integrative," 79.

44 William E. Cross Jr., "The Thomas and Cross Models of Psychological Nigrescence: A Review," *Journal of Black psychology* 5, no. 1 (August 1978): 13.

45 Harold D. Laswell, "The Structure and Function of Communication in Society," *The Communication of Ideas* 37, no. 1 (Winter-Spring 1948): 136.

46 Kathy Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide Through Qualitative Analysis* (Thousand Oaks: SAGE, 2006).

they gathered more information to 'saturate' categories under development. To sample the data theoretically, the researchers made a strategic decision about the data to provide the relevant data to meet their analytical needs because the researchers wanted "to find out more about the properties of a category, conditions that a particular category may exist under, the dimensions of a category [and] the relationship between categories."[47] The researchers collected, coded and analysed the data and decided the data to use and the places to obtain them for them to expound the theoretical models as they developed.

Rather than predetermining the development of the models before the commencement of the research, the models evolved during the coding and review of the literature. It was in the light "of the concepts that developed" from the examination of the literature and which seemed "to have relevance" to the emerging theoretical models that the models were formulated. [48]

Result and Discussion

Result

The Model of Mediated Nigerian National Identity Biases in Political Communication

In its most basic assumptions, MMNNIBiPC which is a user-based model [49] seeks to provide a theoretical underpinning for the prediction of a post-truth democratic era whence information disorder effects are making a significant inroad toward permeating the fabric of the democratic atmosphere in the society. Mediated by public opinion, [50,51] the three key predictors of the model, namely religious bias, geopolitical regional bias, and ethnic bias [52,53] are modelled to predict a post-truth democratic era

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[47] Khan, "Qualitative," 225.
[48] Corbin and Strauss, *Basics*, 59.
[49] Xinyi Zhou and Reza Zafarani, "Fake News: A Survey of Research, Detection Methods, and Opportunities," *ACM Comput.Surv* 1, no. 1 (December 2018): 1.
[50] Harsin, *Post-Truth*.
[51] McQuail, *McQuail's Mass Communication*.
[52] Manuel Castells, "Communication, Power and Counter-Power in the Network Society," *International Journal of Communication* 1, no. 1 (February 2007): 29.
[53] McQuail, *McQuail's Mass Communication*.

[54] in the nation's polity. The Post-truth era is the dependent variable which, moderated by the media is directly predicted by public opinion. Mantzarlis [55] notes, "The argument made by the 'post-truthers' is that politics and the media have become so polarised and tribal that citizens reject any facts that they disagree with" point-blank.

Because the political communication of information is already saturated with social, cultural, and political biases that often shape public perception of the Nigerian polity, 'public perception' as a variable is not integrated into the MMNNIBiPC model, because adding that variable could amount to a tautology of concept. Public opinion, a phenomenon that can be shaped by demographics such as age, gender, and income as well as government policy such as the provision of social amenities or the lack of it can also be shaped by public perception and the media. [56] Hence, theorising the media to control the influences of the various political communication dimensions on public opinion, which is modelled to directly predict the post-truth political values dimension.

However, as mentioned earlier, public perception as a construct is not modelled in this model because the independent variables are presumed to be already saturated with socio-cultural and political biased public perception. Public perception is simply the difference between truthful and genuine information that is "based on fact and a virtual truth shaped by popular opinion."[57] Post-truth or neo-authoritarian political values include eroded credibility of ethical information and news, the prevalence of alternative facts and unverified contents, eroding of democratic values and prevalence of authoritarian powers, populism and hate culture, the suspension of constitutional rule of law as well as "news appealing to the emotion and personal beliefs appear to be more believable and capable of shaping public opinion."[58] Taking from its positivist approach, the

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54 James Ball, *Post-Truth: How Bullshit Conquered the World* (London: Biteback Publishing, 2017); Steven Sloman and Philip Fernbach, *The Knowledge Illusion: Why We Never Think Alone* (London: Penguin, 2017).

55 Alexios Mantzarlis, "Fact-checking 101," in *Journalism, 'Fake News', and Disinformation,* eds. Ireton and Posetti, 85.

56 Pate et al., "The Impact."

57 Powers that Beat, "What is Public Perception?" *Powers That Beat* (blog), August 24, 2012,

https://powersthatbeat.wordpress.com/2012/08/24/what-is-public-perception/.

58 Pate et al., "The Impact," 24.

MMNNIBiPC model (see Figure 1) is expected to be adopted more suitably in academic research and other surveys that employ large samples.

