Opinion Piece

African Research and Scholarship: Twenty Years of Lost Opportunities to Transform Higher Education in South Africa

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The past twenty years of our liberation have disappointed and failed African research and scholarship in South African higher education institutions. In this article I provide examples of how we have failed to transform the higher education sector.

The first example is drawn from two fieldwork studies I conducted at the Universities of Ghana, Legon and of Dar es Salaam on the subject of curriculum and content in higher education in Africa. At liberation, Kwame Nkrumah and Mwalimu Nyerere, founding Presidents of Ghana and Tanzania, respectively, were clear about what they wanted the role of the university and education to be in their independent countries. Nkrumah asked if the university would be permitted to proceed in its established pattern. And the answer for Nkrumah was a confident "No." A radical shift away from the courses and degree structure already established at the University of Ghana, Legon was required. The President of Ghana knew that the function of the university in the postcolonial period was to study the history, culture and institutions, languages, arts, and heritage of Ghana and of Africa in new African-centred ways, free from the proportions of the colonial era.

For Tanzania, "our first step," said Nyerere, "must be to re-educate ourselves; to regain our former attitude of mind"; he spoke "of the need for an African university to provide an "African-orientated education," an education aimed to meet "the present needs of Africa."[1]

The point I make with Ghana and Tanzania is that there was a bold commitment to radically change the direction of their education systems that was absent in South Africa at the time of our liberation in 1994. In Ghana and Tanzania, their presidents led the changes in curricula and content of their education systems and in their universities in a shift away from the colonial paradigms and toward reflecting their Africanness, as people, countries,

and continent. In South Africa, our founding President Rolihlahla Mandela did not make the fearless commitment for education to be liberatory and a priority area of national development. In an interview for the book, *Transformation in Higher Education: Global Pressures and Local Realities in South Africa*, Brian Figaji (former vice-chancellor of Peninsula Technikon) emphasised this weakness:

> I think the first problem was that the Minister of Finance and his colleagues didn't make a fundamental decision to pull South Africa up by its bootstraps through education. They never made that decision. They adopted a multi-pronged approach: education, health, housing, job creation; all those sorts of things. Now if you have a multi-pronged approach like that, you dilute all of them. There wasn't even a really significant public statement saying "we are going to focus on education for the next 10 years and get ourselves internationally competitive."[2]

The consequence was that the status quo of the colonial and apartheid education systems continued. The epistemology and theoretical underpinnings of the content and curriculum of our education in basic and higher education remained unchanged and unquestioned.

The second way in which South Africa failed to transform higher education was with the opportunity the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) presented. The TRC provided us with a chance to interrogate South African universities about the roles these institutions played in supporting and keeping apartheid alive. Almost all sectors of society appeared and made their submission to the TRC except the education sector. It was a miscarriage of justice that the TRC did not call on the universities to come before the commission and account. Education was probably the most brutal aspect of apartheid ideology; and through education, these institutions prohibited the African and black majority from studying; where they were permitted, they could only learn in certain fields intended to prepare them for servitude; and in other professions like engineering, "there was no space for the Bantu,"

to quote H. F. Verwoerd (Minister of Native Affairs at the time, and considered the "architect of apartheid").[3] This deafening

silence at the TRC made the universities think there was nothing wrong with the manner in which they ran their business; so they continued to operate their mission of teaching, learning, and researching in the same institutional environment. Whilst in the past twenty years since 1994 most of the country's institutions of higher education have changed leadership from white to black (African, Coloured, and Indian) vice-chancellors, at the centre of what these universities do—teaching, learning and researching—there have been no substantial paradigm shifts meant to bring about meaningful decolonisation of the curriculum and content. In that sense, the higher education sector in South Africa has failed African research and scholarship.

The third, fourth, and fifth examples of missed opportunities to transform the universities to nurture research and scholarship on Africa in meaningful ways have their genesis in the case of Archie Mafeje at the University of Cape Town (UCT) in 1968, which continued and worsened at the same institution in the 1990s, when Mafeje returned from exile; and in the two cases of Mahmood Mamdani and Malegapuru Makgoba, at UCT and Wits University respectively, in the 1990s. I will explain these lost opportunities to *de-Eurocentricize* curricula and adapt African research and scholarship in the higher education landscape with the "Triple-M Cases" of Mafeje, Mamdani, and Makgoba.

