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EDITOR'S NOTE

The five articles included in this volume are based on the papers that were originally presented at the “Humanities and Social Sciences in an African Context: Education for Life” Conference held from 1-2 November 2012 at St Augustine College in Johannesburg. They were subsequently revised by their authors and submitted to *St Augustine Papers* for peer review.

In the second half of 2016, we plan to publish a volume dedicated to the issues surrounding natural environment and ecological justice in general and Pope Francis' 2015 encyclical *Laudato Si': On Care for our Common Home* in particular. The call for papers is open until the end of August 2016. Guidelines for the authors can be found at the end of this volume as well as on our Journal's website: www.staugustine.ac.za/sap.

Understanding the Human: The Necessity of Philosophy for Education and Research

JOHN HALDANE

I

St Augustine is a new college with an old name and among its eponymous patron's many contributions was a work entitled *de Magistro, Of the Teacher*. In this and in other writings Augustine relates the processes of teaching and learning to the acquisition of understanding, which he regards as fitted to the dignity and to the destiny of humankind. His views of these states are of course closely tied to his Christian anthropology, but they also continue a secular Graeco-Roman concern with the cultivation and practice of wisdom. Even a slight acquaintance with the concerns of Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, and Plotinus is sufficient to reveal the importance they attach to the idea that human excellence and happiness require self-understanding and that this is the proper end both of philosophy and of education, and that insofar as it has a cultural dimension it must also include the study of history, literature, and politics.

I do not think that I need to spend time arguing a general case for inclusion of these and subsequently-developed humanities and social sciences within higher education; but I do wish to say something about the need for philosophy, both on its own account as being the practice of the love of wisdom, and instrumentally, in playing a role in clarifying concepts and evaluating arguments, and in mediating between humanities and other areas, in part by correcting certain postmodernist posturing within the humanities that have brought them into disrepute in the eyes of other parts of the university, most especially the sciences.

Higher education across the world is in a state of flux, reflecting the impact of a number of factors. There are obvious economic challenges posed by the rising cost of providing for tertiary and especially degree level studies, at a time when many economies are in recession, and long-term demographic, and employment trends pose questions about the sustainability of public provision.

In some respect, more profound, however, are the challenges posed by changing understandings of the nature and value of teaching and research in the humanities. On the one hand, an interpretation of the pragmatist idea that all thought is for the sake of action lends itself to an instrumental approach to education; and on the other, the traditional idea of higher education as an introduction to an enduring set of intellectual, moral and social values is challenged by relativist claims, themselves often welcomed and nurtured within the humanities and social sciences.

II

Since the Enlightenment at least, college and university education have been concerned with developing both scientific and humanistic understandings, and also an appreciation of the difference between these. Until relatively recently such an education was the privilege of the few, but increasingly it is seen as a right of the many; and governments also favour mass participation in higher studies as contributing to economic and social development. The latter consequentialist justification has come to be associated with twentieth century political developments but its origins lie in nineteenth century progressive and radical thought such as that of the English writers Jeremy Bentham and Herbert Spencer.

In 1857 Spencer published an essay entitled 'Progress: its Law and Cause',¹ and five years later developed its central ideas under the title *First Principles of a New System of Philosophy*. Between these dates came the publication of Darwin's *Origin of Species*, which Spencer immediately read; yet while his system is often referred to as 'social Darwinism' it is quite different in fundamental respects. First, under the influence of German philosophical and scientific theories (mediated in part by the poet

Coleridge), Spencer thought of the history of life and of the universe more generally, in progressive directional terms. Second, he supposed that acquired characteristics may be passed on to offspring. These characteristics include bodily organs and the faculties that they serve. The human faculties that especially interested Spencer are those involved in social development through the acquisition of knowledge - both *consciously* in the individual, and *unconsciously* as the inherited experience of specific populations.

From this 'evolutionary' theory, Spencer drew somewhat ambiguous conclusions so far as education is concerned. Progress depends upon knowledge, and the development of knowledge depends upon human beings, individually and socially, recognising the consequences of their behaviour. From that point of view, so long as education focuses upon direct, experienced connections between conduct and outcome it is advantageous. On the other hand, if it were to bypass these immediate action/outcome pairings it would be counter-progressive, and hence counter-evolutionary. In these terms one might speak of a Spencerian doctrine: namely that contributing practically to social development understood in material terms is the criterion of educational adequacy.

Whatever the status of its theoretical assumptions, and whatever the merit of considering practical benefits, however, such a doctrine is philosophically and ethically problematic in that it overlooks, or sets aside the idea that an essential aspect of the value of education is intrinsic to it.

In particular, coming to understand a concept, or a theory, or a practice, constitutes one of the goods of human life quite apart from the question of whether it provides utilitarian benefit, and this achievement may be culturally embodied and participated in not as a matter of direct experience but as part of a social practice. In short, the Spencerian view instrumentalises and individualises education, and does so without any clear account of the end towards which it ought to be directed. Spencer's ideas were very influential among pragmatist educational theorists and it is ironic that a product of nineteenth century progressivism, rather than

market economics, should be one of the deepest sources of the demotion of arts and humanities in higher education.

III

A decade after Spencer wrote about ‘Progress: its Law and Cause’ another Englishman proposed a very different account of education, this time drawing not from contemporary science but from the Graeco-Roman tradition of teaching for wisdom. In 1869 Matthew Arnold published *Culture and Anarchy*. As well as being an important poet and social commentator, Arnold was also an inspector of schools and a professor at Oxford University. He saw *education*, in contrast to *training*, as being an essential means for the transmission of culture, and he wrote of how being introduced to such culture is coming “to know the best that has been thought and said in the world” and he added the following:

[T]he idea which culture sets before us of perfection—an increased spiritual activity, having for its characters increased sweetness, increased light, increased life, increased sympathy—is an idea which the new democracy needs far more than the idea of the blessedness of the franchise, or the wonderfulness of their own industrial performances.²

Leaving aside the part-edifying part-disdaining rhetoric, there stands an idea of education with which Augustine would certainly have agreed, as did J. H. Newman. At least at the level that Arnold envisaged for it, however, this can only be effectively pursued through the kind of intensive interaction and formation that involves a relatively small number of able students in each class tutored by a widely read and committed teacher (not substitutable for on-line power point presentations and hand-outs).

Such a combination is unfeasible in a mass higher education system; and the possibility of continuing to fund such a system is proving too much for the states of Western Europe. This raises questions of social policy, which I cannot now address, but which certainly need to be discussed. Part of that discussion should, I think, also consider the fact that universities as we have them today differ from those with which nineteenth century thinkers

were concerned, not only in the scale of participation but in the nature of the tasks asked of them.

Arnold thought only of the education of the young, and John Henry Newman and John Stuart Mill, who wrote on the same issues, likewise emphasised the formation of the minds of the rising generation explicitly excluding from universities two functions that have come to dominate them, namely *research*, which Newman said should be conducted in separate institutes, and *training* which Mill argued should be confined to professional and trade schools. If it were to be suggested now that the educational task would be better and more extensively provided for if academics were not to be required to engage in research or be rewarded for doing so, I suspect that they might find as many reasons as instrumentalising government funders to take issue with the ‘university for education only’ philosophy. In the event, there is no going back in general to the Arnold, Newman, Mill conception, but there may be something to be said for rebalancing in that direction.

IV

I want next to consider and respond to another source of challenge to traditional understandings of knowledge and learning which derive not from utilitarian instrumentalisers or from scientific sceptics about the humanities and social sciences, but which originate within these subjects and yet, with cruel irony, provide grist to the mill of such external critics.

It has been a commonplace of various intellectual movements influenced by hermeneutics, linguistic theory and anthropology to insist upon the relativity of concepts, values and modes of thought, arguing that they are not amenable to rational assessment, even to the point of arguing that intercultural comparison is impossible. Set in sharp opposition to this, however, is the thought that if we are to regard the behaviour of others as expressive of beliefs and values then *ipso facto* we must be able to make sense of it, not simply in the respect of being able to translate it, but to the extent of seeing it as intelligible and even reasonable, which is to say reasonable by reference to a common set of beliefs and values.

If the first, *relativist* idea seems extravagant and disregarding of the extensive practices of translation and comparative studies, the second, *transcendentalist* one seems unduly rationalistic. In fact both are somewhat a *prioristic*, announcing antecedent to empirical enquiry what cannot or must be the case. Leaving to one side general philosophical presuppositions about the possibilities of interpretation, and considering what we know about the diversity of human societies we might expect to encounter both strangeness and commonality, confirming that while human forms of life may differ in time and place, insofar as they are forms of human life, they are also expressions of a common nature.

That very thought may then be looked for among the diverse human cultures and traditions, and sure enough it is to be found in one form or another in reflective writings from the ancient world in both western and eastern societies. In the *Histories*, for example, Herodotus provides descriptions of the beliefs, legends and moral codes of various peoples defeated in Persian conquests and of others from further afield. Often his examples are meant to strike his readers as absurd or shocking, but on reflection several points emerge. First, Herodotus uses the fact that such diverse beliefs are strongly held by some and also firmly rejected by others, to suggest the formative and enduring influence of custom. He writes:

If anyone, no matter who, were given the opportunity of choosing from amongst all the nations in the world the set of beliefs which he thought best, he would inevitably - after careful consideration of their relative merits - choose that of his own country (*Histories*, III).

Second, however, the point is made in terms that presuppose the possibility of close comparison. Third, differences are chosen in relation to a common theme, as when he reports Darius inviting Greeks and Indians to consider one another's treatment of the dead (burning and eating, respectively). The universality of custom, the possibility of considered comparison, and the commonality of underlying interests all point to the idea of a common human nature. This idea runs through the history of ideas from antiquity into recent centuries and continues to be presupposed

even when it is apparently rejected; such is the pragmatically self-refuting character of universal relativism.

Moving from general assumptions of a common human nature to the content of particular conceptions of that nature, certain elements are central and recurrent within the range of traditions; for example identifications of intellect, desire and will; of reason and sentiment, and of self-and other-regarding dispositions. Two millennia before, Adam Smith in his *Theory of Moral Sentiments* built upon Hume's account of the inverse relation between the strength of moral feeling and the distance of its objects, Mencius observed that

while the primary and proper focus of benevolence is upon one's parents, a benevolent man (sic) extends his concern from those he loves to those he does not love (Mencius IV, B.1.).

Similarly, the Kantian idea that it is a condition of right conduct that should pass the test of universalizability, is anticipated in the *Analects* of Confucius, as well as in Greek philosophical and near Eastern religious and legal traditions.

Central also to the moralities of major cultures is the idea of virtue - that is, of dispositions of thought and feeling expressed in actions and reactions. An interesting and regrettable consequence of restricting discussions of historical treatments of virtue to those originating in Greek ethics is the relative brevity of the list, principally, of course, the cardinal four: *justice, prudence, temperance* and *fortitude*. Reading through the *Analects*, by contrast, I count at least seventy virtues identified for respect and emulation, including *attentiveness, circumspection, decency, empathy, determination, dignity, discernment, filiality, generosity, graciousness, hopefulness, humour, loyalty, moderation, modesty, patience, piety, resolution, refinement, resourcefulness, sagacity, simplicity, sincerity, and trustworthiness*.

Of course, these dispositions have been identified via English translations of Chinese characters and something analogous would have been the case

if I had cited African litanies of virtues. These renderings and the translations I quote below are those of Edward Soothill, an English Victorian-cum-Edwardian missionary, educationalist, and Professor of Chinese at Oxford. In the process, Western and specifically Imperial British attitudes will have had some influence. As it happens, however, Soothill was a great admirer of what he recognised to be a code of gentlemanliness in traditional Chinese culture not so very different from that prevailing in his own society and this opened him to Confucius's fine-grained classification of cognitive, affective and executive virtues. The Western code that informed Soothill's reading was itself developed in part out of medieval chivalry traditions which enjoyed a marked revival during the period – which was that also of Arnold, Newman and Mill - and were consciously introduced into reflections on the aims of education. In their original and revived forms, these traditions sought to embody the four cardinal and three theological virtues (*faith, hope and charity*), but alongside them ran other traits that were thought to be natural accompaniments, either as expressions of or as aids to the principal virtues.

In this connection it is interesting to read Thomas Aquinas's short letter to Brother John *De modo studendi* – 'on how to study', and to note the points of resemblance to Confucian instruction. Aquinas writes as follows:

Since you asked me, my dearest in Christ Brother John, how you should study in order to acquire the treasure of knowledge, I offer you this advice on the matter: Do not wish to jump immediately from the streams to the sea, because one has to go through easier things to the more difficult. Therefore the following points are my warning and your instruction. I command you to be slow to speak, and slow to go to the conversation room. Embrace purity of conscience. Do not give up spending time in prayer. Love spending much time in your cell, if you want to be led into the wine cellar. Show yourself amiable to all. Do not query at all what others are doing. Do not be very familiar with anyone, because familiarity breeds contempt, and provides matter for distracting you from study. Do not get involved at all in the discussions and affairs of lay people. Avoid conversations about all any and every matter. Do not fail to imitate the example of good and holy men. Do not consider who the person is you are listening to, but

whatever good he says commit to memory. Whatever you are doing and hearing try to understand. Resolve doubts, and put whatever you can in the storeroom of your mind, like someone wanting to fill a container. Do not spend time on things beyond your grasp. Following such a path, you will bring forth flowers and produce useful fruit for the vineyard of the Lord of Power and Might, as long as you live. If you follow this, you can reach what you desire.

Confucius, meanwhile is credited with the following:

The scholar who in his food does not seek the gratification of his appetite, nor in his dwelling is solicitous of comfort, who is diligent in his work, and guarded in his speech, who associates with the high-principled, and thereby directs himself aright, such a one may really be said to love learning (I: xiv) ...

He who knows the truth is not equal to him who loves it, and he who loves it is not equal to him who delights in it (VI: xviii)...

The scholar who becomes widely versed in letters and who restrains his learning within the bounds of good conduct is not likely to leave the track (VI: xxv)...

Learn as if you were not reaching your goal and as though you were afraid of missing it (VIII: xvii).

I have spent the whole day without food and the whole night without sleep in order to think. It was of no use. It is better to learn (XV: xxx)

Separated by seven and a half centuries, five thousand miles, and the idea of monotheism there are nonetheless significant points of resemblance between these reflections on the demeanour and aims appropriate to learning. From the point of view of philosophy of higher education and the place of the humanities within it, the significant difference between the authors is that Confucius's aphorisms stand apart from any theoretical account of epistemology, metaphysics and value theory, while these latter fields more naturally characterise the work of Aquinas than do words of wisdom. Among the reasons for this is that whereas Confucius was a sage, Aquinas was a philosopher-theologian.

V

This suggests a way of studying say Plato, Aristotle and Aquinas and eastern and African sage traditions as complementary, for the focus of the writing of Confucius and Mencius, as those of Lao Tzu and Zhu Xi, is upon the guidance of conduct through the cultivation and internalisation of certain habits and ritual practices; whereas Aquinas, to limit the example to just one figure, gives his attention to the analysis of action and cognition and the identification of the modes of causality involved in these. The effort to read Confucius in light of an analysis of material, formal, efficient and final causation, or by reference to the distinction between innate and acquired dispositions, or in connection with an account of the good as pertaining to the realisation of nature, is neither difficult nor unrewarding. It is not something, however, that he invites, and certainly his own methods are not theoretical.

Today, across the world but especially in the West, thinking about education moves uncertainly between different sets of aims. On the one hand, talking about the importance of personal growth and civic virtue; on the other, emphasising the need to develop future-orientated skill-sets and adaptability to a knowledge-economy. A natural response to such stated aims is to doubt that they have much in the way of real content, noting that they leave unaddressed, let alone resolved, the more fundamental issues of the modes and ends of growth, the substance and objects of virtue, the value of the purposes to which skills might be directed, and the relation between the intrinsic and instrumental value of knowledge. In the east, and again I suspect in Africa, meanwhile, there is a corresponding contrast between the traditional modes of formation directed towards cultivating fittingness of demeanour in the face of the contingencies of the human condition, and the development of skills adapted to technological and economic progress.

The way in which I have introduced these different aims may suggest acceptance of some of the familiar ways of opposing them, but in fact it seems an open question as to whether they need be in tension. Resolving that question is in part a task for the social sciences but at a more fundamental level it is also a challenge for the philosophy of higher

education. What Aquinas shows very clearly is that while practical questions call for practical answers they also raise, through a series of further questions related to the successive ends implied in chains of practical reasoning (why do this? so as to get those; why aim for those? in order to attain that, etc.), issues about the nature and value of various goals and their relationship to the agents who pursue them. These belong to the metaphysics of value, and to other parts of theoretical philosophy, and progress in them is impossible without engaging with notions of truth and objectivity, substance and causality, and agency and intention.

It is to the study of these notions that Aquinas has most to contribute to the philosophy of education, and to the integration of systematic enquiry and sapiential guidance, and thereby to a dialogue between the speculative orientation of Western philosophical thought and the sage traditions of Eastern and African cultures. Here I leave to one side the further fields of theology: scriptural, systematic, and spiritual, as these have developed in Jewish, Christian, Islamic, Hindu, Buddhist, Sikh and Jainist thought – not as irrelevant, but as engaging a whole further dimension.

The idea that there is such a thing as a common human nature is associated with traditions of thought that have been subject to criticism; but without it the possibility of developing a coherent structure of teaching and learning across the university is lost. Let me end, therefore, with a brief defence of the traditional view that claims about what pertains to the human good are to be derived from an account of human nature, noting that the source for this style of reasoning is not theological, but philosophical, most significantly, Aristotle's *ergon* or 'characteristic activity' argument (see *Nicomachean Ethics* 1097b22–1098a20) and his reflections on the nature of rational animality (*De Anima*).

VI

The core idea is that in studying the human subject one identifies common patterns of action and reaction directed towards certain conditions and thereby identifies inclinations, the realisation of which generally benefits the human agent. Of course there is much scope for refinement in this characterisation since it calls for a distinction between what happens as a

matter of statistical regularity and what happens in line with the nature of the agent. Again it has to address the issue of whether what is found to be generally beneficial, e.g. acting fearlessly in the face of danger, should be affirmed as good for all, even when particular cases appear to lead to loss, or simply affirmed as good for the most part *ut in pluribus*.

It is a principle of Aristotelian philosophy of nature that acts are specified by their objects, powers by their acts and substances by their powers: thus *seeing* is identified as the kind of act it is by reference to its proper objects, light or colour, to which it is responsive; *sight* is identified as a detective capacity whose character is specified by its acts; and a *seer* is identified as something possessed of the power of sight. Typically, sentience will involve more than one modality but the further nature of the subject is again arrived at by proceeding from *acts* via *powers* to the *agent*. One question that immediately arises is what is meant by ‘specification’ and ‘identification’; are these epistemological, conceptual or metaphysical notions?

To answer this, consider the idea of a *nature*, as that which answers to the question *what is it?* posed of some observed or inferred entity E. In principle this might (perhaps) be anything, but the paradigm is an enduring object that interacts with other objects in apparently regular ways. Assuming that E has material aspects but also that these are configured in ways that constitute a characteristic structure, which in the case of an active entity will be part of its functional organisation, then we can see that the specification of the nature of E is an identification of its essence: thus to deal for simplicity with unicellular organisms, biology aims to give definitions of the likes of the yeast cell or the ecoli bacterium.

This is the bare identification of their natures but there will in addition be characteristics of such entities which, while not part of their specific definitions, are common to individuals having the same essence and which are connected to their nature non-contingently. This is to say that if some individuals lack such characteristics this will be due to a developmental defect or to injury, or to some other disabling or inhibiting cause.