Although, it may not be a pre-requisite that socio-cultural and political comments must be mediated for them to affect the democratic system of a nation [59] through the creation of a post-truth political era, incorporating the 'media' element is deemed paramount especially regarding the broader context of a post-truth era, which is fundamental, and media-driven. In this context, the media dimension is modelled to regulate the influences of the three elements of the political communication (political information) based on the three paramount Nigerian national identity factors (religious bias, the geopolitical region of identity bias and ethnic bias), which constantly shape Nigerian public opinion and, subsequently, its democratic values.[60] Democratic values include election, political campaigns (rallies), judicial and legal processes involving democracy such as elections petition tribunals, legislation, rule of law, human rights, transparency and accountability processes as well as freedoms of expression and the media. All these can be affected by the political message or information through public opinion, often guided by the agenda-setting function of the media. [61,62]

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[59] Allen Nnanwuba Adum, Ojinime Ebelechukwu Ojiakor and Stella Nnatu, "Party Politics, Hate Speech and the Media: A Developing Society Perspective," *Journal of Humanities and Social Policy* 5, no. 1 (2019): 45.

[60] Farooq A. Kperogi, "The Evolution and Challenges of Online Journalism in Nigeria," in *The Handbook of Global Online Journalism*, ed. Eugenia Siapera and Andreas Veglis, (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 445-61.

[61] Ireton and Posetti, *Journalism*, 32.

[62] Paul F. Lazarsfeld, Bernard Berelson and Hazel Gaudet, *The People's Choice: How the Voter Makes Up His Mind in a Presidential Campaign*, 2nd ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1948).
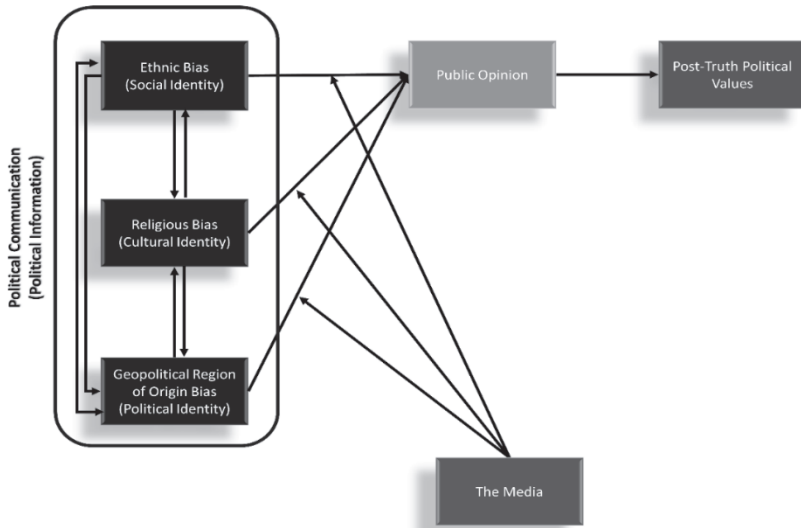
Figure 1: The Model of Mediated Nigerian National Identity Biases in Political Communication (MMNNIBiPC) with arrows showing the various directions of influence (Source: Author)

Note: *The model consists of three key dimensions namely (i) political communication or information (which comprises three factors: religious bias, geopolitical regional bias and ethnic bias – these three make up the predictor variables or the independent variables), (ii) public opinion (mediates the relationships between the predictor variables and the dependent variable), (iii) post-truth political values (the dependent variable) and (iv) the media (moderates the relationship between the independent and the dependent variables).*

The three elements of political information based on the Nigerian national identity are mutually correlated as shown by the double arrows linking the dimensions vertically, a phenomenon that signifies the degree of cohesion among the factors. This model was formulated to provide a theoretical underpinning toward explaining the complex links and impacts of the social, cultural, and political identities biases that often feature in political communication in Nigeria on the nation's democratic process. Although the media dimension is modelled to play a regulatory or moderating role in the model, it is by no limited means pivotal particularly regarding the skyrocketing tendencies of Nigerian political elites at the apex of the spiral of political influence and communication and the various categories of their

supporters at the bottom to use the media to communicate political information that is laden with distorted facts and propaganda. [63,64]

Discussion

In the Nigerian political context, fake news is often accompanied by misinformation, rumours, and hoaxes. These can be observed in many forms notable of which include pictures, videos, and texts accompanying political rhetoric, especially online. From this theoretical discourse, against the backdrop of the three elements namely religion, [65] the geopolitical region of origin, [66] and ethnicity [67] analysis can be made of the influences of the mediated content on Nigerian national identity using the deductively derived Model of Mediated Nigerian National Identity Biases in Political Communication (MMNNIBiPC). Pate [68] supports this theoretical notion stressing that "Many people have poor pictures of the complexities of Nigeria's composition; often matters are ethnicised, religionised, or politicised to the detriment of the collective good of all."