The Mafeje case is particularly significant and symbolic in the context of higher education in South Africa during the entire apartheid period, in that it took place at UCT, the oldest university in the country (founded in 1829). By supporting apartheid legislation as it related to Mafeje's proposed appointment in 1968, and not challenging the Minister of Education, Jan de Klerk, father of former President, F. W. de Klerk, this university entrenched and strengthened apartheid in higher education overall. If UCT had been supportive of Mafeje's appointment as a senior lecturer in the Department of Social Anthropology, it would have set the trend for universities nationwide to appoint black academics. So much for UCT's reputation as "Moscow on the Hill"; the university was so called as a result of its opposition to apartheid, in particular when apartheid obstructed academic freedom.

The choices that UCT made in the "Mafeje Affair" dealt a serious blow to African research and scholarship in South African academia. Having been shunned by an institution in his own

backyard—he was from Langa, outside Cape Town—Mafeje went on to the international arena of higher education, where he distinguished himself, first by obtaining a PhD in Anthropology and Rural Sociology from Cambridge University in 1966. In 1973, at the age of 34, he was appointed Professor of Anthropology and Sociology of Development at the Institute of Social Studies in The Hague by an Act of Parliament, and with the approval of all the Dutch universities, becoming the first African scholar to be so distinguished in the Netherlands. That appointment bestowed on him the honour of being a Queen Juliana Professor and one of her Lords. His name appears in the prestigious blue pages of the Dutch National Directorate. He was guest professor at universities and research institutions in Africa, Europe, and North America, and he authored many books, monographs, and journal articles. His critique of the concept of tribalism and his works on anthropology are widely cited as key reference materials. He also did pathbreaking work on the land and agrarian question in Africa.[4]

One of those choices that UCT made about Mafeje was the betrayal of the university's principles on academic freedom and university autonomy, particularly that "there was no law that stopped UCT from employing a black academic outside African languages."[5]

According to Professor Monica Wilson, head of the department of Social Anthropology and Mafeje's former supervisor and mentor, Mafeje, the African candidate, "was deemed to be the best candidate for the job."[6]

So when UCT chose not to appoint him, and deferred to De Klerk's statement that they must "fill the vacancy suitably with a white person," the institution was lowering its standards to fit the appointment of a white lecturer, even when "after full discussion," the Committee of Selectors, had resolved "that the unanimous recommendation of the Board of Electors that Mr. A. Mafeje be appointed, be upheld."[7] In a recent article on the subject of higher education, the vice-chancellor of UCT, Max Price, wrote about "not lowering the standards for appointment as or promotion to professor for non-whites," arguing that "this would reinforce racial stereotypes and set transformation back."[8] The question is, did Price forget about Mafeje in this reference to "racial stereotypes" and "lowering standards"?

In his inaugural address as the vice-chancellor of UCT in August 2008, Price shows that he did not forget Mafeje. First, he said, "it is a principle that was sorely tested during [the] Mafeje affair . . . and the University was found wanting and has expressed its regret for that."[9] But it is in his second reference to Mafeje that I quote him lengthily because he expresses, in my view, the past twenty years of our collective failure in advancing African research and scholarship in our higher education institutions:

> The Mafeje story reminds us that the greater offense against Professor Mafeje was committed by the university not as a result of apartheid controls, but in the 1990s, when the university failed to understand both the legacy of the apartheid culture within the institution and the need to address and redress it actively. That legacy still plagues UCT, and the University community has still inadequately tackled the need for attitude shifts, culture shifts, proactive redress, to ensure that black people and women feel at home here.
>
> Transformation requires a recognition of the weight of the past and its implications for an agenda of redress, including measures to ensure equality of opportunity and access and efforts to change organisational cultures to become more inclusive and tolerant; and a capacity to change the way people think—about our heritage, culture, values and sense of self. [10]

This is what happened in the 1990s, Professor Mafeje offered UCT a chance to address and redress its apartheid past and not appointing him in 1968, when he presented the university with the opportunity to appoint him. UCT's response to his reconciliatory gesture was to offer him a position at the level of senior lecturer—the same position that UCT had offered him in 1968. In his reply, Mafeje said that he found the offer "most demeaning."[11]

Even today it is overwhelming to think about UCT's answer to *Professor* Mafeje in the environment of President Mandela's national reconciliation, nation-building, and so-called "Rainbow Nation." To belabour this infuriating point, after eighteen years of being a professor internationally, Price's predecessors saw it as appropriate to offer Mafeje a position at the rank of senior lecturer. In the bigger picture of the policies of reconciliation and nation-building, what did this act of injustice by UCT say

to Mafeje, who embodied the capital treasure-trove of African research and scholarship amassed globally and which would have been brought to UCT by virtue of his presence?