Finally, there will be additional features possessed or lacked simply as a matter of contingency, typically due to the effects of environment; though even here the fact and character of these will typically bear some intelligible relation to the essence and natural characteristics of the thing.

As described, the natures of living things include functional organisation directed towards characteristic activities. Here it is unnecessary to go into the details of this as a few examples of characteristic activities suffice. Living things exchange matter with their environment and replicate; some have powers of relocation and of perception, and among these some have capacities of thought and deliberation. In each case we might examine the objects over which these powers are defined and the means by which they are exercised, but here the main point to note is that such powers are associated with natural tendencies. That is to say, it is not just that an entity E has an ability to do A, but that it has a tendency towards doing so as part of developing and sustaining its form of life.

Here there is a complex of active and passive potentialities: propensities to act and liabilities to respond, but for convenience let me just abbreviate this by speaking of a single capacity C aligned to an inclination towards achieving a state S. We may say then that C is a 'natural function' of A if it is part of the essence of A or is a proper attribute of A, if it serves to achieve S, and if it exists in order to achieve S. Equally we can say that S is a 'natural end' for A (and of C). On this account the exercise of C is, other things being equal, conducive to or constitutive of the natural good of A.

I have moved explicitly into the area of value or normativity, thus far not emphasising rational agency. What the latter adds is the ability to exercise a faculty, or to refrain from doing so on the basis of consideration of ends and deliberation between them. Here, of course 'ends' is ambiguous between chosen outcomes and proper objects and it is part of the traditional Aristotelian/Thomistic account that the capacity for choice does not itself create the desirability of ends but should respond to them. Certainly rationality has ends peculiar to it but in so far as these connect with organic functions, they should be harmonised with them either

co-operatively or by subsuming them into the rational order, as when eating is ordered according to a reasonable diet or into a practice of shared meals.

The relevance of this for education is straightforward, though the task of working it out for different aspects of human agency is not in any way trivial. I want to end, however, by pointing out that again a case has emerged for the study of philosophy both as intrinsic to the search for wisdom as combining self-knowledge and a demeanour apt to the understanding that this brings, and as instrumental in the determination of the further elements of study (humanistic and scientific) and of the way in which relations between these might be mediated.

NOTES

¹ *Westminster Review*. 1857. 67: 445-485. Spencer was a member of the English radical movement out of which the *Review* had been founded three decades earlier by Jeremy Bentham. Its purpose was to provide a forum for new thought on matters relating to human advancement and it was there that the term 'Darwinism' was first coined by Thomas Huxley in his review of the *Origin of Species*, 1860:541-570.

² Arnold, Matthew. 1869. *Culture and Anarchy: An Essay in Political and Social Criticism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2009: Section I.

Applied Ethics, Interdisciplinarity and Education in an African Context

MARILISE SMURTHWAITE

Applied Ethics is a contested field with a somewhat checkered history and a somewhat varied reception and reputation among philosophers. While most would agree there is a resurgence of interest in and demand for courses and practice in this growing field, there is less agreement on its nature and role (in practice and in the academy), on its scope and particular sub-fields and on its theory and pedagogy. So, for example, while Applied Ethics is a recognised, very broad and diffuse field of study, its exact parameters remain unspecified. It is often seen as incorporating what might *correctly* be called a number of sub-fields. In practice, however, the latter are often referred to as “fields” themselves. Thus, included within the umbrella term “Applied Ethics” would be some or all of the so-called “fields” of bioethics, business ethics, environmental ethics, media ethics, legal ethics, professional ethics, family and gender ethics, social and political ethics (or both separately), engineering ethics, computer ethics and various others. However, whether these are “fields” or not and where the parameters of Applied Ethics begin and end, remain issues for debate. Other debates in the field include those on the gap between theory and practice, the usefulness of applying traditional ethical theories to deal with ethical dilemmas in medical, business, legal, media and other contexts; the rejection of the deductive method of ‘moral deliberation’, the aim and content of “applied ethics courses” and so on.

It is, of course, worth noting that enthusiasm for Applied Ethics was certainly not the case during much of the 20th century, when it was sidelined until the 1960s. Moral philosophers largely worked on what later was

called ‘meta ethics’ and avoided questions about solving moral dilemmas (Singer 1986). A.J. Ayer notably said it was both “silly” and “presumptuous” to imagine that a philosopher could give moral guidance, while C.D. Broad stated that moral philosophers were not in the business of telling people what to do, nor did they have any greater knowledge on what was right and wrong than people in general (in Singer 1986). These remarks foreshadow one of the contemporary questions in the field: what type of expertise ‘qualifies’ one to make moral judgements or consult on ethical issues? In addition, such remarks raise the issue of whether Applied Ethics is merely some sort of ethical problem-solving technique facilitating ethical decision making or whether it has, in fact, more to offer. This paper will argue that it does indeed have more to offer both to students and to other disciplines and that the evolving nature and developments of the field as well as its controversies and problems, provide fertile ground for interdisciplinary engagement and for a distinctive and relevant contribution to education for life in an African context. To this end, the paper will attempt to give a brief overview of the field including its history especially in the last fifty years, its nature, purpose and goals and possible gaps. It will highlight key theoretical and methodological shifts, outline key debates and questions such as those mentioned above among others, and consider the interdisciplinary possibilities of the field. It will also attempt to articulate the potential of this field to contribute to education for life in an African context, using Business Ethics as the specific example and sub-field.

INTRODUCTION

Applied Ethics is a contested field with a somewhat checkered history and a somewhat varied reception and reputation among philosophers. While most would agree there is a resurgence of interest in and demand for courses and practice in this growing field, there is less agreement on its nature and role (in practice and in the academy), on its scope and particular sub-fields and on its theory and pedagogy. Other debates in the field include those on the gap between theory and practice, the usefulness of applying traditional ethical theories to deal with ethical dilemmas in medical, business, legal, media and other contexts; the rejection of the

deductive method of ‘moral deliberation’, the aim and content of “applied ethics courses” and whether Applied Ethics is merely some sort of ethical problem-solving technique facilitating ethical decision making or whether it has, in fact, more to offer.

This paper will argue that Applied Ethics does indeed have more to offer both to students and to other disciplines and that the evolving nature and developments of the field as well as its controversies and problems, provide fertile ground for interdisciplinary engagement and for a distinctive and relevant contribution to education for life in an African context. To this end, the paper will attempt to give a brief overview of the field including its history especially in the last 50 years, its nature, purpose and goals and possible gaps. It will highlight key theoretical and methodological shifts, outline key debates and questions such as those mentioned above among others, and consider the interdisciplinary possibilities of the field. It will also attempt to articulate the potential of this field to contribute to education for life in an African context, using Business Ethics as the specific example and sub-field.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE FIELD OF APPLIED ETHICS

Let us begin by asking what we mean by the term Applied Ethics? To what does it refer? What does the field of Applied Ethics include or exclude? What is its nature and purpose? In attempting to answer these questions we will find both the term Applied Ethics and the field to which it refers are contested. Likewise, its nature and purpose are variously understood. Therefore it is helpful to begin by looking briefly at its history as a first step towards providing the answers to at least some of these questions.

History

Almond (1995:4-5), Singer (1986:1) and others note that Applied Ethics is neither a new subject nor new in philosophy even though it was not much in evidence during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. During this time philosophy had concentrated on “speculative metaphysics” (19th century) or focused on “materialistic scientism” (20th century). However, this did not mean that philosophers had not previously engaged with political,

social and economic issues and, in fact, the roots of Applied Ethics are to be found in early Western philosophy. Almond's examples of such philosophers include the Thales, the Pythagoreans, the Epicureans, the Stoics, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. Later examples include Aquinas, Locke, Kant, Bentham, Hegel, Mill, and Dewey. Therefore, Singer believes that philosophers, from Plato onwards were in fact "doing applied ethics" and considering practical questions like suicide, infanticide, gender issues, capital punishment, war and so on (Singer 1986:1). Ethical issues had been considered in contexts like economics, law, politics, education, marriage and the family.

This said, enthusiasm for Applied Ethics waned considerably during much of the 20th century, when it was side-lined until the 1960s. During this period, moral philosophers avoided "practical ethics" and questions about solving moral dilemmas (Singer 1986). Little attention was paid to either moral theory or moral problems despite the occurrence of two world wars, the "development and use of weapons of mass destruction" and issues of genocide (Haldane:724). Philosophers apparently considered this was not their concern. This is borne out by A.J. Ayer who notably said it was both "silly" and "presumptuous" to imagine that a philosopher could give moral guidance, while C.D. Broad believed that moral philosophers were not in the business of telling people what to do, nor did they have any greater knowledge on what was right and wrong than people in general (in Singer 1986:2). These remarks foreshadow one of the contemporary questions in the field: what type of expertise 'qualifies' one to make moral judgements or consult on ethical issues? In addition, such remarks raise the issue of whether Applied Ethics is merely some sort of ethical problem-solving technique facilitating ethical decision making or whether it has, in fact, more to offer.

What the antipathy towards Applied Ethics meant was that instead of focusing on so-called "practical ethics", philosophers largely worked on what later was called 'meta ethics' - a so-called "higher-level study *about* ethics" - and wrote on issues like the *nature of morality* and *the meaning of moral judgements*, (Singer 1986:2, see also Haldane 1996). Haldane

criticises the very abstract treatment of these meta-ethical questions, which were couched in a technical language and “became ever more distant from actual moral thinking” (Haldane:723).

Nevertheless, despite the efforts of philosophers to distance themselves from dealing with moral problems or practical issues, there was an increasing demand for what Haldane calls “systematic moral thinking about fundamental values and the basis of conduct” (1996:724). Therefore, from the 1960s onwards, Applied Ethics enjoyed a “revival”, referred to by Peter Singer (1986:1) as the “most striking development” in moral philosophy during this period. The increased interest heralded a return from a philosophical approach which focused on “means and techniques” to “a more holistic and humanistic approach to philosophy” and what Almond calls “the proper preoccupations of philosophers”, namely questions about “ideals” and “ends” (1995:1). In other words, the shift meant philosophy returned to considering key questions about how we should live, should relate to others and should order our political affairs (Almond 1995).

Various explanations for this increasing interest in and growth of the field have been advanced and are discussed below.

Haldane argues that it was seen as a “scandal” that “...professional moral philosophy appeared to have nothing to say about important moral issues” (Haldane 1996:724) and further notes that the “experience of students and academics in the United States” made a definitive contribution to the rise of Applied Ethics, given that there was much public discussion on questions like civil rights, sexual morality and on bioethical and war-related issues.

Almond (1995) believes this mid-twentieth century revived interest in Applied Ethics resulted from developments in medicine and technology, the Vietnam War and its consequent moral dilemmas, the 1970s animal rights and environmental movements, and the developments in business and corporate ethics in the wake of numerous corporate scandals. Winkler

and Coombs (1993) argue that interest was sparked by a need to understand ethical issues in the medical and healthcare fields, in various professions and in the environment. In addition, change and technological developments in business and the biomedical field for example, had led to new ethical problems and questions which were difficult to answer using those principles previously relied on to resolve ethical dilemmas.

Whatever the exact combination of factors which stimulated interest in and growth of the field, during the 1960s moral philosophers began once again to contribute to clarifying moral debates, applying ethical theories to particular problems, and discussing issues like equality, justice, war, civil disobedience and so on (Singer 1986:3). Academics wrote on issues like racial discrimination, war and pacifism and, by 1971, J. Rachels had produced an anthology of Applied Ethics articles called *Moral Problems* (Singer 1986:3). In addition, Applied Ethics was taught alongside meta-ethics and normative ethics in philosophy departments in English-speaking universities (Singer 1986:4). For Singer this development was unsurprising, given the need to discuss practical ethical issues. What he did find surprising was the neglect of Applied Ethics through most of the 20th century. Despite such neglect, Applied Ethics successfully established itself as part of the philosophy curriculum and many different works covering various topics have been generated (Singer 1986:4).

The Field of Applied Ethics

This brief historical introduction gives us some sense of how the field developed in the twentieth century in particular and hints at the diverse areas and issues included in the field. It also leads us to ask what we actually mean by the term *Applied Ethics*, what we understand its nature and purpose to be and to ask what this field includes or excludes.

In the first instance, we find a lack of precision in the *use* of the term *Applied Ethics*. For some it refers to a “department” of moral philosophy (Singer 1986:1); for some it is a term equivalent to and interchangeable with either *applied philosophy* (Almond 1995:3) or *applied moral philosophy* (Martin 1989: xv); for some it is a *division* of *ethics* which in

turn is a *branch of philosophy* (Beckwith 2002; Boonin and Oddie 2005:1) and for some it seems to be a term in its own right and is to be understood by examining its constituent parts (Winkler and Coombs 1993). John Haldane is alone in suggesting that the phrase *Applied Ethics* is a “limiting” one and that the “approach of casuistry and practical philosophy” would offer broader possibilities for those he calls “moral philosophers concerned with practice” (1996:727).

In addition to the inconsistent usage of the term, we also find there is no one generic definition of *Applied Ethics*, although there are some common elements to be found in definitions and explanations of its meaning. These include some mention of its dealing with practical moral quandaries and some mention of its relationship to philosophy or ethics. A few examples will suffice to illustrate our problem (underlining mine):

Applied Ethics is “an area of study that deals with specific social and moral issues such as abortion, euthanasia, affirmative action, and homosexuality” (Beckwith 2002: xiv).

Applied Ethics is “the philosophy of morality as it applies to practical moral needs” (Martin 1989: xv), and its focus is the “practical considerations of morally concerned people” (Martin 1989:13).

Applied Ethics is that “branch of ethics that concerns itself with practical moral questions” (Boonin and Oddie 2005:1).

Applied Ethics describes various “things”, but what it actually means is “the more or less systematic application of moral theory to particular moral problems” (Haldane 1996:723).

And, finally, Almond (1995:2) who opts to talk about the applied philosopher who engages with “issues of current concern and debate” (1995:2), a somewhat vague and boundless notion covering everything and perhaps nothing.

But perhaps the most challenging aspect of understanding this field is to discover what it actually comprises. This is because while *Applied Ethics* is a recognised field of study, its exact parameters remain unspecified. The field is thus broad and diffuse and seems to incorporate what might *correctly* be called a number of *sub-fields*. In practice, however, the latter are often referred to as *fields* in themselves. Thus, included within the umbrella term *Applied Ethics*, would be some or all of the so-called *fields* or *sub-fields* of bioethics, business ethics, environmental ethics, media ethics, legal ethics, professional ethics, family and gender ethics, social and political ethics (or both separately), engineering ethics, computer ethics and various others. However, whether these are “fields” or not and where the parameters of Applied Ethics begin and end, remain issues for debate.

Again some examples from the literature will illustrate how those writing in this field and producing books on *Applied Ethics* opt for a variety of approaches in defining its parameters. Thus some opt for an *issues-based* categorisation, some opt for *fields* or *sub-fields* as the basis for setting parameters, some for *areas*, some for *divisions*. Whatever the classification system we find no consistency in the contents of each division as the following examples will illustrate.

Winkler and Coombs (2005) see the *field* of *Applied Ethics* as comprising three *divisions*: Biomedical ethics; Business ethics and Environmental ethics all of which have the same “provenance”, namely to respond to the “moral quandaries” which arose as a result of the challenges posed to traditional values and principles by change and technological progress. The result of this is a shift from “tinkering with traditional values to moral philosophy and foundational ethical theory” (:2).

By contrast, a number of authors opt for an *issues-based* approach. Beckwith’s text *Do the Right Thing. Readings in Applied ethics and Social philosophy*, opts for this *issues-based*, rather than *field-based* understanding and contends *Applied Ethics* is “an area of study that deals with specific social and moral *issues* such as abortion, euthanasia,

affirmative action, and homosexuality” (2002: xiv). This understanding of the field is reflected in selected articles in the text which move in scope and content from a consideration of various ethical theories to specific ethical issues like life and death issues (abortion and euthanasia), and issues of social justice and personal liberty (affirmative action, censorship, homosexuality etc.). Likewise, Singer (1986), the editor of an earlier book called *Applied Ethics*, also opted for an *issues-based* approach and included articles on issues like death, suicide, euthanasia, abortion, capital punishment, overpopulation and animal rights among others. (Boonin and Oddie 2005) in their book *What’s wrong. Applied Ethicists and their critics*, also chose this *issues-based* approach with every chapter called “What’s wrong with....” for example killing, sex, family, race relations, the state, etc.

However, Almond’s book *Introducing Applied Ethics* (1995) includes work on both *areas* and *issues* requiring ethical attention, such as family and relationships, ethics and the professions (education, media, medicine, business, psychiatry, science and technology), law, economic and political issues, and international and global issues like rich and poor, war, environment and animals. John Haldane makes a distinction between Applied Ethics as an *issues-based* discipline and Applied Ethics as a *field* or *discipline containing other fields*. He notes that moral theory was applied to *issues* like abortion, euthanasia, suicide and warfare in the early phase of *Applied Ethics*. Later there were new *fields* of Applied Ethics: medical or bioethics first and then many others such as business ethics, computer ethics, environmental ethics, gender ethics, journalism ethics and so on (Haldane 1996:723). I would argue that some of this “issues-based” orientation was simply transferred into these fields, where texts pertaining to ethics and ethical problems particular to issues in specific fields are easily found. This is a common approach in many Business Ethics textbooks.

Apart from the *issues-based* approach and the *field-based* approach or a combination of both, we get what I will call “idiosyncratic” approaches by individual authors. So, for example, Martin (1989) has a somewhat quirky

understanding of *Applied Ethics*. Having explained that *Philosophical Ethics* contains two *branches*, namely *General Ethics* and *Applied Ethics*, he then argues that *Applied Ethics* comprises *Social Ethics* which deals with moral issues in social, institutional and professional areas and *Everyday Ethics*, which deals with the daily moral concerns of the individual. In addition, he notes there are certain *specialisations* in Applied Ethics to address the needs of particular audiences in *fields* like business, law, engineering, medicine, media, journalism, and environmental policies (:13). By contrast to this detailed and somewhat confusing approach, we have that of Di Leo (2002) who does not call *Applied Ethics* a field, a division or anything else. He simply refers to *Applied Ethics* as having “expanded its role in the philosophy curriculum” (: xiii) and notes courses are required in what he calls “emerging topics” which he lists as business ethics, engineering ethics, environmental ethics, biomedical ethics, computer ethics and legal ethics (: xiii).

Cohen (1995), by contrast, avoids using the term *Applied Ethics* altogether and calls his book *Ethics in Thought and Action*. The aim of the text is to facilitate young people to make “intellectually sound and reasonable” ethical choices (: xi). To this end, he includes chapters on Ethics and the Law; Ethics and Business; Ethics and Medicine; Ethics, Existentialism and Zen; Ethics and Psychology; Ethics and the Environment; Ethics and Journalism; Ethics and Abortion; Ethics and Education; and Ethics and Science. His approach poses two challenges: firstly, he seems to reduce the field of Applied Ethics to ethical choice making or ethical decision making; secondly, his chapters cannot be said to coincide with some of the more familiar divisions given in the field. Thus his understanding of the field is a mix of ethical problems in certain professions like law and journalism, of specific ethical issues like abortion, and of some coverage of different philosophical positions and their approaches to ethical problems.