Information distortion is increasingly gaining ground in Nigerian democracy, especially in the social media and broadcast media spheres. Fake news and misinformation are two mutually exclusive terms and mean slightly different phenomena. However, in the Nigerian context, both terms are often paired or mixed up – e.g., fake news is often accompanied by bits of misinformation and vice-vasa. Sharing fake content may be deliberate but disseminating misinformation could be inadvert. However, because of high levels of media illiteracy discontent with the government, people

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[63] Lucas Graves, *Deciding What's True: The Rise of Political Fact-Checking Movement in American Journalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016).

[64] Abayomi Ojebode, "Fake News, Hate Speech and the 2019 General Elections: The Redemptive Role of the Nigerian Media," Paper Presented at the 13th Annual Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN) Lecture, November 29, 2018, NICON Luxury Hotel, Abuja, Nigeria, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/329307521.

[65] Kperogi, "The Evolution."

[66] Farah A. Ibrahim and Jianna R. Heuer, "Cultural and Social Justice Counseling: Client-Specific Interventions," *International and Cultural Psychology* (London: Springer, 2016).

[67] Maykel Verkuyten, "Perceived Discrimination and Self-Esteem among Ethnic Minority Adolescents," *Journal of Social Psychology,* no. 138 (August 1998): 479.

[68] Umaru A. Pate, "Fake News, Hate Speech and Nigeria's Democratic Sustenance," Paper presented at a Colloquium to Mark the Press Week of the Nigerian Union of Journalists, Plateau State Chapter, September 7, 2018, Jos, Nigeria, 9.

would not mind differentiating between fake news and misinformation. Past research like Pate and Ibrahim, [69] Lucas and Targema, [70] and Ibrahim [71] have shown that in Nigeria, fake news, and misinformation garner expressive support in two critical factors "that nurture and sustain [their] continuous existence, namely politics and ethnoreligious conflicts." While Ibrahim [72] and Takwa [73] argue that "to further understand the impacts of fake news and misinformation in the Nigerian polity, one must understand that ethnoreligious conflicts are pervasively widespread across and/or within states and regions" of the country and that most ethnoreligious conflicts have a political undertone. Hence, politics is seen as the crossroad that converges the dyad concepts of fake news and misinformation together; [74] and hence, the urge for the development of MMNNIBiPC to decolonise Nigerian journalism and political communication research.

In Nigeria, most ethnoreligious biases and conflicts are politically motivated, and, coincidently, politics happens to be the bridge that brings fake news and misinformation together. [75] Supporting this argument, Malaolu [76] maintains that no political game can be devoid of 'propaganda', which characteristically embodies deliberate and strategic manipulation of untruth and manipulation of facts name-calling. Therefore, Lucas and Targema[77]

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[69] Umaru A. Pate and Adamkolo Mohammed Ibrahim, "Fake News, Hate Speech and Nigeria's Struggle for Democratic Consolidation: A Conceptual Review," in *Handbook of Research on Politics in the Computer Age*, ed. Solo M.G. Ashu (Hershey: IGI Global, 2020), 89-112.

[70] Tordue Simon Targema and Joseph M. Lucas, "Hate Speech in Readers' Comments and the Challenge of Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria: A Critical Analysis," *Jurnal Pengajian Media Malaysia* 20, no. 2 (December 2018): 23.

[71] Ibrahim, "Theorizing," 27.

[72] Ibrahim, "Theorizing."

[73] Suifon. Z. Takwa, "An Overview on Multiculturalism, Diversity and Reporting of Conflict in Nigeria," in *Multiculturalism, Diversity and Reporting Conflict in Nigeria*, eds. Umaru A. Pate and Lai Oso (Ibadan: Evans Brothers Publishers Nig. Limited, 2017), 11.

[74] Ojebode, "Fake News."

[75] Pate Ibrahim, Ya'u Pereira and Bagu Agbanyin, "The Escalation of Hate and Dangerous Speech in the Build-Up to the 2015 Election and the Imperative of Strengthening the Broadcasting Code," A Paper Presented at The NBC Stakeholders Forum on Political Broadcasts, 2017, Chilla Luxury Suites, Kano, Nigeria.