Reconciliation is about forgiveness but the privileged white administrators at UCT could not even *come to forgive themselves* when Mafeje's story reminded them of the greater offense the university had committed against him. In addition, the appointment of Professor Mafeje, a distinguished international scholar, at UCT would have been a threat to the long-established university curricula, value system, and institutional culture based on Europe and Europeans as focal points of knowledge and knowledge production. The institution was not prepared to risk all that for the sake of reconciliation. The third point about reconciliation has been made many a time, but I reiterate it: reconciliation has benefitted whites far more than it has benefited Africans and black South Africans. The Mafeje example is a profound case that supports that point.

In the wake of its previous treatment of Mafeje, UCT, under its second black vice-chancellor, Njabulo Ndebele, in 2003, wanted Mafeje to accept an honorary doctorate at the university's graduation ceremony. It made no sense. UCT denies this distinguished scholar employment and then wants to offer him an honorary doctorate—for what? It is understandable that Mafeje did not even reply to the letters from UCT about accepting the honorary doctorate. "Mafeje felt the honorary doctorate was too little, too late and that it did not address broader political issues" of the 1968 decision by the UCT Council to withdraw his appointment and the treatment he received in the 1990s.[12]

In short, there was nothing transformative about UCT offering him an honorary doctorate. UCT saw fit to make an apology posthumously to Mafeje and his family after his death, acknowledging that it "has become clear that the University did not do nearly enough in the 1990s to make it possible for Professor Mafeje to return to UCT, and that this remained an obstacle to his reconciliation with his alma mater."[13]

The apology goes on to say that UCT:

> records therefore that significant opportunities were lost during the period of South Africa's transition to democracy to bring a very significant African scholar home to UCT. In this

> the University showed a serious lack of sensitivity, and it is a matter of profound regret that Professor Mafeje's life ended with these matters unresolved. The University now wishes to apologise to Professor Mafeje's family that it did not make a committed effort to secure a place for Professor Mafeje at UCT, and that it may even have acted in a way that prejudiced Prof. Mafeje a second time in the 1990's. UCT also reiterates its regret regarding the Council's decision under government pressure to withdraw the appointment as senior lecturer in 1968.[14]

In life Mafeje would have appreciated hearing UCT say about him that "significant opportunities were lost to bring *a very significant African scholar home to UCT*" (my emphasis).[15] Reconciliation aside, the treatment of Mafeje by UCT continues to shed light on this institution's—and by extension, other South African universities'—attitude towards higher education transformation today, particularly with the employment of South African black scholars—both eminent and emerging.

The Mahmood Mamdani case at UCT in 1997-98, when the eminent scholar newly appointed as AC Jordan Professor of African Studies and as director of the Centre of African Studies (CAS) at UCT was prevented by the university from teaching his proposed introductory course in the study of Africa, further demonstrates the wasted opportunities of South African academic institutions to cultivate and value African scholarship and its research in the post-1994 period. The fieldwork I did in Ghana and Tanzania was a comparative study with the Centre of African Studies (CAS) at UCT and the University of Fort Hare (UFH). Fort Hare had the Department of African Studies (DAS) from 1945, established by Professor Z. K. Matthews, who was its only Head of Department; Matthews resigned lin 1959 as Acting-Principal in protest of the *Bantu Education Act* legislation that eventually abolished the Department of African Studies and its curricula at Fort Hare.

It was this comparative research study of curriculum that took me to UCT in March 2011 to dig into the institutional archives and conduct interviews about Mamdani as the AC Jordan Chair in African Studies. Driving into the campus that Friday morning to meet with the CAS students and staff, I was greeted by the *Mail & Guardian* poster shown in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1. "Disestablishment of CAS" (picture by Neo Lekgotla *laga* Ramoupi)

In 2011 the students of CAS found themselves dealing with a university administration that had been discussing in secrecy their future in what became known as the "Disestablishment of CAS" at UCT. These African Studies students decided to be proactive; they organized themselves and established a forum called Concerned African Studies Students. For that entire year the activism of these students against the UCT administration to disestablish CAS became an inspirational and informative platform to

disseminate information about CAS among students, interested staff, and the public.