What we have here, then, is a clear illustration that we have not yet clarified the relationship between philosophy and Applied Ethics definitively in terms of terminology. We have also not decided on what

basis to classify the constituent parts of the field, nor have we established what is or cannot be included in the field. In other words, this field is young, open-ended and continuously evolving. However, where a field is developing all the time and where what constitutes the field is relatively fluid, there is also a danger that the diversity of sub-fields will be so great that many will in fact have no theoretical foundation or really substantive content. Even now one could say that certain sub-fields are more developed than others; bioethics and business ethics are ready examples. Even in the more established fields or sub-fields we need to be aware that there is a danger of simply analysing ethical problems in a formulaic manner, with very little else being thought about or written about or taught: in other words reducing Applied Ethics to a decision making tool, applicable in a variety of contexts and to a variety of issues. At worst, such an approach could become a one size fits all model, where expertise actually amounts to technical skill in applying a model of ethical decision making with little need for or attention paid to the foundations of such models and to the nuances and detail of their underlying approaches.

Given the difficulties of the terminology and the field, it comes as no surprise that any consideration of the purpose or goal of Applied Ethics also confronts us with a variety of possible answers, some relatively broad and unspecific and some fairly narrow.

Purpose

What we can see from the history of *Applied Ethics* is that at least part of its purpose lies in clarifying and understanding and trying to solve at least some of the complex ethical issues and problems that characterise human life in various and specific contexts. However, *Applied Ethics* cannot merely be viewed as a toolkit for ethical problem solving and decision making. Thus the views of those like Martin who argues that the purpose of *Applied Ethics* is to “clarify, organise and enrich our grasp of practical moral interests....to sharpen the ideas that we use as *tools in coping responsibly with our daily lives*. And it explores contrasting moral perspectives that increase moral understanding” (1989: xv, italics mine) are partially correct, but limited.

Almond (1995:2) has rightly argued that *Applied Ethics* enables philosophy to “play a role in public debate”, that in a world where matters of public interest receive limited and often even superficial coverage in the media, “Applied ethics, in contrast yields scope and space for discussion of issues of public policy which is conducted on the established philosophical principle of following the argument where it leads” (:2). However, she also makes the point that *Applied Ethics* is not just about considering and analysing what *is*, but also involves a consideration of what *ought* to be. Her view, with which I concur, is that separating theoretical and Applied Ethics is a somewhat unhelpful approach other than for such practical purposes as drawing up a list for courses. In reality, theoretical and Applied Ethics are not “discrete” and separate entities, but “lie on the same continuum from the particular to the general, the concrete to the abstract” (:2).

However, the difference between *Applied Ethics* and the type of moral philosophy dominant during most of the twentieth century, lies in its consideration of contextual and situational aspects of ethical problems and what she calls its more “holistic” approach. Applied Ethicists are willing to consult the work of and indeed work with persons in other fields (e.g. psychiatry, sociology etc.) in trying to solve ethical problems and dilemmas (Almond 1995:3). This observation points to the possibility of multidisciplinary engagement and approaches in a field already interfacing with multiple other academic disciplines. If Almond’s views are taken seriously, they signal the importance of a more “holistic” approach to Applied Ethics and its purpose. Certainly such an approach would go beyond the “toolkit” orientation and would seek to counter the notion of the field as the “poor relation” of philosophy and of philosophical ethics, with a focus on mere problem-solving. It would most likely need to include an understanding of the field’s relationship to both philosophy and specifically its relationship to philosophical ethics, as well as the development of a body of relevant theory which might help to underpin and unify the fields’ diverse sub-fields, and the acknowledgement of both the validity and importance of a field which has already demonstrated its capacity for involvement in and relevance to diverse spaces of human activity.

Challenges and Debates

However, we must not lose sight of the fact that this young field contains many challenges, questions and debates. We have already touched on two of these, namely the terminology and its use and meaning and the parameters and scope of the field. We turn now to some other contentious issues and criticisms.

The first of these revolves around the rapid growth and expansion of the field of Applied Ethics. As in the case of Business Ethics, such growth and popularity may hold certain inherent dangers. John Haldane sounds a warning note in this respect voicing reservations not only about popularity, but also about what he calls the many new “fields” that have developed in the discipline. He suggests that we need to question whether this is a good thing or not. He is especially critical of the “unseemly rush” of certain philosophers to become involved in the field. Not only is this “undignified” (1996:725), but it could also undermine the quality and credibility of Applied Ethics. He argues there is a moral concern that certain Applied Ethicists like the Sophists of old, may offer a superficial and mechanical set of skills as a way of solving moral problems which would be without merit and substance. Such superficial and mechanical formulae can undermine both philosophy and the field of Applied Ethics.

The second issue worth mentioning is that of moral expertise and professional consultation. Applied Ethicists consult in various fields, sit on committees whether private or governmental, address the media and so on (Winkler and Coombs 1993:7). The debate here revolves around what qualifies one to be a moral expert, if indeed this is even possible. Clearly a formulaic or narrowly mechanical understanding of ethical decision making is insufficient and so the debate also raises questions about Applied Ethics curricula and what we teach our students. Winkler and Coombs argue that Applied Ethics is “inherently multidisciplinary because it is impossible to locate all the skills and attributes necessary to progress in social morality in the training and skills that are typical of any single profession” (1993:7). It is not enough in this field just to be an expert in a set of skills linked to some general principles which are then used to make

moral decisions, because the field is more complex in practice. Nor is training in normative theory and analytic philosophy sufficient. The contextualist approach to moral reasoning requires “a variety of skills and intellectual and emotional resources beyond those that are typical of the moral philosopher” (:7). Thus expertise would include grounding in normative theory and analytic philosophy, an understanding of the contextual approach, psychological and sociological knowledge, political and religious knowledge and so on (see Winkler and Coombs 1993).

A third issue also raised by (Winkler and Coombs 1993) concerns the issue of how Applied Ethics can develop a sufficiently critical and evaluative perspective on existing and accepted “moral evaluative practices” (1993:7) so that it can advocate “genuine” or perhaps “radical” reform, for example, in issues pertinent to the environment. Because Applied Ethics is by nature “intensely practical and consensus-driven”, it must avoid merely being conventional and conservative in what it recommends (1993:7). In other words, Applied Ethics must avoid merely propping up the status quo.

We need also to take cognisance of the criticisms levelled at both the field and academic discipline of Applied Ethics. Brenda Almond in her book *Exploring Ethics. A travellers tale* (1998) voiced concern at the increasing gap between theoretical ethics and practical or Applied Ethics as well as “the increasing use in both cases of a technical vocabulary and mode of presentation that puts the ordinary non-specialist reader at a distance from important ethical reflection and argument” (1998 preface, no page number). Her aim therefore was to try to bridge the gap and to show the relationship between theory and practice, as well as that between various aspects or areas of Applied Ethics. To this end she combined a treatment of various theoretical approaches including egoism, relativism, utilitarianism, rights theory, and virtue ethics among others with conversations about such ethical issues as justice, freedom, conflict, poverty, war, environment and many others.

Winkler and Coombs (1993) also point out that growth in the field of Applied Ethics gave rise not only to questions *about* the nature of the field,

but also brought to light a number of difficulties and problems *within* the field. One of these is the difficulty and ineffectiveness of the deductive method often used to solve ethical problems, for example in business, by applying the principles of mainstream ethical theory to specific moral quandaries. So, for example, trying to use a Kantian framework to solve an ethical problem in bioethics or business generated a sense of “abstractness” and “remoteness” and in reality failed to provide a solution to the ethical problem. There has followed “a rejection of the traditional idea of developing and applying general normative theory” (:3). This is because those in the field found the method was too rigid and failed to take into account the important social and cultural realities which impact on the solution to the ethical dilemma (Winkler and Coombs 1993:3).

These authors are careful to point out that this does not entail the rejection of ethical theory. In fact, what it does mean is an acknowledgment that such theory is not best suited to answering specific questions or providing blueprints for ethical decision making. Rather, its role lies in helping us more fully understand the “complex set of moral concepts in terms of which we interpret our problems and dilemmas, and so point the way to improving our values and social practices” (Winkler and Coombs 1993:6). Therefore these authors suggest that theory developed in this field should be informed by practice if it is to be useful or relevant. They also argue that it is “naïve” to believe that we will be able to generate universal acceptance for a universal set of principles given the diversity of cultural, social and historical circumstances in our world (Winkler and Coombs 1993:4). Rather than using the deductive method, they suggest the shift to contextualism may provide an approach better suited to solving the problems in our complex world.

Di Leo (2002: xiii) makes a similar observation noting that in the past twenty-five years there has been a shift away from Applied Ethics courses which use teleological or deontological frameworks to evaluate moral problems, to a variety of other approaches. In his view, the problem with the traditional frameworks is that they appear to come “from nowhere” and are very abstract whereas there is now a greater focus on the cultural and

social context in which moral problems arise. If one is to study ethical theory fruitfully there needs to be greater awareness of the lens a framework provides and the gaps it may leave (e.g. deontology generally does not see gender as a relevant aspect of moral enquiry and so omits gender-related moral issues from consideration), whereas contemporary philosophers “are much more concerned with the cultural and social situatedness of moral problems and are exploring ways to make their ethics courses reflect this change” (2002: xiii).

A further criticism of Applied Ethics in respect of reaching moral decisions is levelled by those who believe ethics to be subjective and emotive, with no possibility of objective truth and no scope for “reason and argument”. This view is contested by Singer (1986:6-7) who argues that not believing in the possibility of objective truth does not mean we need to surrender what he vaguely terms the “standards of consistency and relevance we uphold in other aspects of our lives”. This issue is also echoed by Beckwith (2002) who points out that students studying ethics and moral issues often become frustrated and conclude that subjectivism and personal autonomy in moral judgements would best resolve ethical problems or dilemmas. This, Beckwith argues, is because they believe there is more disagreement than there *really* is and they ignore the values that those disputing particular issues actually have in common (e.g. fairness, equality, and justice).

There are further questions in the field which we can only briefly mention here. For example there is the issue of how we should live and act morally. In this instance the shift seems to be from the principle and rule orientated Kantian or utilitarian approaches to that of virtue ethics which is more compatible with contextualism (Winkler and Coombs 1993:5).

Another divisive issue, given the rejection of the deductive method, is that of the source of those standards which we use to justify moral issues where the main difficulty is to comprehend how bias influences moral decision making in specific socio-cultural contexts so that we can, in such

instances, achieve a “justified moral judgement” (:5), i.e. one based on the “free and informed consensus of all interested parties” (:5).

A final issue worth heeding is that raised by John Haldane (1996:728) who is somewhat sceptical about the future of the field of Applied Ethics unless it reconceptualises itself and adopts the approach of casuistry and practical philosophy, instead of its current practice of applying general principles to specific problems. His suggestion is that Applied Ethics develop “accounts of virtues and values specific to the different departments of life” (:727). Writing in 1996, he suggested that in the future there would be a plethora of courses, and publications and that “applied ethicists will look for new fields of operation” (:728).

Courses in Applied Ethics

Certainly, he seems to have a point if one considers both undergraduate and postgraduate courses in Applied Ethics that are offered at universities whether here in South Africa or elsewhere in the world. The variety of divisions, specialisations and sub-fields is mesmerising. While there are references made here and there to the application of ethical theory to solve practical problems in a variety of settings, it is these latter so-called *settings* which ensure confusion. Possibilities in curricula for Applied Ethics apart from courses in ethical theory, include social justice, global justice, environmental ethics, journalistic ethics, freedom of speech and communication ethics, media law and ethics, journalism law and regulation, ethics and technology, medical ethics, biomedical ethics, bioethics, multi-cultural bioethics, public health ethics, ethics for healthcare professionals, ethics of mental health, professional ethics, social and political ethics, business ethics, business and society, human enhancement, abortion, euthanasia, death and dying, crime and punishment, war and terrorism, war, empire and ethics, poverty, non-humans, nature and human nature, ethics and animals, animal rights, global warming and climate change, campus ethics, character education, government ethics, ancient ethics, among others. Without having either time or space to discuss the content of such courses or modules, one can understand immediately that terminology and the scope of the field is

varied and contested, even in the older Applied Ethics sub-fields like bioethics. What, for example would be the differences and similarities between bioethics, multi-cultural bioethics, medical ethics, and biomedical ethics? Clearly Applied Ethics could well be undermined as an academic discipline and as a field should such a proliferation of sub-topics and/or sub-fields continue without attention to the development of underlying and substantive theoretical underpinnings.

Education for Life in an African Context: Business Ethics

However, this must not blind us to the possibilities offered by the field both in its contribution to education and to the wider society. I would like to illustrate this potential by looking briefly at one of the fields, or some would say sub-fields, developed in Applied Ethics namely Business Ethics. If, as Haldane suggests (in Almond 1995:86), education is the “...transmission of knowledge and values from one generation to another” and if the study of the humanities “promotes intrinsic values that link understanding to ethical values” and “provides both society and individuals with an informed sense of community and a common humanity” (ASSA 2011:30), then I would suggest that Applied Ethics is well placed to make a significant contribution to education for life in an African context.

So what contribution can Business Ethics make in this respect?

I suppose a short answer might be to prepare students to face a world where a lack of ethical behaviour is common in both private and public sectors and to equip them to deal with this situation. But is this a satisfactory answer? I would say not, as it is, in my view, a very partial one. Certainly in our society today there is a rising concern at the lack of ethics demonstrated in all walks of life, whether globally or nationally. Many of us can easily point out the global manifestations of unethical behaviour in the business sector as well as continent-specific or nation-specific examples. There is a great need for more ethical behaviour in many sectors whether public or private and this certainly applies in Africa

as well. Certainly many of our students will enter the business context or, if they are postgraduate students, they may well be involved there already.

However, I do not think that a study of Business Ethics should merely be seen as a kind of attempt to provide an ethics kit for use in real-life situations where necessary. While some may argue the merits of such an approach, it is, in my view, not only reductionist, but does not serve as a truly worthwhile contribution for life in an African context. In addition, it does a disservice to Business Ethics as field and as academic discipline. It falls short in that it provides no overview of the field itself, its history, scope and limitations and debates and challenges. It provides minimal or no understanding of ethical theory and of various theoretical perspectives and approaches both at the macro-economic level and at the meso and micro economic levels.

Instead, it may merely provide examples of case studies or ethical dilemmas as a means of showing students how to make ethical decisions and illustrating what ensues if you do not do so. However, I think Business Ethics as an academic field and as part of a university curriculum has far more to offer than this. To substantiate my views let us consider this field and its possible contribution very briefly.

Business Ethics, like Applied Ethics, is according to some "...not a stable or uncontested discipline" (Jones *et al.* 2005:8). Some of the most recent information in this respect is to be found in the Global Survey of Business Ethics as a field of training, teaching and research (Rossouw and Stuckelberger eds. 2012). This survey covered Latin America, North America, Sub-Saharan Africa, Europe, Middle East and North Africa, Central Asia, South and South East Asia, East Asia, and Oceania. One of the findings is that terminology is contested (e.g. Business Ethics versus Economic Ethics, Business Ethics versus Corporate social responsibility), another finding was that the exact scope and limitation of the field varies between developed and developing and transitional economies, as does the actual development of the field. In respect of teaching leading to academic qualifications, the most common themes regardless of region, proved to be

corporate governance and management of corporate ethics and corporate responsibility, followed by ethics of “specific functional areas” (e.g. finance), with economics ethics and sustainability being the third most common theme. The global North dominates the research landscape, with the most common themes across all regions being governance and management ethics in organisations, corporate responsibility and stakeholder relations and sustainability. These are followed by economic ethics, social justice and human rights (:391). The field thus is young, it is uneven and it is contested. Courses in Business Ethics vary in scope and in focus. This we can see from a reading of this 405 page study (Rossouw and Stuckelberger eds. 2012). But there are other considerations as well.

Like Applied Ethics, Business Ethics has not always had an overly enthusiastic following either among philosophers, who see courses in Business Ethics as incorporating too little philosophy, or among business schools who see them as not technical enough (De George 1991:44). Business Ethics too has been given a warning on a similar basis to Applied Ethics. De George asks: “Will success spoil business ethics?” (1991:42), cautioning that despite the demand for and popularity of business ethics courses, some had not yet really understood Business Ethics to be an academic field and academic subject rather than a handy toolkit for particular issues or an opportunity to “preach” particular versions of business conduct.

De George (1991) notes that business ethics as an academic subject and as a field would in fact be “a systematic study” of ethics in business, incorporating various levels of engagement and analysis: the systemic, the organisational and the individual. At each level there would be three tasks: descriptive, evaluative/critical and normative or prescriptive (:43). Understood in this way business ethics is, in his view, a liberal arts course rather than a technical one. However, he argues, “Despite its initial success the field of Business Ethics is in jeopardy and its future is somewhat in doubt...not because it has not been accepted but precisely because of its popular success” (:45). The latter could mean that Business Ethics ceases to have a proper academic and philosophical grounding, that it is co-opted

to suit the interests of business, that it fails in its critical function and that many who consult in or teach in the field do so without any fundamental grounding or understanding of either philosophical or theological ethics, a grounding often evidenced by those who began in the field early on. In fact, De George (1991:49) argues that “Instruction in Business Ethics as an academic subject aims to produce critical thinkers” but it cannot succeed in doing this where it simply becomes a mouthpiece for the moral or business status quo. Similarly Bowie (1991:22) has argued that “The central purpose of an education is to understand human nature and our place in the world. Moreover each person has ethical responsibilities in addition to vocational ones. Sometimes liberal education is explicitly justified on the grounds that its purpose is to produce civic-minded leaders.”

It seems to me then that these issues are precisely what indicate that Business Ethics has a valuable role to play in education. Business Ethics is firstly, by the nature of the discipline, interdisciplinary. It must, if it is to have credibility work with and draw on such diverse fields as philosophy and philosophical ethics, theology, economics, politics, history, business, organisational and management literature, law, psychology, and studies in culture. Secondly, if it is taught as an academic subject in the way envisaged by De George, it will engage with far more than certain practical issues and problems which face the business corporation specifically. It would provide the student with a holistic perspective on the human person within the context of the economy. It would provide an initial discussion of the field itself as well as a grounding in ethical theory, would examine and ethically evaluate ways of ordering economy at both national and global levels, consider such phenomena as globalisation and the human challenges facing us as a result of this process, and consider issues of justice within the global and national contexts. It would consider theoretical approaches to the corporation, as well as issues like corporate social responsibility, organisational culture and its relationship to ethics, corporate governance and ways of managing and institutionalising ethics within organisations. It would consider approaches which provide frameworks for research on corporations and their ethical conduct. As a

small part of this section, there would be some study of the ethical issues and conflicts which we find in the business context: financial, social and environmental. Finally, at the individual level one would consider at a minimum ethical leadership in business, work and the human person and ethical decision making. It is clear that Business Ethics can be taught as a comprehensive and holistic subject which draws on and engages with many other disciplines in this process.

What contribution does such an approach to the teaching of this discipline in this way then make to education for life in an African context?

I would suggest that:

Firstly, it provides a holistic, not merely a technical or quantitative, perspective on the area of human economic activity and human life and draws attention to the importance of the common good. As such it resonates with the notion expressed in the *Study on the State of the Humanities in South Africa* (2011:28) that

If it were possible to distil a single goal of the Humanities it would be this:

imagining and promoting the idea that humans comprise community and, following the Enlightenment again, that this community should be jointly shared and managed in the common good – Philosophers, first, but later, sociologists call this the ‘public good’. Not surprisingly, this idea has been taken up throughout the Humanities – in disciplines seemingly as far apart as Economics and Ethics.