[76] Oluwaniran P. Malaolu, "Media Representation and Democracy in Africa: 'Why There Are No Skyscrapers in Nigeria' – A Critical Analysis of UK News Media's Representation of Nigeria's Democracy, 1997-2007" (PhD diss., University of Sterling, UK, 2012).

[77] Targema and Lucas, "Hate Speech"

summarise that the outcome of the convergence of these three "undesirable elements namely ethnoreligious conflicts, violent political culture and propaganda" is a two-word terminology – fake news – that is capable of disseminating misinformation virally and inciting wide-scale violence that often leads to deaths, displacement of people, destruction of property and robbing the society of the peace and harmony necessary for informed democratic participation by the citizenry.

Fake news and misinformation are not only can yield items of false information, [78] worse enough they can bolster "faith and sincerity" in political communication thus, making people turn a blind eye to any information that is against their personal views and opinions no matter how factual it may be. A good example of this is how President Trump 'successfully' hoaxed millions of American voters, especially his supporters into believing that the 2020 US election was rigged. After all, he has been manipulating their psyche since 2016 through deliberate misinformation and twisting of facts and pulling the smokescreen over their gullible eyes that he, President Trump, is not a politician; therefore, he is not a liar [79] and that he is a businessman who tells nothing but the truth. This situation can create a fertile environment for a post-truth effect to descend on the global political arena, including Nigeria. [80] Since President Trump's coming to power in 2016, several democracies that hitherto had been non-populist or partially populist such as India, Israel and Myanmar have taken after Trump's populism. When people close their eyes to the truth long enough, they become blind to it; [81] hence, the domino effect of post-truth on the Nigerian polity is better imagined. This underscores the need for the development of the MMNNIBiPC model focusing on the Nigerian context, and indeed African context as well while de-emphasising Western bias.

Conclusion

Given the spirally globalised nature of the various shades of information disorder including misinformation, mal-information and disinformation that have an unforgiving impact on nations' democracy driven by the

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[78] Pate, "Fake News."

[79] Open Democracy, "For Donald Trump."

[80] Aly Verjee, Chris Kwaja and Oge Onubogu, *Nigeria's 2019 Elections: Change, Continuity, and the Risks to Peace* (Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2018).

[81] Ojebode, "Fake News," 4.

overwhelming power of the media, especially the internet, [82] the need to understand this information disorders from a Nigerian context is imperative. The news media in Nigeria are constitutionally the watchdog of the nation's democracy, and they are facing a tough time trying to cleanse the polity of the filth of information that has polluted the political atmosphere in the country. However, in the race towards the fight against the menace of misinformation, the news media may have taken the largest share of news production and dissemination because these are their professional responsibilities, they are not the only entities whose responsibility it is to cleanse the polity of all forms of information disorder. Government departments para-media organisations and institutions are also involved. Hence, the scope of the use of media and media influence in the nation's democratic arena is vast in as much as the impacts of information disorder is.

Since the global media hype on the emergence of a post-truth political (democratic) era and its unfolding consequences, if there is any procedure that is consistently recommended by fake news literature it is none other than fact-checking. However, fact-checking involves a series of information authenticity probing activities and procedures. In fact, with the increasing sophistication of misinformation (e.g., by degenerating into alternative facts, alternative affection, post-truth, etc.), fact-checking is equally becoming complex and deeply scientific.[83] To help Nigerian journalists, Nigerian media industry, Nigerian governments, Nigerian para-media institutions and organisations, Nigerian academic community and the entire world at large, the MMNNIBiPC model was designed with the tools to explain and predict the procedures involved in the incubation and hatching of misinformation largely based on the Nigerian political context was formulated and proffered for adoption by all. The model is further expected to provide a theoretical platform toward explaining and even predicting the various variables involved in the process of the encoding, dissemination and eventually maturing of misinformation and dislike message culture and their impacts into bigger phenomena leading to various degrees of information disorder at different points in time by various actors in the hierarchy of political influence in the Nigerian 'politico-sphere'.

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82 Ogola, "Africa."

83 Stephanie Hankey, J. K. Marrison and Ravi Naik, "Data and Democracy in Digital Age," *The Constitution Society Report 56*, 2018,

http://consoc.org.uk/publications/data-and-democracy-in-the-digital-age/.

No research is without its limitations. The key limitations of this work are (i) this research focuses on the development of misinformation theoretical model in the Nigerian context only and (ii) the sample size of 125 participants from whom the data were collected may be regarded as small. However, given that data saturation had been attained during data analysis, not much caution may be exercised while interpreting the findings of this research.