Secondly, it provides an understanding of ethical theory and the importance of living a life that is moral within all contexts. Again this resonates with what is said on page 30 of the *Study on the State of the Humanities in South Africa* (2011):

Because the study of the Humanities promotes intrinsic values that link understanding to ethical values – to explain why the other is important and to create, through this, an understanding that a better world is

possible. Although the responsibility of philosophers, no single field in the Humanities is complete without normative thought.

Thirdly, it examines the relationship between human persons and economy and the relationship between ethics and economy. It fosters an understanding of the purpose of economy and of business placing the human person at the centre as a thinking moral agent and provides an ethical lens through which to view economic systems, business organisations and individual economic activities.

Fourthly, it fosters an understanding of the corporation or business as being one economic player within the context of the society which has implications for the role to be played by business in that society, for its relationship with society and its responsibilities to that society. As such it resonates with the view expressed in the document on the *Study on the State of the Humanities in South Africa* (2011:25) namely that:

The Humanities teach people to be ‘human’ to work and live with other ‘humans’ in ‘society’. This link enables both societies and individuals to promote the idea of ‘community’ and to foster in it a sense of ‘belonging’ and ‘identity’. The various disciplines within Humanities help us understand and explain the range of these and their myriad complexity.

Fifth, it provides students with an interdisciplinary perspective and not merely an economic one on the world of business and economics.

Sixth, it alerts students to critical debates and questions which must be asked in our current context. So, for example, it raises problems of social and economic justice and the relationship of such issues as poverty and income gaps to issues of power.

Seventh, it develops in such students a broader understanding of ethical issues, conflicts and dilemmas which are to be faced within our contemporary business context. Finally, it provides students with some ability to think critically and ethically about issues at all levels of economic activity.

Business Ethics can make such a contribution, but whether it always does so is the real question. As with much human activity I would venture to say that it does in some cases and not in others. But I believe the potential of both Applied Ethics and Business Ethics to be important in the context of a broad and human education is significant. It is up to those of us in this field to help to realise this potential.

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Advancing Human Science in Africa through Fresh Theoretical Insight

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INTRODUCTION

It is plausible to argue that major problems of contemporary Africa can to a large extent be said to be caused by educated Africans. By educated Africans, I mean those who have gained formal western education. These problems briefly captured include corruption, irresponsible and bad leadership, poverty, social insecurity and poor health care delivery, etc. A strong position that can be held to defend this claim is that the practical agents of positive change of political and social delivery in contemporary Africa are the educated Africans. They are the ones who could generate the forms of knowledge that could lead to policies and programmes that can respond to the desires for development in Africa. But a more fundamental cause of the problem can be located in the kind and quality of education received to carry out this exercise. This is because proper and viable education can provide the mental and material resources that will address this wide gamut of problems. Thus while it cannot be held that education can, by fiat or magic, solve these problems, it can conveniently be held these problems cannot be solved without education. If these positions are considered, then there is the need to probe the kind of education received to understand the dilemma of development in contemporary Africa as a way of proffering a reliable solution in this regard. This paper adopts these positions sets out to interrogate the social content of education received in contemporary Africa to see the extent to which the social content could be said to harbour items for proper development in Africa. Its central thesis is that education must serve some developmental ends, especially the ends of those who produce it without

which such education is weak, ineffective and irrelevant and stands as a form of mis-education as is the case in Africa. The paper applies this position to examine the content of knowledge in Africa with specific references to the human sciences. By human sciences I mean the diverse fields of study that address the human condition and the knowledge arising from human nature such as those implied by the social sciences and the humanities notably: philosophy, political studies, economics, sociology, psychology, etc. The paper does not address the knowledge produced in these disciplines individually, but captures them under the broad concept Human Sciences. The argument it applies to validate this position is that these diverse disciplines are bound in theory by the corporate concern of interpreting the idea and nature of the human person. Thus the paper argues that judging by the social outcome of the expected gains of these disciplines, they have largely failed to “humanise” Africa by way of providing the forms of ideas that will lead to a stronger and more humane society in Africa. The paper will then proceed to provide positions that will interrogate this state of affairs and lead to an alternative proposal gained by providing a fresh alternative that may direct human science in Africa.

A number of scholars have drawn attention to the weakness of knowledge production in Africa: J.-M. Ela.(1994); T. Falola & Jennings (eds.).(2002); A. Imam.(1997); T. Mkandawire (1997); F.B Nyamnjoh (2004; 2012); A. Rwomire (1992); P.T. Zeleza (1997) and P. Hountodnji. While some of these scholars discuss the issue with broad reference to general knowledge production in Africa (Falola; Mama and Hamiltonin; Nyamnjoh (2004); and Rwomire and Zeleza; others discuss the issue with specific reference to human and social sciences (Ela and Mkandawire). Ela and Mkandawire address the subject from the point of view of the intellectual relevance of the humanities and how to make the humanities in Africa visible. For instance, Ela’s work (1994) is captioned *Reconstructing the History of African Societies: Promoting the Social Sciences in Black Africa*, while Mkandawire’s work (1997) is entitled *The Social Sciences in Africa: Breaking Local Barriers and Negotiating International Presence*. On the whole the efforts here have been broad and wide. But they do not address

the question of theory – that is, how to account for a broader idea of the human person that generates the concern in Africa, and how it can be held that an exogenous foundation of theories in human sciences stand at the root of the problem of human sciences in Africa. In this sense only perhaps the respected Nigerian social scientist Claude Ake has done something of such through his work *Social Science as Imperialism*.

What my work has set out to do is to demonstrate that social and human sciences in Africa have not served a worthy cause for development in Africa; to point out how and why this is the case and recommend the need for a paradigm shift through a fresh theoretical base for the human sciences. To achieve these aims, the paper will (i) articulate the nature of the development crises in Africa and whether they could be linked to the human sciences. To do this it will articulate the anticipated developmental dividends of development and how they fall in line with the practical gain of human sciences – namely: a more rational and critical society, social stability, greater freedom, creative originality, qualitative growth and development and an enhanced standard of living, etc. It will appeal to Africa's low profile in the development index of the larger world to advance this claim. From here, the paper will (ii) discuss the nature and content of the human sciences in Africa and argue that the forms of knowledge obtained herein contribute to this state of affairs. Thereafter, the paper will (iii) locate the theoretical foundation of the problem in relation to the theory of humanity that has served to generate ideas that drive the human sciences in Africa to see whether it is in a position to produce the desired outcomes. After interrogating the theory of the person that drives the human sciences in Africa, the paper will (iv) make proposals for what it calls “the re-humanisation” of the human sciences in Africa, defined as the attempt to provide alternative conceptions of humanity and infuse the same on the curriculum of the human sciences in Africa.

AFRICAN HUMANISM, HUMAN SCIENCES AND THE CRISIS OF AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT

By *African Humanism* I mean the meaning, worth and significance of being human in an African context, and by *Crisis of African development* I mean that development projects are suffering from wrong direction and

focus especially in relation to desired developmental dividends. I also extend this to mean that the idea of being human is suffering some defects in contemporary African thinking. The idea and ideals of African humanism can be found in a number of writings on African philosophy, thought and culture. For example Ayi Kweyi Armah made this the overall theme of his creative essay *Two Thousand Seasons* (1973), while Wole Soyinka discussed this extensively in his essay *The Credo of Being and Nothingness* (1991) and L.O. Ugwuanyi has also reflected this position in the essay entitled *Authentic Existence in the African Understanding* (1993). The claim here is that the ideals of this humanism have not translated to worthy gains in relation to development in Africa. Indeed several aspects of African life advertise a low level of development such that “little has been achieved in the 50 years of Africa’s independence which can be seriously described as developmental” (Kwesi Prah 2011:156). The implication of this is that the knowledge which has advanced human qualitative growth of human potential and driven development in other parts of the world, very notably in Europe and the western world in general, has failed to do the same in Africa at least within these periods. The issue of public failure (perhaps even private) in the developmental desires of Africans range from the organisational demand of life in the modern African society to the ethical demands of moral and political life. They range from poor quality of political life to the dysfunctional nature of a wide range of social services within African society such as health care delivery, educational services, etc. While several aspects of the knowledge capital can be held responsible for this state of affairs, it is most particularly the case with the human sciences in Africa because they provide the theoretical foundation on which other aspects of learning achieve their practical and social relevance. By human sciences, I mean that aspect of knowledge that is concerned with providing valuable ideas about human nature, its potential and possibilities or what David Hume the British philosopher has called *the Science of Man* (sic) (Stumpf 1989:281). In making claims about the developmental failure in Africa I restrict myself to black Africa or sub-Saharan Africa. My choice of sub-Saharan Africa for the study stems from the fact that the problem is very relevant here and I have had the practical effect of experiencing these problems in my adult life.

Ironically the evidence of what can be called the failure of the human sciences in Africa cannot be found in the scarcity of the population of those who could be said to be formally educated in the human sciences judging by the number of these disciplines that are taught and researched in African institutions of higher learning. The cause can rather be located in the fact that there is no match anywhere between this educated population and the qualitative development of the citizens in terms of the desired outcome in human relations in the political, moral and social demand of the term, nor in terms of the desired practical impact of human science education such as improved sense of human worth and dignity, a modernised human culture and a humane society. As a matter of fact, the role of the human sciences as the instrument for qualitative growth and development and proper advancement of the human society is nowhere in doubt in Africa, and it is considerably recognised judging by the emphasis it commands. Virtually all higher educational institutions such as universities and colleges in Africa have faculties of Human Sciences. From the elementary levels of education in Africa the idea of the human person is continually taught and emphasised. The problem has to do with the kind of knowledge provided by these faculties; whether this knowledge is designed to impact significantly on human society and influence critical thinking on the social ideals and policies so as to lead to a stronger social formation and a more viable human interaction and reliable cultural dividends. By cultural dividends I mean quality social services, industrialisation, effective social systems, high and reliable economic growth and quality social life.

To demonstrate the failure of human sciences in Africa let me attempt to capture the demands of development, its desired outcome in Africa and the role of the human sciences in this regard.

Development can be defined as the qualitative improvement in the nature of an object or change in the status or state of a person, organ or body marked by advancement or improvement over some primitive status (McGurk in *Ikpe* 1999).

According to Sidney Hook,

Development amounts to any change which has continuous direction in the qualitatively new... a directional cumulative change that either terminates in an event marked off by a recognised qualitative novelty or which exhibits in its cause a perceptible pattern of growth (McGurk in *Ikpe* 1999).

The Economic and Social Council of the United Nations had in 1962 defined development as “growth plus change”.

Development can be applied to structures, human beings and institutions, etc. Development in the human context amounts to individual or collective/social advancement. Individual development is the growth in the biological, emotional and rational features of a person, the proper expression of the germ of life embedded in the chromosome of the individual or their practical growth of skills and talents. In its social context, development demands an improvement in the different dimensions of social life – moral, social, economic and political, etc. Political development amounts to the improvement in the quality of rights and gains of belonging to the State, while social development refers to the quality of social control, social security and social services available within a social group and the advancement of strong and reliable norms, values and policies that a social group demands and needs to function as a human community. Moral development implies a qualitative improvement in the idea of right and wrong that operates in a society and how this could lead to happiness which minds like Aristotle have defined as the goal of the ethical life (for details see Aristotle’s *Nichomachen Ethics*). Finally, economic development is the ability of an individual or group to provide or create wealth and resources to provide their basic needs and the basic necessities of life.

Summarily however, all development is aimed at the improvement of a person’s life and for this reason should be judged by how it affects the people. Indeed, as Ade Ajayi, a notable Nigerian academic puts it, “development is about people” (1999) and should be demanded, judged and approved by its impact on the people. Julius Nyerere, former president of Tanzania and a foremost African thinker, puts it this way:

Roads, buildings and increase of the crop output, and other things of this nature, are not development: they are tools of development. A new road extends a man's freedom if he travels upon it. An increase in the number of school buildings is development only if those buildings can be, and are used, to develop the minds and the understanding of the people. An increase in the output of wheat, maize or beans is only development if it leads to the better nutrition of the people. An expansion of the cotton, coffee or sisal crop is development only if these things improve the health, comfort and understanding of the people. Development which is not development of the people may be of interest to historians in the year 3,000: it is irrelevant to the future which is being created (Oladipo 2009:96).

The import of this position which sufficiently captures the position of the work is that the ultimate measure of development is how far the human person and the idea of being human have been advanced and developed through ideas, values, structures, principles, institutions, laws and morals that define and direct human nature productively and reliably. By this is meant that development basically amounts to how the human person has been made a crucial catalyst of change and growth to serve the cause of humanity. To do this however, a form of knowledge is needed and this is the knowledge of the human person or the human nature as it is expressed in a particular social and cultural environment of the individual. Whereas all humans are basically rational creatures (and to a large extent the same in their psychic compositions), what human reason amounts to and the measure of its worth and meaning differ considerably based on the culture and environment of the individual (defined as the available resources through which reason has been made to express itself). Indeed a philosophical insight into anthropology would show that what it means to be human has different expressions in different cultures, all of which are considered to be valid ways of expressing the human nature especially in response to the needs and demands of the individual within the context of the social self. This is what justifies and institutes the human sciences as a valid subject of learning and this is why it should influence the development process of a people significantly. Baruch Spinoza the Jewish philosopher whose ideas influenced the philosophical foundations of modernity had argued that it is in and by the very expression of human

potentials that they could be held to exist in the first place and their essence upheld (cited in Paul Tillich 1952:31).

The human sciences are therefore, expected to provide a form of knowledge that will explain what human faculties are and can be and what they are not and cannot be, what is the best form of interaction among these faculties and what are the proper expectations from these interactions. Such knowledge should address the demands of all aspects of the person – body, reason, soul, emotion, belief, imagination, memory, feelings, etc. and lead to adequate self-knowledge in terms of which both the individual self and the social self (defined as a social group) should be defined; that is, the culture and structure that a human community is able to construct or reconstruct within the provisions of time and history. Thus, in brief, it should be expected that the human sciences should articulate and define which form of knowledge should be desired and why, and serve the purpose of constructing or reconstructing the human culture to serve as the second nature of the human. These expectations from the human sciences make them an important agent of development.

In an African context, it should be expected that the human sciences should undertake a detailed and prolonged investigation into the nature of the human person and locate the human inclination and tendencies and how the moral, social, economic and political structures of the African society has influenced human nature and can be brought to bear on its study through, and in, what should amount to a philosophical anthropology of development. By philosophical anthropology of development is implied a study that attempts to relate developmental desires in Africa to the dynamics of human nature to see the extent to which human desires, tendencies, tastes, dispositions, culture, values and priorities influence the choice around which development is conceived in Africa. The claim made here is that it is not cogent to teach or educate a people on sociology, psychology, philosophy or economics in Africa through just any form of theory or views but through one that can locate the possibilities of the African world and the ideas that are implied in their world. By articulating this it could be seen that the African world has

positions that make it different and an evaluation made of how these differences have added to or contributed positively or otherwise to the continent's present state of development; that is a form of knowledge that applies the expression of human nature in Africa. It is doubtful whether the human sciences in Africa have done this at either practical or theoretical levels as can be seen in the quality of development in Africa.

To further illustrate the weakness of human science in Africa at the moment as evident in the weak and poor advancement of Africa it is important to note that according to an African social scientist:

...at the beginning of the new millennium, Africa was the poorest, most technology-backward, most politically unstable, most crisis-ridden, most-indebted, and most foreign-dominated and exploited as well as the most marginal content in the world. Foreign debt represents up to 80 percent of GDP in net present value terms in most countries, inflation rates average between 12 and 45 percent, unemployment rates (excluding the informal sector) ranges between 12 and 25 percent, while the savings rate in Africa is the lowest in the world. As well, 15 of the world's 20 most impoverished nations are in Africa, with over 3 million refugees and 18 million internally displaced persons. It is estimated by international agencies that over 250 million Africans lack access to portable water, while over 200 million have no opportunities to access basic health services. More than 2 million children die before the first year, over 150 million youth are illiterate, and almost half of rural females do not attend formal schools (Ihonvbere. 2011).

Another African scholar captures the burden of modern development in Africa this way:

Africa is looking like a basket case. The entire map... is littered with debris of rogue states, failed governments, violent successions... and villains and victims, violently repressed secessions, interminable wars, interminable rows of wandering refugees, endemic diseases, endemic poverty, hopeless debt burdens, ugly slums, desperate recourse to religion and magic, massive unemployment for youth. And for this reason, Africa leads the world in virtually every form of crime against good governance, child soldiers, child amputees, child labour, mass graves from forgotten but enduring civil wars, mass graves from the epidemics of Ebola, Lassa

fever, and now AIDS, not to forget Malaria, our perpetual scourge (Okere in Oguejiofor 2004:4-5).

It should not be held that owing to these sad features of Africa, African under-development is entirely caused by the vacuousness of the human sciences in Africa. Compelling arguments that point to other strong sources of African underdevelopment have been advanced. They include those of Walter Rodney (1972), Chinweizu (1978), Thomas Pogge (2001a, 2001b, 2002, 2004) and the Austrian thinker Paul Feyerabend. For Pogge, the unjust institutional arrangement of the world order is a basic factor contributing to poverty and underdevelopment in the world and the solution to this lies in the re-arrangement of this structure. Similarly, Paul Feyerabend defends the view that underdevelopment in the Third World to which Africa belongs is basically as a result of Western domination through science. As he puts it:

Many of the so-called third world problems such as hunger, illness and poverty seem to have been caused rather than alleviated by the steady advance of Western science (Feyerabend 1978:4).

The position I hold in addition to these, is that there is an African nucleus of the problem which is that Africa's poor developmental growth has strong roots in the vacuousness of human science in Africa and this can be located in what can be called the exogenous theory of the human person that has driven the human sciences in Africa. The other position I hold is that this exogenous theory has no concrete foundation in human realities in Africa.

One reason that could be advanced against this position is that the human sciences do not seem to have a direct effect and impact on industrial and economic output and should not be expected to be a magic wand for development. The other reason is that the increase in the number of educated people does not amount to an increase in the number of industries and employment opportunities and thus, it is not very logical to expect a sharp developmental output through knowledge. There is a tendency to make an overblown expectation from human sciences in

Africa. But this is where the whole idea of human sciences in Africa lends itself to a critical questioning, for it is clearly right to expect from the human sciences, all the mental structures needed to advance and develop a people's quality of life through resource mobilisation and coordination in both material and mental demands, either through direct exploitation of natural resources or through the kind of innovation that makes the human mind a form of wealth. Francis Bacon the British renaissance philosopher (1561-1626) reliably captured in his famous position thesis that "knowledge is power" to influence and recreate the world. The import of Bacon's view is that knowledge should imply and lead to the desire for innovation which should be understood to imply the capacity to create. Thus, the growth of formal knowledge ought to compel growth in innovation and productivity and hence more economic growth. For these reasons, it sounds right to call the African situation whereby we have an increasing population of the ostensibly educated in human sciences but a decreasing output in terms of the cultural dividends, an ironic and embarrassing state of affairs. Human problems should be located in the quality of ideas applied to address the problem and ideas are the product of the quality of the mind that produces them. Thus, the problem outlined above can summarily be narrowed down to the poverty of reasoning, or poverty of human will or emotional capacity, and all such faculties that are considered necessary for proper human advancement of a people. They call for a critical review of the ideas provided by the human sciences in Africa.

CRITIQUING THE HUMAN SCIENCE IN AFRICA

Arising from the scenario captured above it can be held that human sciences in Africa amount to a form of mis-education. By mis-education I mean that the case in Africa has become more or less a wrong-knowledge paradigm that invents and applies false concepts and models to educate a people without building on their local epistemology. This also in a sense amounts to a form of de-education. By de-education I mean that this form of education impoverishes the mind of the people because it prevents the search for a proper knowledge paradigm; one that alienates agents of knowledge from the available knowledge capital in their world, the applications of these and the gain that flows from this process. The history

of knowledge process in modern Africa as emanating from colonial adventure in Africa accounts for this problem. It also explains why social science in Africa amounts to a form of imperialism (Ake 1984).

The modern knowledge process through institutionalised schooling in Africa has a colonial origin and in line with the philosophy of colonialism it can arguably be held to be one designed to further colonial elitism and establish a world of hegemony and promote the colonial process. Thus, it discourages the need for seeking alternative ideas outside the western ideas it teaches. The curious link between the history of formal education and the period of colonialism in Africa suggests that Western education came to consolidate and validate the colonial project. Colonialism itself, a capitalist project, shaped and directed the capitalist properties of this education in the sense that only the capitalist interests of the western hegemony defined and directed the project. Thus education also functioned for this capitalist project, ready to make even an “epistemic commodity” out of Africans.

To achieve this alien design, endogenous knowledge was displaced by a western institutionalised knowledge paradigm and a western educational process justifiably seen to be considerably more formal. As a result of this, the potential and promise of endogenous knowledge was relegated to the background and therefore, could not play any role in the developmental process of education in Africa. A number of scholars have strongly emphasised this point and decried the negative social psychology arising from this scenario and its consequence on the knowledge process in general (for details see Onwuka 1982). This has also been obtained in the human sciences where the idea of being human is the driving force for knowledge.

It is difficult to hold that any knowledge project that discourages self-knowledge and denies self-worth and makes virtues of autonomy and equality (which are cardinal values of education) can be anything but mis-education. This is because such education would be seeking to invent a separate species of human being; that is, those who need to be human by

being others. By so doing, it would be denying the subjects their individuality from which arises the creativity and uniqueness, self-will and self-worth which enriches a people on the grounds of which they can be held to be properly educated.

Indeed, it was to point out the weakness of colonial education that Julius Nyerere a prominent African thinker describes it as education that

induced attitudes of human inequality and in practice underpinned the domination of the weak by the strong, especially in the economic field (Nyerere 1975, as reproduced in *Mutiso and Rohio*).

Similarly, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, another respected African thinker likens education in Africa to a form of mental possession characterised by violence. As he put it:

Berlin of 1884 was effective through the sword and the bullet. But the night of the bullet was followed by the morning of the chalk and the black board. The physical violence of the battlefield was followed by the psychological violence of the classroom. But where the former was visibly brutal, the latter was visibly gentle (Ngugi 1980:9).

K.P. Moalusi links these positions with the view that education in Africa

denies the colonised useful knowledge about themselves and their world, while at the same time it transmits a culture that embodies and is designed to consolidate a slave mentality. Hence the colonised are taught that they have no history, that their history started with the arrival of the European conquerors on their mission to civilisation (Moalusi 1994:100).

This form of education which supports unjust values has had several negative consequences for the developmental aspirations of the African - both individually and collectively. The first is that it has eroded and destroyed African creative capital and led to what can be called the perpetuation of the dependency syndrome in Africa. The second is that it has induces a crisis of the self and has led to a lack of self and to a large extent self-worth on the path of Africans.

The equivalence of these is that a whole culture of inequality and self-alienation is being perpetuated in Africa.

Inequality occurs when the quality of an individual is diminished by the members of a social group by creating a fresh but inferior status for the individual, thereby denying or eroding cardinal human values such as egalitarianism and human dignity. It affects the collective social good and harmony of a people by promoting social injustice, dominance and psychological violence. Similarly self-alienation harbours destructive potential for an individual's well-being because the self-alienated person is not well positioned to contribute to the social process of development. A self-alienated person functions outside the group and belongs to an out-group and suffers what Frantz Fanon calls "psycho-existential complex," in the sense that the worth of his/her being and the desirability of this worth is held in contempt and doubt by the self. Self-alienation leads to self-rejection which undermines inner human strength, worth and value. These are outcomes of colonial education and the knowledge paradigm it has instituted in Africa, especially in the human sciences.

If the human sciences in Africa were guilty of these charges it could be seen why it has affected the African society very negatively and why the issues of social coordination and resource mobilisation have remained a problem in Africa for which little has been achieved "which can be called developmental" (Kwesi Prah *ibid.*). It can then be further seen why the African society has not been able to construct what the Ghanaian scholar Kofi Awoonor (2001) has characterised as "the inner resourcefulness that dominates the social imperative and permits the construction of a human society in which we all are our brother's keepers" which are the desirable goals of the human sciences in Africa or believably anywhere there is human community. Given this state of affairs, it becomes urgent to re-think human science through fresh proposals that will lead to worthier gains from human science education in Africa. To this I now turn

TOWARDS A RELEVANT AND FUNCTIONAL HUMAN SCIENCE IN AFRICA

From the above, it could be seen that there are missing items in the human sciences which need to be supplied in order for them to serve as a relevant purpose in promoting the ideals of the civilized and humane society that will not trap it in gross underdevelopment and a peculiar culture of poverty. Poverty properly conceived in this instance would amount, not just to material poverty, but to mental poverty as well. Thus what is desired is first to achieve a form of epistemic justice and liberalism in the knowledge economy in Africa, and second, to achieve an all-inclusive sociology of knowledge that restores confidence among Africans. By epistemic justice and liberalism I mean the need to restore what has been thrown away or lost in the epistemological conquest of Africa and re-integrate this into the knowledge industry of Africans. This, in essence implies the need to enlarge the intellectual capital of Africa by incorporating Africa's endogenous knowledge whose displacement and denial has led to the view that Africa has a knowledge deficiency and an unproductive intellectual potential and on the grounds of which their capacity, worth and value have been underrated and under-estimated in knowledge terms. A second measure is to achieve an all-inclusive sociology of knowledge. By inclusive sociology of knowledge I mean how to achieve a social ethic of knowledge that counters "the attitude of arrogance, superiority and intolerance towards creative difference" (Nyamnjoh 2012:131) which has asserted itself as the defining feature of a western knowledge paradigm in Africa and which has sought to denigrate, "inferiorise" and oppress as well as regress the creative cultural capital of Africans.

In an essay that reflects this concern, I have argued that

knowledge can lead to a form of epistemological violence and that such knowledge can hardly lead to a worthy world order. I itemised the features of such knowledge to include one that promotes dominance; isolates the knower; defines its achievement in absolute terms, advertises inequality of difference and dislocates (alienates) its views from its basic human foundation (Ugwuanyi 2013:682).

I wish to further this position here by proposing a more inclusive sociology of knowledge for Africa such that the human family can be considerably united by the knowledge process.

A number of scholars have reflected this scenario with theories that recommend the need to decolonise and “Africanise” the human sciences. The basic demand of these scholars is the need to remove the alien structures that dominate knowledge production in the human sciences and erect a fresh knowledge base rooted in the African world. This demand is broadly captured under the demand for Africanisation of the human sciences in Africa; that is, to make the human sciences relevant to Africa by allowing the African to generate and regenerate concepts and ideas that would be applied in human science education. Scholars who emphasise decolonisation as an option to this process include the foremost Nigerian intellectual Chinweizu, et al. *Towards the Decolonisation of African Literature* (1980); foremost Kenyan Intellectual Ngugi wa Thiong’o *Decolonizing the Mind* (1980); and the Ghanaian philosopher Kwasi Wiredu *Conceptual Declonization* (1995). Wiredu recommends a contrast of Western ideas and their African equivalence to determine their relevance in the African setting before adopting them for use, a form of re-education through conceptual de-education (for details see Oladipo 1995:22).

Another position that suggests a solution to the challenge of a reliable human sciences knowledge paradigm in Africa is to create a fresh tradition of humanities in Africa which can be distinctly called African humanities. This is because human sciences in Africa owing to their colonial origin have been part of the evolution of humanities elsewhere but circumstances that have led to the evolution of human sciences, have differed. Opatá (cited in Ijoma 1992:93) observes that

the socio-historical circumstances which led to the evolution in the humanities in 5th century Greece and the late Roman Republic are decidedly different from what obtained in pre-colonial Africa of the same date.

There is the need to apply this view in re-ordering the human sciences in Africa. This proposal harps on the need to institute what amounts to

African humanities as a complement to the existing human sciences and has support from a number of scholars such as S.N. Nwabara, D.I. Nwoga and D.U. Opata. These scholars, in their various contributions on the subject, hold that there is the need to address what Nwabara calls “Africa’s private response to his natural and social environments and with the expression of his self-awareness and individuality” (Nwabara in Opata 1992:95) and that this need should serve as justification for African humanities. D.U. Opata also follows this line of thinking to argue for a tradition of humanities that amounts to

the study of the human person in a non-physiological, non-anatomical sense... a qualitative and valuational study of the human person, human life and human values as these find expression in the human person’s attempt to find meaning and sustenance in the world... how Africans both define and evaluate the human person (Nwabara in Opata 1992:95).

Another position that is further applied to support this view is that:

Humanities were brought across from Europe in the late 19th and 20th century, at a time when the idealist division between the art and society ruled, i.e., was held by the ruling class. It infiltrated the educational system established in Africa during the colonial period and of course this infiltration was not eliminated on October 1, 1960* (Obasi & Ohekweazu 1984).

Supporters of this position believe with Horsthemke that there is the need to carry out “changes in syllabus or content; changes in the curriculum...” (Horsthemke 2004) or “the process of defining or interpreting African identity and culture” (Makgoba 1997 in Horshemke 2004). This should lead to “the re-appropriation of the knowledge, practices, values, ways of knowing” unique to Africa (Nel in Horshemke 2004).

The position that my work holds is that decolonisation of the humanities is important but that it needs a fresh supplement. I argue that without applying such a supplement it might be difficult for the options outlined above to effect a paradigm shift in the human sciences in Africa because the human sciences in Africa have a meta-theoretical foundation and without a theoretical response to this problem, the deficiencies will persist.

My position is that the idea or notion of the human person driving human sciences in Africa does not have adequate roots in the idea of the person that finds its roots in the African world and that there is need to reconfigure this idea. This idea of the human basically defines a person as a rational being and seeks to empower the human being through scientific/rational principles. But this idea of the human is deficient in the sense that scientific rationality does not equate with the entire human phenomenon. Secondly, the individual principle and root of this process through which science is validated, is insufficient to serve the cause of truth about humanity.

To articulate the African idea of the human person which can provide a worthier root to the human sciences in Africa, let me refer to the views of two prominent African philosophers John Mbiti and Ifeanyi Menkiti. According to Mbiti (1970) the African view of the person is founded on or rooted in a communitarian epistemology. To be human in an African worldview is to be seen to be held so by the social value and moral lens of the community. As he puts it, the thesis in Africa is "I am because we are; and since we are, therefore, I am". "This is a cardinal point in the understanding of the African view of man (sic) (Mbiti 1970:141).

In the same vein, Ifeanyi Menkiti (1984) holds that, in contrast to western epistemology which attempts

to abstract this or that feature of the lone individual and then proceed to make it the defining or essential characteristic which entities aspiring to the description "man" (sic) must have, the African view of man (sic) denies that persons can be defined by focusing on this or that physical or psychological characteristic of the lone individual. Rather, man (sic) is defined by the environing community (1984:171).

Menkiti further supports his view with the claim that being human, or the *idea* of the human person, is anchored on

gradation based on the emergence of the special new qualities seen as constitutive of a level of being not only qualitatively superior to, but also

ontologically different from the entity with which one first began (Menkiti 2004:325).

Several issues stand out in this notion of the human person with significant implications for the human sciences. The first is that it recommends a link between the human person and the human being; the second is that it recommends what amounts to a constitutive notion of the human which asserts the role of the community in validating the claims to humanity beyond the individual psychology. These implications lead to a responsible knowledge imperative and provide the basis for an accountable social epistemology through which knowledge should be weighed by a desirable outcome and can on its own be charged with an ethic of duty.

It cannot be underestimated how accountability has remained a missing link in contemporary human sciences as a result of which the desired outcome of knowledge is often under-emphasised, and power and dominance has driven knowledge worldwide many times against the social process that should validate it. It is no longer news that capitalist hegemony and base financial interest often define the ideals around which human sciences are constructed; a scenario which has inspired Mahatma Gandhi, foremost Indian humanist to lament that "“science without humanity/knowledge without service” remain some of the deadliest social sins of contemporary modernity. Thus while it is not doubtful that all knowledge amounts to a form of humanism (Baran 1965) the terms by which this humanism can be weighed and judged is an outstanding challenge for knowledge and scholarship.

The second gain from the African theory of human persons is that it emphasises the role of community in establishing and institutionalising the intellectual ideal through which the idea of the human can be measured. Thus we have what amounts to a strong humanitarian epistemology where knowledge could be measured, not on a singular authority of the individual but as can be valued and validated by the communal process and the social lens of the community.

The final gain in applying the African notion to improve human sciences is that it provides the grounds for the insertion of a progressive ethical epistemology in the human sciences. This is because it insists that the idea of the human (and any knowledge that can be founded on this idea) must be aligned to some dynamic and morally resourceful end. This position is strongly implied in Menkiti where this idea demands a constitutive progressive ontological difference; some sort of normative anthropology where the idea of the person is subjected to some signification; and has to be validated through a superior qualitative social goal.

The African view of humanity therefore has the potential to extend human thought beyond the western tradition which sees the person fundamentally as a rational animal, to insist that rationality must be rooted on ethical and ontological imperatives. This position insists that one is human because one is moral - because one is seen to be good, to be capable of being good by doing good or capable of receiving good, by being an agent for the good; and should only be found to be human by this criteria. This idea of the human does not ignore fallible nature (that is, the fact that persons can fall into the error of doing bad). The emphasis is that evil does not form a definite and desirable part of human nature and that being moral should be found and applied as a definitive term on what it means to be human and on what human sciences should be developed. Whereas the terms of this morality could remain a subject of probe, this idea of the human contests the position that any exercise of reason is desirable, sufficient and significant enough to be called human and responds to the overbidding idea of intellectual freedom that has destroyed the human nation or affected her most negatively in the area of knowledge production and consumption.

Kwasi Wiredu, the Ghanaian philosopher earlier referred to, provides a strong support for this position when he submits that in Africa, being human is a normative concept and that among the Akan people of Ghana, “the question of moral maturity... is needed at all for being a person at all in the first place” (Wiredu 2004).

Another position that arises from the African idea of the human person relevant for the reconstitution of the human sciences is the idea of the person that carries a regenerative potential (defined as one in which the human being is seen or believed to be one because he falls within a chain of beings – one whose actions and inactions are capable of extended consequences beyond him – one in which historical connectivity forms a part of the vital item that defines the person and a vital part of his/her humanity). Placid Tempels, the philosopher who drew in his groundbreaking work *Bantu Philosophy* (1954) had held that life is essentially an interaction force and that the person operates within a chain of forces which he can re-inforce or diminish. In recent times Innocent Asouzu (2007) has also been trying to extend thoughts in this direction. For Asouzu (2007:15) “reality is an all-embracing whole, in which all units form together a dynamic play of forces” and the human person represents this paradigm because his “permanent and transcendent flow of consciousness connects the present life to the former life of the ancestors and to his own afterlife in the land of the spirits.”

These positions emphasise the ontological connectivity of the human phenomenon.

What then are the implications of these to an idea of knowledge and how can they be applied to achieve a fresh input into the human sciences through the African worldview? These positions are relevant to the idea of the human sciences because the idea of the human person is upheld to be one in which the shared ends of belonging stand as the basis or foundation of value and meaning. This position has the capacity to improve the communal capital or what in broad terms should be called social capital. Knowledge in this worldview can be defined as that form of knowledge that jointly arises through and for the co-operative and communal will of the society and defines its gain according to how it re-enforces the growth of this communal will. Knowledge that is desirable from this worldview should necessarily lead to an enhancement or growth in the communal capital. The implication of this is that it is no longer valid to teach anything anyhow about humanity to Africans in the human sciences, or to

expound views in the human sciences with the goal of promoting a human ideal that has social gain such as one whose goal is the deification and absolutisation of human freedom. These will not properly represent or project what Africa has done with her humanness or the human ideals that have defined the African world. The other implication is that through these measures, it is clear that there is an idea of the human that can be applied to measure the worth and value of knowledge advanced by the human sciences in Africa and which can be applied to evaluate the output. The final implication is that it can be held that a version of the human sciences can be rooted in the African world and can lead to what can be branded a superego science (defined as a science that attempts to define and study the human nature with views and values that can lead to interconnectivity or “inter-generationality” and ultimately to a higher person). This desirable theory of the human sciences is one that puts connectivity, accountability and communalism as the foundation of its principles and should desire such gains in the position it espouses.

These positions find their justification in the fact that the history of the humanities has always reflected different emphasis on humanity in different civilisations. In the Greek world, the human sciences served to inculcate “independence of spirit, versatility of attainment and complete self-reliance of brain and limb” (Opata 1992:4). The Greek world essentially advocated for the liberal arts as a way to raise noble citizens; hence, “subjects like logic, grammar, oratory and rhetoric were emphasized” (Opata 1992:4) in their curriculum of studies. In the Renaissance period emphasis in the human sciences concentrated more on the development of talents and skills. The Italian scholar and teacher Vergerius (1404) captured this concern when he characterised the liberal studies of his time this way:

We call those studies liberal which are worthy of a free man, those studies by which we attain and practice virtue and wisdom, that education which calls forth, trains, and develops those highest gifts of body and mind which enable man (sic) and which are rightly to rank next in dignity to virtue only (Vergerius in Opata 1992:4).

In the modern era, the human sciences, themselves the architect of modernity, have also experienced a shift in paradigm with emphasis shifting almost entirely to studies that will lead the individual to realise himself in terms of autonomy, dignity and freedom. Indeed it can be argued that the contemporary human sciences are devoted to reason for the sake of reason and freedom for the sake of freedom. Indeed, as a result of this magnificent shift in paradigm, modernity has bequeathed to human kind an array of knowledge which now falls within the range of the human sciences – political science, sociology, economics, psychology, theatre arts, mass communication, communication arts, etc. But the gains of the human sciences have not been the same in all parts of the world because the meaning and notion of autonomy, dignity and freedom which is the underlying philosophy of the disciplines within human sciences at the moment, differs from one culture to the other.

It is within this context that there is a need to locate the best terms on which the human sciences can serve Africa purposefully and reliably, because modernity has meant for Africa a unique challenge of how to articulate and advance an idea of the human whose implication does not undermine the capacity for progress and change. The challenge here is how to apply the human science in Africa to a version of modernity in ways that will reflect the qualities of a truly free mind. It is for this reason that the human sciences in Africa must address the idea of humanity bequeathed to the continent, for the case in Africa was that of promoting modernity in the continent through what can be called epistemological medievalism; that is advancing knowledge to a people by disabling them from being a part of the knowledge process. My simple claim here is that what the human person has meant for the human sciences currently in vogue in Africa does not adequately represent what it means in Africa, and there is need to interrogate this disparity by applying the benefit of the post-colonial and post-structural campaign in the ordering of human knowledge to formulate ideas that are in a position to play a useful and vital role in the flourishing of humanity in Africa. To do this then there is the need to formulate a tradition of the human sciences that can re-order the discipline in favour of African humanity so as to be able to undo the

epistemological injustice done to African humanity without which the practical dividends of human sciences may not be realised in the continent.

CONCLUSION

This paper has attempted to interrogate the human sciences in Africa to see the extent to which they could be said to be in favour of African humanity. It has argued that the human sciences have largely failed to “humanise” Africa by way of providing the forms of ideas that will lead to a stronger and more human and humane society in Africa. To do this, it has articulated the anticipated developmental dividends of the human sciences in Africa – qualitative growth and development, social stability, greater freedom, creative originality and enhanced standard of living, etc., and by articulating the poverty of these cultural dividends, demonstrated that the outcome of the human sciences in Africa falls short of these anticipated dividends. From here, the Paper advanced claims on how it could be right to argue that the forms of knowledge obtained here, are responsible for this state of affairs. On the basis of this, the Paper interrogated the theory or idea of the human person that animates the human sciences in Africa and argued that it is not in a position to produce the desired outcome of human sciences in the continent. Finally, the Paper has made proposals for what it calls “the re-humanisation” of the human sciences in Africa, defined as the attempt to provide alternative conceptions of the human person that will lead to more functional human sciences in Africa. What is considered a major gain of the paper is that it has “problematized” the current knowledge available in the human sciences in Africa with the hope that African intellectuals and scholars will begin to take seriously the need to provide alternative paradigms for human science. The paper does not totally wish away the potentials of the current knowledge available in the human sciences but holds that in an African contest it needs a supplement without which it will not serve any desired gain.

If this study is taken seriously, other areas that could be explored further include: how to refine the endogenous knowledge capital in Africa to serve this end; how to avoid giving the human sciences in Africa a narrow

scope by this measure, and how this measure can profit human sciences in general. These and more are the concerns which I hope that scholars who find the positions canvassed here valuable, will investigate further.

* The date applied above is meant to refer to the period of decolonisation and to serve as an all-inclusive name for decolonisation, given the fact that Nigeria got her independence on October 1, 1960.

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Whose Voice is Talking?

Literary Narratives as a Tool for Critical Transformative Pedagogy around HIV/AIDS and Gender Perceptions

JENNIFER M. SCHMIDT & CLAUDIA DA ROCHA KUSTNER

INTRODUCTION

We come to understand our world and how we are situated within it through narratives. The stories we tell both reflect and shape our reality. One reality facing us today is that of “HIV fatigue” and AIDS denialism becoming increasingly common amongst South African youth.

In a country where the prevalence of HIV and AIDS is worryingly steady, educators are finding it increasingly difficult to create awareness and to educate young people about HIV and AIDS, as well as the underlying catalysts of HIV such as gender inequality. Crew & Nzioka (2008) have highlighted that lecturers in universities and colleges can act as pivotal agents of transformation to the youth and society at large by providing relevant HIV and gender-related training skills to the youth. However, HIV curriculum integration in tertiary institutions has often been approached with trepidation and caution; many lecturers citing lack of time and expertise as reasons for not integrating HIV education in their respective curricula.

This interdisciplinary paper explores how a literary narrative prescribed in a literature course for first year college students was used to encourage students to engage in critical thinking and to challenge the “voices” and perceptions they had around HIV and gender inequality. Using the novel, *Book of the Dead* (2010), by Kgbetli Moele, as well as a presentation by an HIV positive activist and accompanying writing assignments as critical

tools, we attempted to construct a transformative pedagogy to challenge students' individual negative perceptions (voices) of HIV & AIDS, which indirectly impact perceptions of gender and sexuality, both of which are socially constructed. In addition to the class discussion, students had the opportunity to reflect critically on the concept of narrative and engage in dialogue on the book and on their perceptions of HIV, gender, and sexuality.

A transformative pedagogy implies moving from introductory content and concepts to practical application, action and personal change. The construction of new knowledge through *collaborative* and cooperative actions, which are personally *meaningful* to the students, are core to a pedagogy of *change*. Learning thus relies both on granting the individual an *active voice* and creating an environment for collective *listening* and mutual support.

This paper argues that meaningful HIV and gender education can be integrated within existing curricula, and that it should aim to provide a *transformative* experience for students through the use of narrative - a tool for more engaged levels of critical thinking. Since this paper was an interdisciplinary project between the departments of Literature and Psychology at St Augustine College of SA, the first section is written by the Literature lecturer, Dr J. Schmidt and the second section is written by the Psychology lecturer, Ms C. Da Rocha Kustner.

THE CASE FOR DISRUPTION

The novel as a whole is too abusive. It leads to the notion of revenge and to other people to be unsociable. [Khusto] tried to make people know[ing] their consequences of following outside appearances. But it is just what it can be. But in fact it is just a written book (Anonymous Student 13 in LITR102).

The narration makes it a lot easier to relate to the characters (Anonymous Student 22 in LITR102).

...the value of a literary work is continuously produced and re-produced by the very acts of implicit and explicit evaluation that are frequently

invoked in reflecting its value and therefore being evidence of it. In other words, what are commonly taken to be the *signs* of literary value are, in effect, its *springs* (Herrnstein Smith 1817; emphasis original).

I don't tell them to love their bodies or turn off the television – useless admonitions today, and ones I cannot obey myself. *But I do try to provide a disruption, if only temporary, of their everyday immersion in the culture. For just an hour or so, I won't let it pass itself off simply as normalcy* (Bordo 2003: xxiii; emphasis mine).

An emaciated orphan cooks supper for her younger siblings, two young men surreptitiously fondle each another in the shadows of an abandoned shabean, a young mother breaks down in tears upon receiving her test results in a make-shift clinic. What are the narratives that take centre stage when we hear the word “AIDS” and why? As a signifier, “AIDS” is overdetermined with meaning, containing both hope and fear, and in a South African context acutely reflects and embodies underlying discourses of power interpolated by race, gender, sexuality, and North/South knowledge economies. The grand narrative “AIDS is a death sentence” has been countered in the public sphere with the recurrent image of HIV positive individuals as empowered, stable, with the assistance of ARVs, and the ‘new normal’ of life with HIV/AIDS is seen as manageable rather than soul-destroying. AIDS stereotypes still exist, however, and while at an intellectual-level may be recognised as stereotypes, they still continue to enact considerable epistemic violence. Literary narratives that explore HIV/AIDS in a South African context thus have the double burden of both contending with the lingering power of these stereotypes as well as avoiding being didactic in their challenging of grand narratives. Having received since Grade One the message that a “positive” HIV status does not mean that one’s life is ruined, university students in South Africa today enter the literature classroom already primed with “AIDS fatigue”: “they’ve been there, done that,” and took the quiz in Life Orientation. Kgbetli Moele’s novel *The Book of the Dead* is neither a cautionary tale nor another instantiation of a “positive survivor” theme, and, through its strategic use of narration, provides a disruption of grand narratives surrounding HIV/AIDS. By refusing a narrative closure that reproduces a comforting, didactic image of the disease, the novel also disrupts the

conventions of the African *bildungsroman*¹ genre. Instead, AIDS literally overtakes telling the protagonist's story, confronting the reader directly on both literal and metaphorical levels.

A brief sketch of the plot of the novel is useful in highlighting the ways in which it goes against the grain of a didactic, "happy ending" narrativisation of HIV/AIDS that comforts rather than challenges the reader to engage critically. The novel is an African *bildungsroman* that tells the story of Khutso, who is born into the harsh life of the townships of late-era apartheid South Africa. Acutely aware of how he is situated and deeply invested in a discourse of aspiration, he focusses on getting an education and, against the odds, becomes a lawyer, gets the girl of his dreams, the aptly-named Pretty,² transitions into middle class life and has a son, Thapelo. Ironically, Khutso's name means "peace" in sSotho and the idealism of the first half of the novel is shattered when he discovers that he is HIV positive. Here the text contradicts stereotypes of HIV/AIDS as contracted only by those who aren't "successful," and are marginalised in the power structure of the dominant culture, such as those who are gay, poor or uneducated. Khutso's material success does not shield him from the disease; moreover, he doesn't cope with the news and feels hopeless about being "positive." Additionally, in the novel, infection only occurs through heterosexual sex (contrary to the lingering stereotypes of AIDS as a "gay disease" despite this not being the dominant form of transmission in Southern Africa) and the narrative reverses the expected order of transmission by having Pretty contract HIV, kill herself, and then Khutso learns he's been infected by her.³ Initially, Khutso considers suicide, but instead embarks on a plan of aggressive revenge infection and the second half of the novel becomes a catalogue of his conquests. His narration reproduces misogynistic and paternalistic stereotypes through an array of sexual encounters and at the same time these stereotypes are challenged by the unravelling of the narrative structure itself as AIDS-as-narrator takes over the narration, with the text alternating between the third person omniscient perspective and the first-person narrative "I" of the disease. Amidst this dizzying shifting in perspective is, perhaps, one of the most unsettling features of the novel concerning the strategic use of ARVS,⁴

which AIDS-as-narrator says are ‘useful’ cosmetically to hide one’s status and which enable Khutso to continue with revenge infection, further upending another grand narrative of didactic AIDS texts (i.e. everyone takes ARVs and lives happily ever after). Without providing the reader with formal narrative closure, the final scene of the novel consists of AIDS casually rattling off Khutso’s vital statistics prior to his death and then calmly announcing it is “moving on” from one of its most productive “good soldiers.”

Structurally there are a few significant things to note about Moele’s novel. Firstly the use of self-referentiality. The novel is divided into two sections, “the Book of the Living,” which consists of fourteen chapters that show how Khutso follows the “South African dream” and becomes a success story, and the second half of the novel titled “the Book of the Dead” which traces his path of revenge infection. The narrating of Khutso’s revenge infection is separated into four Roman numeral sections within which chapter titles are named after the specific woman targeted for revenge infection. The Roman numeral sections can be read as the four stages of infection that Khutso undergoes as the disease progresses. The first and second parts of the novel are separated by epigraphs from South African township poets and friends of Kgbetli Moele that speak directly to ARVs and the sexual transmission of HIV/AIDS.⁵ These epigraphs and concluding quote from Nelson Mandela bookend the novel and represent conflicting attitudes about HIV/AIDS. The epigraph before “Book of the Living” by Thabo Matsane reads “Don’t inject me with that venom,” and the tone for the “Book of the Dead section” is set by the quote from Goodenough Mashego: “And every bitch I ever loved, I wish an Aids-related Death.” After Khutso’s death in the final section of the novel there is a quote from Nelson Mandela:⁶ “Aids is no longer just a disease, it is a human rights issue.” Again, these formal features of the novel serve to remind the reader of the packaging of AIDS into narrative, and more specifically the “socially-inappropriateness” of the epigraphs disrupts the discourse of an uncritically affirmative image of HIV positive individuals.

Khutso also has a literal book manufactured by a printer that he has embossed with the title “Book of the Dead,” and this triple reiteration of the phrase “Book of the Dead” highlights to the reader the links between Khutso’s victims (who as “the dead” are the content for his “book”), the act of narrating, and the grand narrative of “AIDS is a death sentence.” The scene where Khutso picks up his book from the printers is laced with irony:

“In case you are wondering what I am going to do with the book,” Khutso finally said making his way to the door, “I am going to record my paternal family history; the male lineage from 1840 to the present day.”

“Book of the Dead,” the Sales Manager said, unable to pretend he was anything but relieved. “And here I was thinking that you are a serial killer, and you wanted to record the names of your victims.”

“The black man is always a suspect...” Khutso replied, watching as shame stole over the Sales Manager’s face (2009:82-83).

Khutso’s quest for revenge-infection, to “fuck ‘em dead” (2009:89) as AIDS exhorts, forces the reader to reconsider and expand the image of a serial killer as he and AIDS gain additional pleasure in replaying the details of enabling the women’s deaths. Ostensibly, the literal book that is the “Book of the Dead” may be a private journal of sexual conquests, but at the same time the act of turning dying bodies into text serves as a meta-textual reminder of the potentially dangerous threat to subjectivity this textualisation poses. This threat is reiterated when Khutso himself loses control of his own narrative voice.

REVENGE INFECTION

Khutso dedicates himself to the task of revenge infection with the same intensity that he worked to get out of poverty, and, in doing so, targets all women, infecting them regardless of race, age, class or profession (whether it is prostitutes, whose work places them at greater risk, or lawyers). Whereas previously his style of dress was uninteresting and “if you didn’t know you would have thought he wore the same clothes from Monday to Friday” (2009:55), AIDS makes sure he has a make-over in

order to succeed in revenge infection. The narration here is striking as AIDS announces what constitutes the “right look”:

It was then that I decided that Khutso needed a makeover. He was dull, and for our purposes he needed to be a star—to stand out in the crowd. So when we got to Tshwane the first thing we did was lose the hair, the beard and moustache, lose his dull clothes and put on something vibrant, something that communicated with people. For our plan to work everyone had to want to associate with Khutso just by looking at him, he had to be a model on a catwalk (2009:92).

It is also worth noting the gendered patterns of stigmatisation at work in the targeting of women at metatextual level. Lizzie Attree observes about this discourse that

In the language of stigma and victimisation, *Africa can just as easily be figured as a female continent that has been raped, plundered and pillaged by everything from colonialism and neo-colonialism to HIV/AIDS*. The unequal power relations that such ideas demonstrate are inseparable from discourse on HIV/AIDS in both Africa and the West (Attree 2010:3; emphasis mine).

Here the deaths of the women take on an additional dimension when read through a postcolonial lens -revealing the patriarchal discourse that undergirds the post-apartheid present. Through AIDS-as-narrator’s exaggerated re-presentation of gender stereotypes, the reader is pressed to interrogate them more closely. Some examples include: “Money: the key to any woman’s heart” (2009:101); “For a black man like Khutso the sight of a light-complexioned black woman was enough to turn him on, and he couldn’t wait to feel the thighs of a white woman” (2009:131), and “It’s hard to get a woman on demand in the suburbs, but it’s an easy thing to do in the township” (2009:135).

The entanglement of Khutso’s subjectivity with AIDS-as-narrator continues to become more pronounced. Instead of phrases such as “our purposes” or “our plan” which also leave room for ambiguity with their hint of the royal “we” in the tone of the narration, later in the narrative

there is disarray at the syntactic level where the blurring of AIDS-as-narrator and Khutso becomes overt. The blurring of subjectivities is striking during the reconciliation between Khutso and his son:

He looked at *me*, *hoping that I* would be able to give him some kind of an *answer but Khutso had nothing to say*. I smiled. I am coming for you little gangster, I thought quietly to myself. You are right, there is no way around it (2009:163-164; emphasis mine).

It is the visuality of this exchange that creates confusion and disrupts: one cannot literally “see” the disease, which in the text has consciousness, except through the people it has infected. The linguistic melding from first-person “he looked at me” to the third-person “Khutso” indicates the overtaking of the disease.

STRATEGIC USE OF SECOND PERSON NARRATION: AIDS AS NARRATOR

One of the most unsettling moments in the text upon AIDS entering as a narrator, is its direct addressing of the reader through the strategic use of the second person pronoun “you.” With this direct address, the reader is disrupted in the act of following Khutso’s narrative: the *bildungsroman* stops suddenly and the reader is confronted with AIDS reflecting upon itself and the reader’s imagined potential future infection:

Soon when people look *at you*, *you will start to think that they can see me in your face*. When you catch people talking about you, and they pause their conversation, you will think that they are really talking about me. You will start to stigmatise yourself. In reality, by the time they start to see the telltale signs of me in your face I will be long gone, because by then you are no longer of any use to me. You are deteriorating, full-blown, and you can’t hide the truth any more (2009:110; emphasis mine).

Certainly this passage is relevant in foreshadowing what will happen to Khutso, but within this moment in the text, which significantly constitutes its own separate section in the novel, the extra-textual dimension is highlighted and effectively unsettles the “positive survivor” script that circulates in the public sphere. This value of disruption in the face of contained, monolithic (or in the case of HIV/AIDS) uplifting narratives for

an African context is something reiterated in Kenyan writer Binyanga Wainaina's satiric essay, *How to Write about Africa*, where he notes:

Broad brushstrokes throughout are good. Avoid having the African characters laugh, or struggle to educate their kids, or just make do in mundane circumstances. Have them illuminate something about Europe or America in Africa. African characters should be colourful, exotic, larger than life – but empty inside, with no dialogue, no conflicts or resolutions in their stories, no depth or quirks to confuse the cause.

Following Wainaina, while Moele's novel is disturbing on multiple levels, there is value in its producing a counter-narrative to the dominant representation of AIDS.

AIDS doesn't stop at taking over Khutso's body, it takes over the body of the text. What is the significance of having the text of the body (Khutso's) and the body of the text become interchanged? Part of Khutso's final conversation with his son stages this dilemma of embodiment:

“I am terrified of Aids. I hate Aids, Dad, I hate it,” the little gangster continued. “If Aids (sic) were a person, I would kill him or her with my bare hands, *but there is no Aids, there are only people, and that is the worst thing about Aids.*” True, *there is no Aids, only people, I thought*, listening attentively (163; emphases mine).

I would like to suggest that in this passage AIDS is neither “denying its existence” nor being ironic, but reflecting on the nature of its discursive power. There are “only people” who have AIDS in the sense that a post-apartheid AIDS fictional narrative is “only” “just a written book” (Anonymous student 13)—both are inflected through discourse and the potential provided by strategic disruption of this discursive “flow” is something about which one can be truly “positive.”

HIV CURRICULUM INTEGRATION IN TERTIARY EDUCATION SETTINGS

In a country where the prevalence of HIV and AIDS is worryingly steady and AIDS education fatigue is firmly chronic, behaviour change specialists are finding it increasingly difficult to raise HIV awareness and prevent

young people from contracting HIV. It is evident that a strategic disruption of the dominant and negative HIV discourses should be one of the key strategies in HIV prevention. Innovative education strategies and HIV curriculum integration, particularly in tertiary education institutions, provide an entry point to change these deadly discourses.

Almost a quarter of a century into the AIDS epidemic, it seems as if African academia have not yet fully grasped the reality of this devastating and enduring epidemic. Professor Michael Kelly (2003), a prolific HIV researcher and philosopher laments that despite being situated in high prevalence areas for over 20 years, African universities still tend to treat the HIV epidemic as merely a student or health issue - not a priority issue for academic concern. He suggests that information around HIV and AIDS should be integrated as a core theme into university functions, comprehensively “reflecting on issues affecting society, teaching, research and community engagement.”

Kelly (2003) cites the following reasons why a pro-active and dynamic institutional university response to HIV and AIDS is imperative:

- 1) No university is immune from the disease.
- 2) The disease has the potential to disrupt effective institutional functioning.
- 3) HIV and AIDS can undermine long-term academic accomplishments by the premature death of young graduates in the workplace.
- 4) Universities have a moral and ethical duty to serve the *specific* needs of South African society for knowledge, understanding and expertise, especially with regards to HIV and AIDS.
- 5) Lastly, HIV and AIDS is not just a ‘passing plague’, but rather an epidemic that will remain with society for the remainder of the century.

In addition to these epidemiological reasons, there are very real pragmatic reasons why HIV and AIDS provides a case for curriculum integration – Our students, informed or not, are exposed to risk factors that increase their vulnerability to HIV infections which includes new-found

independence, strong peer pressure, transitions in identity formation and self-esteem, experimentation with substance abuse and sexual behaviours, a sense of invincibility and ignorance (Kelly 2003).

Mary Crew & Nzioka (2008) from the Centre for Study of AIDS have also highlighted that lecturers in universities and colleges can act as pivotal change agents to the youth and society at large by providing relevant HIV and gender-related knowledge and wisdom to the youth. However, HIV curriculum integration in tertiary institutions has often been approached with trepidation and caution; many lecturers citing lack of time and expertise as reasons for not integrating HIV education in their respective curricula.

Despite the logistical concerns of HIV curriculum integration in tertiary studies, there appears to be a strong case for academic ‘disruption’ in favour of integrating HIV into all types of curricula and an urgent call to action, as United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan stated in his opening address to the International Partnership Against AIDS in Africa, in December 1999, “this unprecedented crisis requires an unprecedented response” (United Nations 1999).

Another pressing concern around HIV curriculum integration is that much like the dominant HIV narratives that were discussed in the literary section above by Dr Schmidt: students are tired of HIV and AIDS and try to avoid HIV education and awareness events at all costs. Teachers and lecturers are reluctant to give yet another HIV presentation with guilt-inducing graphs and an ‘HIV homily’. Thus, academics that endeavour to make their curricula relevant and applicable to current social ills face, not only the challenge of finding the least disruptive way to integrate HIV education into their in curricula, but also to do it in a way that is creative and transformative.

This pilot HIV curriculum integration project set out to illustrate how the disruptive power of a literary narrative prescribed in a literature course for first year college students, as well as an HIV presentation by a person living with HIV and AIDS (PLWHA) organised by the psychology

department were used as pedagogical tools to encourage first year literature students to engage in critical thinking, and to challenge the attitudes and beliefs they had around HIV and AIDS. The students involved in this project were given an opportunity to voice their viewpoints and reflect on the two HIV narratives that were presented to them. These responses were understood in terms of the Stages of Change model by Prochaska, DiClemente & Norcross (1992). This paper also argues that HIV curriculum integration initiatives should aim to be transformative in application and lecturers should be cognisant of the complexities of behaviour change and the psychological process behind it.

Transformative pedagogy and HIV curriculum integration

This project initially came about as a creative HIV curriculum-integration idea between lecturers from the Department of Literature and Department of Psychology. In this cross-disciplinary, pilot intervention the HIV-related novel *Book of the Dead* (Moele 2009) was prescribed to all first year literature students as part of their curriculum for the module entitled 'Self-Awareness in African Literature'. A full description of the book is presented by Dr Schmidt in the preceding section.

Over a period of a few weeks, students read and discussed the book in class. Towards the end of the module, a well-known HIV activist, Mr Pholo Ramothwala⁷ was invited to give a one-hour interactive presentation to the students about his experiences living with HIV. This allowed students to contrast the narrative of the book's HIV-positive character, Khutso, with Pholo's autobiographical narrative. Students were then given a transformative opportunity to dialogue and express their views on the book and the presentation in the form of a semi-structured, written questionnaire (see appendix 1). The responses from the questionnaires were explored further using the Transformative pedagogy approach and the Stages of Change model (Prochaska et al. 1992) as theoretical frameworks to understand them.

A transformative pedagogy implies moving from foundational content and concepts to application, action and personal change. The construction of

new knowledge through *collaborative* and thought-provoking activities, which are personally *meaningful* to the students, are core to a pedagogy of *change* (Torosyan 2007). Knowledge is thus meaningful when students are able to reflect on how it relates to their everyday interactions and to their lives at home and on the streets. The latter was reflected in some of the students' responses, which indicated that that the narratives had an influence on attitudes and preconceptions about HIV and AIDS:

The way I view people with HIV has become more positive... more understanding and empathy (s 2).

Davis-Manigaulte et al. (2006) stated that transformative learning should also strive to achieve a balance in both rational and *affective* ways of knowing. In analysing the students' responses it was evident that both the prescribed book and the autobiographical narrative encouraged students to think *critically*, feel *deeply* and to question the hegemonic assumptions they had around HIV and AIDS. In response to the disruptive narrative of the book, students (indicated anonymously as 's') shared their intense feelings that were aroused by the book:

This is not a good narration!! I did not read it from a book, it was in front of me! It made me think and stress – How many people do we meet on the street and can be HIV positive with good health (s 13).

*I enjoyed reading the novel even though it was very **terrifying**" (s1) "Khutso's narrative [...] makes me **hate** the disease (s 24).*

*Disgusting and **scary** that there are people like that or even in imagination that would embark on such a horrid life goal (s 11).*

In response to Pholo's more positive and hopeful autobiographical narrative, students reflected on how their thoughts and feelings had shifted with regards to HIV and AIDS:

*On Pholo's narrative my response is that I felt **relieved**... It **showed** me that he was the opposite of Khutso's character in the book (s 12).*

Having HIV and AIDS is not the end of everything (s 23).

He really opened my eyes (s 25).

Taylor (2006:94) reiterates the transformative power of text in serving as a “doorway to deeply held emotions with the potential to initiate a process of individuation” and to promote critical reflection. This project allowed students to tap into their affective and cognitive states in response to the narratives. This illustrates the power that existing university curricula contains in being able to strategically affect the attitudes and behaviour of individuals, if lecturers are cognisant of their transformative potential.

Transformative learning also relies both on granting the individual an *active voice* and creating an environment for collective *listening* and mutual support. This pedagogical model implies that education should always strive to be transformative. However, lecturers often cite time-constraints, large classes and full curriculum loads as reasons for not creating an engaged and transformative class environment.

Ettling (2006:61) challenges lecturers to question their views on what they think the primary purpose of education is: “To impart information, construct knowledge, or initiate change?” While there is a place for all of the goals mentioned above in the tertiary education system, HIV curriculum integration and the state of the epidemic in the country demands a more urgent and *active* approach in using education and curricula as tools for transformation.

Acknowledging the Process of Behaviour Change in HIV Curriculum Integration

Creative HIV curriculum integration requires an understanding of the transformative power that certain academic syllabi contain in being able to shift HIV-related attitudes, perceptions and behaviour amongst tertiary students. It is also important that lecturers involved in HIV curriculum integration familiarise themselves with theories of behaviour change and the complexities involved in trying to shift norms and behaviour.

Behaviour change is a multifaceted psycho-social process that is challenging to conceptualise in a neat, linear model. A common theory used in understanding health behaviour change is the Stages of Change theory (Prochaska, DiClemente & Norcross 1992) which hypothesises five components or cognitive processes that individuals experience when changing an attitude, belief or action. Although the theory presents itself in a sequential manner, the stages are viewed as a cyclical process, which varies according to the individual. The five stages proposed are: pre-contemplation, contemplation, preparation for action, action and maintenance.

The first stage is the *pre-contemplation* stage, where individuals have no intention of changing their behaviour or beliefs. Recognising that many of our students could be in the pre-contemplation stage of change with regards to HIV risk-taking behaviour and negative attitudes towards HIV, this project attempted to raise consciousness through information-giving and dialogue by means of the two narratives presented. With high HIV prevalence rates amongst young people, it can be assumed that many of them are still in the pre-contemplation stage of change with regards to HIV risk and prevention behaviours.

However, when reflecting on our students' responses in this project, it was evident that students registered a wide range of emotions in reaction to the narratives, including fear, disgust, anger, sympathy and withdrawal. We propose that these intense self-reflections, elicited by the disruptive power of the novel and the hopeful tone of the autobiographical narrative by Pholo, provided an indication that students were, or entered into in the *contemplation* stage of change.

In the *contemplation* phase, individuals begin to recognise that their behaviour or beliefs are ineffective and are thinking of changing. This stage involves self-reflection, *identification* and re-evaluation. The novel elicited an overwhelming amount of emotive identification as evident in the students' responses below.

*It [the novel] makes me **fear** the disease and the mental vulnerability of people that have it (s 17).*

*With **Khutso** as a character, I was **appaled** [sic] at his revenge infection (s 4).*

*That guy has problems. He is **fucked up** in the head (s 16).*

Cognitive theory used in literary analysis is useful here. This theory proposes that fictional literature often elicits fictional simulations in people's minds (Oatley 1995). There are also strong links between cognitive theory and Aristotle's concept of mimesis, which is the representation of reality in literature.

Furthermore, according to Oatley (1995) for these "imitations" or "representations" to occur, the reader needs to

- a) reflect on the character's goals using their own planning procedures to connect actions together meaningfully;
- b) Construct mental schemas of imagined worlds;
- c) Feel as if the writer is addressing them i.e. first person narrative and
- d) Integrate incongruent elements to create a unified experience. This process allows readers to internalise feelings evoked by narrative texts and may contribute to the leading cognitive stages of behaviour change. Some of the students' responses indicated that they were identifying and even empathising with the character in the book:

*I also **sympathise** with **Khutso**, his being infected out of ignorance and then being overwhelmed by emotion, where he loses control over his emotions (s 17).*

Many of the students' emotive responses reflected how the character in the book, **Khutso** was feeling. In their research on narrative experience taking, Kaufman and Libby (2012) identified that a first-person narrative portrayed by an in-group character, provoked the highest level of emotional identification and produced the greatest form of *behaviour change* amongst readers.

The prescribed novel *Book of the Dead* (Moele 2009) includes a first-person narrative point of view.⁸ In addition to Pholo's autobiographical, first-hand account of living with HIV, the narratives served as powerful transformative tools in challenging students to evaluate their sexual behaviour and motivated some students to engage in HIV risk reducing behaviours.

When preparing for action, individuals' intentions begin to translate into behavioural criteria, whereby individuals commit to actions of change. In the stage of *action* individuals modify their behaviour, attitudes or environment to change ineffective thoughts or actions. This stage requires a shift from an internal to a more external process whereby commitment is needed with regards to time and energy to fulfil the actions.

In the students' responses to the narratives, some showed that they were preparing for action and some stated that they were committed to change their actions or behaviours:

[The narratives] will influence me to do an HIV test (s 2).

Though HIV and AIDS is not a death sentence, it is advisable for me to prevent it (s 10).

Pholo made us see the importance of taking care of ourselves (s 19).

I was touched and believe sex education should be broadly exposed to everyone (s 4).

The final stage of change according to the theory is *maintenance* whereby individuals reflect on their progress and attempt to prevent a return to old behaviours and attitudes. (Proschaska et al. 1992). We are cognisant of the fact that this once-off HIV curriculum intervention is not sufficient to promote lasting behaviour change with regards to HIV health promoting behaviour and attitude shifts, but that it represents a critical and creative

HIV curriculum-integration project that could ‘plant the seeds’ of behaviour change in students’ minds. Further research is recommended to explore the topic in more depth.

CONCLUSION

Narrative is at the heart of all human interactions and is an accessible and integral way of acquiring information. Research shows that narrative approaches serve as promising tools for supporting and encouraging health-behaviour change (Hinyard 2007). This study has illustrated that meaningful and transformative HIV education can be integrated into existing curricula through the strategic use of a literary novel and a live narration by a PLWHA. It is also important that academia should be cognisant of the complexities of HIV discourses and behaviour change. Finally, in light of the “shiny happy HIV-positive people” dominant narrative, integrated HIV curricula should not be afraid of responsibly disrupting young minds with the aim of providing a *transformative* experience for students. The juxtaposition of narratives such as Moele’s *Book of the Dead* with the life stories of individual’s experiences with HIV-AIDS provide academics in South Africa with one such example of responsible disruption and the possibility of countering “HIV fatigue.” By unsettling student’s expectations (and perhaps some of our own) we open the door to the possibility⁹ of new stories about HIV from within the academy and beyond.

NOTES

¹ David Mickelson describes the distinguishing features of bildungsromane for a postcolonial African context: “In this respect, Bildungsromane from former colonies are doubly interesting since their subject matter, as well as their form, throws into relief the conflict of the traditional and the inherited. In Africa, for example, the Bildungsroman typically examines the conflict of cultures in which a young *évolué* struggles to achieve a balance between the “civilizing’ education of the colonial power and the traditional culture of his forefathers” (418). Writing later on the role of transnationalism, Susan Stanford Friedman questions why narrative theory has not overtly experienced the seachanges brought by globalisation that effected other areas of literary studies: “By themselves, however, the ethical and interdisciplinary turns in narrative theory do not explain its relative slowness to engage with what has variously been called the transnational, the global, and the planetary. An alternative explanation might be that the narratological project has been transnationalist from the beginning but in ways that may have inhibited the sort of transnational turn accomplishing seachanges in other fields of literary studies” (3).

² Pretty's situation and use of transactional sex is rendered in a way that is both matter-of-fact and sympathetic: "There were always men who wanted to be part of her life, and when they found that they fell short of her expectations they came with currency, and for a poor girl the currency was what mattered" (33).

³ Intriguingly, because of Pretty's non-monogamous past, students tended to read her as having cheated on Khutso during their marriage, despite there being no textual evidence to support this reading. She does try to make Khutso jealous by inventing love affairs (68). Khutso's jealousy and previously controlling behaviour does potentially afford Pretty an opportunity for an affair, but this is not represented. Instead we are presented with their growing apart: "[Thapelo] even settled his father's concerns about his mother's whereabouts: What was she doing? Who was she with? And what time would she be home? Khutso, it seemed, no longer cared. If Pretty wasn't home when they came back from wherever they had been, he and Thapelo would go out again, to the movies, and come back much later in the evening" (67). Pretty does in fact go out and again the text strategically presents a non-representation of an affair: "Pretty had waited for them until nine, but when they hadn't been home by half past she had decided to go out. However it didn't worry Thapelo and his father that she wasn't home, and when Pretty finally did return, early in the morning, Khutso didn't ask where she had been" (67).

⁴ AIDS makes clear the instrumentalist use of ARVS: "ARVS. I like them. In fact, I love them. I want my soldiers to live as long as they can. I want them to have the freshest faces for the longest time, so that no one ever suspects that they are sick" (133).

⁵ It is worth noting that Thabo Matsane died of an implicitly AIDS-related death. While his memorialization in the text is beyond the scope of this paper, the sentiment expressed in his epigraph contains pedagogically useful ambiguity: "venom" can be read as either HIV-Aids or the ARVs used to treat it.

⁶ Binyanga Wainaina satirically notes the use of Mandela to "hook" a western audience when writing about Africa: "Always end your book with Nelson Mandela saying something about rainbows or renaissances. Because you care."

⁷ Pholo Ramothwala is a prolific South African HIV-activist and motivational speaker that lives openly with HIV. He is the director of the NGO, Positive Convention and is often invited to speak about his experiences of living with HIV for over 10 years.

⁸ This aspect is discussed further by Dr Schmidt in the preceding section.

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Towards a Philosophy of Mathematical Literacy

MICHAEL GLENCROSS

INTRODUCTION

Education in South Africa has experienced some major changes since 1994. These included Outcomes-Based Education (Department of Education 1996; 2002; 2003a), with teachers becoming educators, pupils being referred to as learners and a range of new subjects, called learning areas. The vision of Curriculum 2005 was for general education to abandon the rote model of learning and teaching and to adopt a liberating, nation-building and learner-centered outcomes-based progressive system of education (Department of Education 2003b). More recently, the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) (Department of Education 2008) documents have given way to the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) (Department of Basic Education 2011a; 2011b), together with the National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12 (Department of Basic Education 2012). Learning areas are again called subjects and the terms Learning Outcomes and Assessment Standards are no longer used. The CAPS documents instead now spell out content topics in terms of specific knowledge and skills. The previous distinction between Higher Grade and Standard Grade has been removed and all learners now study either Mathematics or Mathematical Literacy.

The Mathematics course is a blend of traditional (algebra, geometry, trigonometry) and more modern topics (probability and statistics), while the new Mathematical Literacy course is driven by life-related applications of mathematics and intended to provide learners with an awareness and understanding of the role played by mathematics in the modern world (Department of Education 2003a; 2003b). There is no common interpretation of the meaning of mathematical literacy, so we see other countries using terms like quantitative literacy (USA), functional literacy

(UK), or numeracy for the mathematical equivalent of literacy (UK). Before discussing the nature of mathematical literacy, we need to examine what is meant by the nature of mathematics, the meaning of mathematics education and to delve, albeit briefly, into some philosophies of mathematics.

In attempting to articulate a philosophy of mathematical literacy within the framework of mathematics and mathematics education, a number of questions emerge: What is mathematical literacy? What is mathematical literacy for? What mathematical literacy should be taught? How should mathematical literacy be taught? This paper will attempt to provide answers to these questions.

THE NATURE OF MATHEMATICS

The perceptions held by society of the nature and role of mathematics have had a major influence on the development of the school mathematics curriculum, its teaching and the related research. Understanding the different conceptions people have of mathematics is important in enabling us to understand how and why school mathematics courses have been developed and implemented.

In the USA, for example, the reform movement in mathematics education depicts mathematics as a dynamic, growing field of study, while others see mathematics as a static discipline with a known set of concepts, principles and skills. Mathematics, along with its applications, has grown exponentially over the past fifty years and this has led to a detailed examination of its nature and importance, with views ranging from axiomatic structures to generalised heuristics for solving problems. These diverse views have had a significant impact on the ways in which society thinks of mathematics and how it reacts to its increasing influence on our daily lives.

Such differing conceptions have influenced the ways that mathematicians and teachers approach the development and teaching of mathematics. There are those who view *mathematics as a static discipline that develops

abstractly, while others see it as a dynamic discipline that is constantly changing as a result of new discoveries. The contrasting views about the nature and source of mathematical knowledge have resulted in a continuum for conceptions of mathematics that goes back more than two thousand years to the age of the Greeks. The lack of a common philosophy of mathematics has had serious repercussion for both the teaching and practice of mathematics and this situation has influenced the more recent developing field of mathematics education.

WHAT IS MATHEMATICS EDUCATION?

The broad field of mathematics education was established during the twentieth century as an independent field of study and research. It has been clearly described by Howson (1977:353) as consisting of “activities which (represent) attempts to understand how mathematics is created, learned, communicated and taught most effectively; to design mathematical curricula which recognise the constraints induced by the students, their society and its educational system; to effect changes in curricula (which we take to include content, method and procedures for evaluation and assessment); to foster within the population at large a growth of mathematical activity and an appreciation of the role of mathematics and of its nature”. This and many other definitions all refer, directly or indirectly, to the *philosophical, psychological, sociological* and *methodological* aspects of mathematics. These ideas may be summarised under four headings in answer to four questions already posed in relation to mathematical literacy.

What is mathematics? This refers to the nature and philosophy of mathematics and is primarily concerned with exploring and discovering the essence of mathematics, as well as considering the implications of philosophical questions for the classroom.

What is mathematics for? This question focuses attention on the applications and uses of mathematics, including mathematical modelling.

What mathematics should be taught? In addressing this question, we focus on the curriculum and a consideration of what ought to be taught at different

levels, related to both the nature of the mathematics topics and relevant theories of learning which may influence curriculum design.

How should mathematics be taught? The methodology of mathematics necessitates a consideration of processes and methods of learning as well as strategies for teaching. It is likely to include problem solving, investigative methods and related matters.

PHILOSOPHIES OF MATHEMATICS

In the recent decades, a philosophical shift has been observable within mathematics and mathematics education. The philosophy of mathematics education has grown and matured since the 1970s, particularly through the seminal work of Paul Ernest (1991). He argued that for over two thousand years, mathematics was dominated by an absolutist paradigm that viewed it “as a body of infallible and objective truth, far removed from the affairs and values of humanity” (Ernest 1991: xi). Within this viewpoint, mathematical truth is absolutely certain and mathematics is the one and only realm of certain, unquestionable and objective knowledge.

The absolutist view is based on two types of assumptions: those of mathematics, concerning the assumption of axioms and definitions; and those of logic, concerning the assumption of axioms, rules of inference, and formal language and its syntax. In the early twentieth century, contradictions emerged that challenged the *status quo*: if mathematics is certain and all its theorems are certain, how can contradictions exist among its theorems?

This was the start of a change of perspective that came to see mathematics as fallible, changing and the product of human inventiveness (Ernest 1991). Mathematical truth is now seen as fallible and corrigible, and can never be regarded as being above revision and correction. The choice of which philosophical perspective is adopted is the most important epistemological factor underlying the teaching of mathematics (Ernest 1991). The rejection of absolutism implies a ‘loss of certainty’ (Kline 1980), but should not be interpreted as a loss of knowledge. Our knowledge is better founded and the

absolutist view is at best an idealisation. The fallible view of mathematics represents an advance in knowledge, not a retreat from past certainty.

WHAT IS MATHEMATICAL LITERACY?

Mathematics, as a valuable part of our human heritage, is needed for social and economic competence, while it is a necessary vehicle for personal development. The following anecdote illustrates the dire need for literacy and competency in mathematics. In The Netherlands some years ago, research showed that 1 out of 25 people could not read or write. A local newspaper reported this as “Just imagine, 1 out of 25, which means 25%” (De Lange 2003). Sadly, such errors are not always noticed even by literate educated people.

As part of the process of defining mathematical literacy, we need to consider a number of questions.

From a mathematical perspective, how do we define literacy?

What kind of mathematics relates to literacy?

What kind of competencies are we looking for?

Are these competencies teachable?

Many people refer to mathematical literacy as quantitative literacy, where quantitative literacy is regarded as “the capacity to deal effectively with the quantitative aspects of life” (Steen 2001: xx). Numerous definitions of mathematical literacy specifically mention number, arithmetic and quantitative situations. The main problem with these definitions is their narrow emphasis on quantity. Mathematical literacy should involve knowledge of mathematics in the broadest sense, not just its quantitative aspects.

A valuable definition that has international consensus is that proposed by Burkhardt (2007:138)

Mathematical literacy is an individual’s capacity to identify and understand the role that mathematics plays in the world, to make well-

founded judgements and to use and engage with mathematics in ways that meet the needs of that individual's life as a constructive, concerned and reflective citizen.

In brief, we could say that this is thinking with mathematics about problems in everyday life.

There is a suggestion of agreement in the literature that, in comparison with traditional school mathematics, mathematical literacy is

- less formal and more intuitive
- less abstract and more contextual
- less symbolic and more concrete.

Mathematical literacy also seems to emphasise reasoning, thinking and interpreting. We shall now highlight a number of competencies necessary for mathematical literacy.

COMPETENCIES NECESSARY FOR MATHEMATICAL LITERACY

In considering what it means to be mathematically literate, the focus will be on what a mathematically literate person is able to do. De Lange (2003), developing the work of Steen (2001), offers the following necessary competencies for mathematical literacy.

1. Mathematical thinking and reasoning

A mathematically literate person will

- be able to ask mathematical questions
- know the kind of answers that mathematics offers
- be able to distinguish among different kinds of statements
- understand and handle the extent and limits of mathematical concepts

2. Mathematical argumentation

A mathematically literate person will

- know what proofs are

- know how proofs differ from other forms of mathematical reasoning
- follow and assess chains of arguments
- have a feel for heuristics
- create and express mathematical arguments

3. *Mathematical communication*

A mathematically literate person will

- express himself/herself in a variety of ways in oral, written and other visual forms
- understand someone else's work

4. *Modelling*

A mathematically literate person will

- structure the field to be modelled
- translate reality into mathematical structures
- interpret mathematical models in terms of context or reality
- work with and validate models
- reflect, analyse and offer critiques of models or solutions
- reflect on the modelling process

5. *Problem posing and solving*

A mathematically literate person will

- Pose, formulate, define and solve problems in a variety of ways

6. *Representation*

A mathematically literate person will

- decode, encode, translate, distinguish between and interpret different forms of representations of mathematical objects and situations
- understand the relationships among different representations

7. *Symbols*

A mathematically literate person will

- use symbolic, formal and technical language and operations

8. *Tools and technology*

A mathematically literate person will

- use aids and tools, including technology when appropriate
- This may be seen as a daunting list by some, but it is argued here that in order to be fully mathematically literate, people need all these competencies in varying degrees. They also need confidence in their own ability to use mathematics and to be comfortable with quantitative ideas. It is also desirable to have an appreciation of the historical, philosophical and societal perspectives of mathematics.

Acquiring mathematical literacy is known to be difficult, as is its effective teaching, largely because it involves both insight and the knowledge of algorithms (Hughes-Hallett 2001). Some algorithms, such as those used in arithmetic, are necessary, despite the almost universal availability of calculators and computers. However, learning or memorising algorithms is not enough, if only because an essential component of mathematical understanding is insight.

Current school curricula do little to emphasise insight or support its development at any level. The competencies necessary for mathematical literacy are actually the same competencies that are needed for mathematics *as it should be taught*. As things stand now, especially in South Africa, the gap between mathematics and mathematical literacy is large.

WHAT IS MATHEMATICS?

To make clear what is meant by literacy in mathematics, we will briefly consider what constitutes mathematics.

School mathematics traditionally takes a few knowledge strands, for example, arithmetic, algebra, geometry and trigonometry, and interweaves or layers them to form the curriculum. Finally along comes calculus, usually presented as if it is the epitome of mathematical knowledge. This approach generally fails to develop intuition as a key characteristic of mathematical literacy. In particular, the various phenomena that lend themselves to mathematical treatment do not appear already organised and structured as

they are in the school curriculum. Mathematical concepts, structures and ideas have been invented and developed over the centuries as tools to organise phenomena in the natural, social and mental worlds. Real-life problems rarely arise in contexts and ways that allow their understanding and solutions to be achieved through a single item of mathematical knowledge.

There are five deep mathematical ideas that may be used to develop among children the vital mathematical insight into the many different roots of mathematics. These five ideas are: dimension, quantity, uncertainty, shape and change. The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development 1999) has used these ideas to create four categories that describe what constitutes mathematics. These are (1) Quantity, (2) Space and Shape, (3) Change and Relationships and (4) Uncertainty. Through these four categories, mathematics content may be organised in such a way that concepts that make sense together may be met within and across many different situations. Despite this analysis, it is still difficult to say unequivocally what mathematics is needed for mathematical literacy. The prime reason for this is that mathematical literacy involves mathematics as it is used in the real world, whereas mathematics curricula tend to focus on school-based knowledge.

MATHEMATICAL LITERACY IN SOUTH AFRICA

In South Africa, the recent curriculum changes in mathematics have been based on a view of society and nationhood that reflects the political changes since the watershed year of 1994. The Revised National Curriculum Statement (RCNS), for example, was designed to achieve a number of goals that are enshrined in the Constitution, such as nation-building, non-racism, equality and democracy, while also being a vehicle for social and political transformation (Department of Education 2002a; 2002b). The National Curriculum Statements for Mathematics (Department of Education 2003b) and Mathematical Literacy (Department of Education 2003a) also promoted a new approach to the teaching and learning of mathematics. This was done by emphasising

- lifelong education and training of good quality;
- the ability to think logically and analytically, as well as holistically and laterally;
- being able to transfer skills from familiar to unfamiliar situations.

More recently, the NCS Grades R-12 (Department of Basic Education 2012) provided a policy statement for learning and teaching in South African schools. The new curriculum states that it ‘aims to ensure that children acquire and apply knowledge and skills in ways that are meaningful to their own lives’ (Department of Basic Education 2012:4), while it is acknowledged that the world is “characterised by numbers, numerically based arguments and data represented and misrepresented in a number of different ways” (Department of Basic Education 2012:8).

In the South African context, mathematical literacy is seen to consist of five key elements:

1. Elementary mathematical content
 - limited to those concepts and skills relevant to individuals’ everyday lives, the workplace and being critical citizens in social and political discussions
 - the focus is not on abstract mathematical concepts
2. Authentic real-life contexts
 - exploring and solving real-world problems related to genuine, realistic (authentic) situations
3. Solving familiar and unfamiliar problems
 - enable learners to be able to solve problems in any context
4. Decision making and communication
 - weigh-up options, compare solutions, make decisions regarding most appropriate choice and communicate decisions
5. Use integrated content and/or skills in solving problems
 - solving real-life problems involves the use of content and/or skills drawn from a range of topics

SUMMARY

There are different views about the nature of both mathematics and mathematical literacy. These views have an impact on the mathematics taught in our schools. Mathematical literacy has different meanings for different people, ranging from numeracy to quantitative literacy to literacy in mathematics. In South Africa, there is a wide gulf between the two school courses: Mathematics and Mathematical Literacy, mainly because the Mathematical Literacy course focuses on real-life problems that do not involve or require the use of any abstract mathematical concepts.

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BOOK REVIEWS

South Africa-Mali Timbuktu Manuscript Trust 2011. *Building an African partnership: The Ahmed Baba Institute's new library archive in Timbuktu.* Halfway House: South Africa-Mali Timbuktu Manuscript Trust. xx + 119 pages. ISBN 978-0-62052-429-2. No Price quoted.

Timbuktu Manuscript Series 2015. *Dhul Qurnain: Tale of the Two horned one.* Cape Town: South Africa-Mali Timbuktu Manuscript Trust. xxxii +168 pages. ISBN 978-0-620-66863-7. No Price quoted.

Timbuktu Manuscript Series, Sidi Ahmed. Al-Khalifa ibn sidi umar ubn sidiAhmed ibn sidi Mohamed al Raqqad 2015. *Curing disease and defects both apparent and hidden* (tr. Mukhtar A & Fernana AH) Cape Town: Medina Institute. xli + pages.175 pages. No price quoted.

Timbuktu Manuscript Series 2015. *African written heritage, vol 1.* Cape Town: South Africa-Mali Timbuktu Manuscript Trust. xxviii +179 pages. ISBN 978-0-620-67730-1. No Price quoted.

The South Africa-Mali Timbuktu Manuscript project was initiated as the result of former President Mbeki's state visit to Mali in 2001 and his discovery of the poor state of the Timbuktu manuscript collection which has come under threat since then in one of the earliest centres of learning in Africa. The partnership which developed between the two countries was in line with Mbeki's idea based on the understanding that the production of knowledge and the strengthening of institutions of learning across the African continent are vital to achieving African renaissance. The outcome was a new home for this incredibly valuable manuscript collection which was custom built and is architecturally well adapted to the physical context. This book is a boxed coffee table edition to promote the project. It is well conceptualised and presented. It describes the critical story of the development of the archive, its opening, the manuscript collection, the initiator, advocacy and fund-raising, the design concept, challenges and encounters and the onsite construction process. The text is lucid and the illustrations add considerably to the substance of the book. This is a fitting

tribute to the creativity of the project and the memory of the seventeenth century scholar Ahmed Baba who gave his name to the building.

Dhul Qurnain, the tale of the two horned king, or the tale of Alexander the Great, his travels, battles and conquests, is the first volume of the Timbuktu Manuscript Series to be published jointly by the Open Press, Madina Institute and the University of Pretoria. The earliest manuscript, the narration of which is attributed to Abu Abdul Malik, dates from 1157 CE using sources from the Qur'an, ancient medieval sources and oral tradition. Maniraj Sudhaven offers a helpful analysis of Alexander the Great and the transmission history of the incomplete document. This is followed by a literal translation and is concluded with a more readable form of the document which has been adapted in order to make the tale more lucid and to offer some interpretation. Altogether, this is a work of substantial value as it presents a popular (though not populist) form of one example of early African literature, which challenges European assumptions regarding the lack of African history. It is to be hoped that this will stimulate greater interest and research in African history.

The second publication in the series, *The book of healing diseases both hidden and apparent in the human body*, is a seventeenth century Timbuktu manuscript. During this period, it is evident that both African traditional medicine and western allopathic medicine, sources from anecdotal and empirical evidence, were combined and in common use.

The manual categorises illnesses and cures after considering the secrets and uses of God's names, verses and Arabic letters. The first is the benefits of plants; the second, benefits of metals and minerals; the third, the benefits of certain animals; the fourth, the book of diseases and cures and the fifth, the book of intercourse. These remedies were not only localised because of the author, Sidi Ahmed. Al-Khalifa ibn sidi umar ubn sidiAhmed ibn sidi Mohamed al Raqqad attracted students from all over the world during the seventeenth century, each bringing their own understanding and contribution to the field of health. What is interesting about these remedies is not only their perceived ability to cure, but that they give us great insight into the ailments of the day, the materials available in the healing process.

This is a particularly valuable source for a historical understanding of a holistic approach to medicine. These volumes offer great promise for the future dissemination of the Timbuktu manuscripts which will, hopefully, offer enormous substance to our understanding of African history.

Any who are at all interested in the origins, uses and philosophy that lie behind the popular Sudoku, will find a relevant manuscript in *African written heritage*, the third volume in the Timbuktu Manuscript Series. This focusses on nine documents of varying interests written by scholars, religious revivalists, spiritual and community leaders. The documents contained here are:

1. *Benefits of repentance*: A prosody on asceticism (Yusuf ibn Said al Filani, 17th century, CE)
2. *St Isaac of Nineveh* (a Coptic scholar, 14th century, CE)
3. *Al-Fawid ula Al Qalaid*: Necklaces of ethical gems (Abu Ali al Husn ibn Ali al-Ahwazi, 11th century, CE)
4. *Pillars of justice*: The ethics of governance (Sheik Usman Dan Fodio, early 19th century, CE)
5. *A short treatise on theology*
6. *The talisman of Imam Ghazali*: Usages of the sudoku (Shaykh Nun ibn TAHIR al Filali at-Tijani, 11th century, CE)
7. *The book of intercourse* (Sidi Ahmed Al-Khalifa ibn Sidi Umar ibn Sidi Ahmed ibn Sidi Mohamed al-Rqaqad, 17th century, CE)
8. *The crown of all secrets*: A short treatise on the ‘Union of Existence’ (Sheik Yusuf Al-Qadri Al-Khalwati[ra], 17th century, CE)
9. *Virtues of trade and agriculture* (author and date unknown).

While all of these manuscripts have value, perhaps *The Crown of all Secrets* is of the greatest interest in the South African context since its author was banned to South Africa following a dispute with the Dutch East India Company in India in 1694. He was resettled at False Bay and the Makassar beach was named after him. Yusuf died in 1699. Although he was not the first Muslim to settle at the Cape, he is regarded as the founder of Cape Islamic faith.

Written from a Sufi metaphysical perspective, his work can contribute to our understanding of the concept of *Wahdah* (unity) as God's relationship with the universe. Two ideologies separate the concept into 'unity of existence' and 'unity of witness'. Shah Waliullah's attempt to reconcile the two was by claiming they were 'verbal controversies' based on their ambiguous language.

The book of intercourse offers some helpful guidance that has outlasted the passage of time and is founded on a distinct commitment to relationship in marriage through love and mutual respect and is considered an act of devotion. The timing might be a subject of debate for some. Friday and Saturday nights are out and there is a distinct preference for Thursday and possibly Tuesdays! Some of the aids to sexual relations would be equally well integrated into the second volume in the series, the one on *Curing disease and defects both apparent and hidden*.

It is interesting to note in our times when we have become so distrustful of many things Islamic, how much good sense, theology and philosophy has emerged within African contexts during the past few centuries, how much commonality exists between the written and oral teaching of both Christian and Islamic faith systems and how both systems project a less fearful future than we have been led to believe in as the result of contemporary happenings throughout the world. There is also a stronger sense of ecological harmony than we can currently acknowledge. The unity of existence and witness provides a common base from which we can venture into the future with all its uncertainties. I would encourage all students and scholars of religion in Africa to become acquainted with this project.

In the first three volumes, language editing could be better but this is currently being attended to. It would also be helpful if line numbers were included for ease of reference.

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ABOUT ST AUGUSTINE COLLEGE OF SOUTH AFRICA

The idea of founding a Catholic university in South Africa was first mooted in 1993 by a group of academics, clergy and business people. It culminated in the establishment of St Augustine College of South Africa in July 1999, when it was registered by the Minister of Education as a private higher education institution and started teaching students registered for the degree of Master of Philosophy and Doctor of Philosophy.

It is situated in Victory Park, Johannesburg and operates as a university offering values-based education to students of any faith or denomination, to develop leaders in Africa for Africa.

The name 'St Augustine' was chosen in order to indicate the African identity of the College since St Augustine of Hippo (354-430 A.D.) was one of the first great Christian scholars of Africa.

As a Catholic educational institution, St Augustine College is committed to making moral values the foundation and inspiration for all its teaching and research. In this way it offers a new and unique contribution to education, much needed in our South African society.

It aims to be a community that studies and teaches disciplines that are necessary for the true human development and flourishing of individuals and society in South Africa. The College's engagement with questions of values is in no sense sectarian or dogmatic but is both critical and creative. It will explore the African contribution to Christian thought and vice versa. Ethical values will underpin all its educational programmes in order to produce leaders who remain sensitive to current moral issues.

The college is committed to academic freedom, to uncompromisingly high standards and to ensuring that its graduates are recognised and valued anywhere in the world. Through the international network of Catholic universities and the rich tradition of Catholic tertiary education, St Augustine College has access to a wide pool of eminent academics, both locally and abroad, and wishes to share these riches for the common good of South Africa.

Author Guidelines

EDITORIAL POLICY

St Augustine Papers is a biannual multi-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary journal published by St Augustine College of South Africa. This academic journal publishes scholarly, refereed articles and book reviews in all the fields in which academic programmes are offered at the College, including Theology, Philosophy, Applied Ethics, Peace Studies, Education, Social Sciences and the Humanities in general. Interdisciplinary articles are especially welcome. All manuscripts submitted for review undergo a blind peer review process. Final publishing decisions are made by the Editorial Committee.

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PEER REVIEW PROCESS

All submissions to be considered for publication in the peer-reviewed section of *St Augustine Papers* will be subject to a blind peer review process, i.e. the reviewers will not know the identity of the author(s) and the author(s) will not know the identity of the reviewers (each article will be sent to at least one reviewer). Reviews are usually performed within one month. All other submissions to the journal (Editorial, book reviews, etc.) will be subject to review by the Editorial Committee.

PRESENTATION OF MANUSCRIPTS

Original research articles should be between 5000 and 9000 words in length in a particular field within or related to the focus and scope of the journal. Articles may be e-mailed to Dr Jakub Urbaniak at j.urbaniak@staugustine.ac.za using software that is compatible with MS Word. The first page of the manuscript should carry the proposed title and author's name with highest degree. Under the name, an identification line, giving title and position held, the institution and its location, should appear. Personal details and a short biography (maximum 100 words) should also be submitted. A brief abstract (no more than 150 words) should follow the author identification data.

NOTES

Notes should be numbered serially throughout the text by superscript numbers (without parentheses) to the right of any punctuation marks. The notes themselves should appear at the end of the manuscript but before the references, under the caption 'Notes'.

REFERENCES

The Harvard method should be used. All references should be specified in parentheses in the text (and in the text of notes) by surname(s) of the author(s), the year of the publication and page number(s), for example (Dworkin 1986:45-52) or (Solomon & Higgins 1996:157) or (Grant *et al.* 1976:58). 'Et al.' is to be used for three and more authors. The complete citation should appear at the end of the manuscript (after the notes, if any) under the caption 'References'. Such citations should be listed alphabetically by surname of author; for authors cited more than once, by year of publication, with the most recent references first. Please note the use of capital letters, punctuation marks and italics in the following examples:

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