Amongst the professors, staff, and students that I interviewed at UCT was Lungisile Ntsebeza, professor of Sociology. At the time, Ntsebeza was head of the Faculty of Humanities' Task Team, which had been assigned to explore the way forward with regard to the operational and intellectual location of CAS at UCT in 2011. Ntsebeza's interview reminded me of Amilcar Cabral's *Return to the* Source *(*1973, *Selected Speeches of Amilcar Cabral*, New York: African Information Services); Ntsebeza indicated to me that the source of the current UCT predicament with CAS in 2011 was with the past case of Mafeje. He reasoned that had UCT addressed the Mafeje affair humanely in 1968 and in the early 1990s when Mafeje returned from exile, the Mamdani affair would not have happened. Simply put, the "Mamdani affair" occurred because UCT swept the Mafeje case under the carpet, as if he did not exist.

In 1993 Mafeje had applied for the AC Jordan Chair in African Studies at UCT and was viewed as a frontrunner for the position. In his letter, Mafeje had declared with justifiable confidence:

> I believe that I am eminently qualified for the post. Not only did I have the privilege of working with the late A.C. Jordan as a research student at the University of Cape Town and abroad but also I can claim that among African scholars specialised in African Studies I probably have the widest experience and recognition throughout the continent, including Arab-speaking Africa.[16]

After providing details of his achievements and extensive contacts with "pan-African and regional organisations," Mafeje concluded his letter on a personal note:

> It would . . . be a great pleasure for me to bring all this intellectual capital to the University of Cape Town (my alma mater) and in general to African studies in South Africa. To impart some of this knowledge to South African graduate students who have been isolated from the rest of Africa for so many years would be the greatest contribution I could make after thirty years in exile.[17]

Instead of appointing one of their own in Mafeje, UCT appointed a foreigner, Mamdani, the distinguished Ugandan African professor of Indian descent, who at the time was a visiting professor at the Center of International Studies at Princeton University, to the AC Jordan Chair in African Studies. There is a well-established tradition, especially of the formerly white universities in South Africa, to appoint foreign Africans or blacks just to tick the box for equity purposes, and also because these institutions know that the foreign staff, unlike black South Africans, will accept and not question the status quo. But UCT terribly miscalculated with the appointment of Mamdani, as it later became clear in Mamdani's thought-provoking work, "Is African Studies to be turned into a new home for Bantu education at UCT?".[18] UCT had avoided the intellectual powerhouse of African scholarship and research in Mafeje, only to confront another intellectual "lion" of African scholarship and research in Mamdani.

At the crux of the matter with Professor Mamdani was that in the context of the post-apartheid period when South Africa was under an African president—Mandela—and with a ruling party that is African—the African National Congress (ANC)—UCT was not willing to shed its antagonistic attitude towards African knowledge production, scholarship, and research that Mamdani was presenting in his "Introductory Course on Africa." Pedagogy and content were the bones of contention, and the main question was about "how to teach Africa in a post-apartheid academy." As Mamdani explains,

> Race is not absent from this issue, but . . . broadly it is a question about *curriculum transformation*, and about who should be making these decisions. Narrowly, *it is a question about how Africa is to be taught in a post-apartheid academy*. The curriculum transformation, re-teaching of Africa in post-apartheid university, and appointments of African and black professors are, and must be at the heart of institutions of higher learning in South Africa today. It is more urgent now after we have celebrated a decade of freedom.[19]

Today, twenty years later, the demands are the same.

The "Makgoba affair" at Wits University also took place in the 1990s, and Makgoba documented the experience in *Mokoko:*

The Makgoba Affair: A Reflection on Transformation (1997). This book describes the experiences of Professor Malegapuru Makgoba as Deputy Vice-Chancellor at Wits University. The case continues to show the pattern of higher education failing African research and scholarship in post-apartheid iSouth Africa. Makgoba writes:

> Wits must realize that the cultural ethos which apparently served the institution so well in the past must change to accommodate other cultural values. The *curricula* have to change fundamentally as the University comes to terms with the reality that *it is educating all South Africans in Africa. Africans in particular do not come to university to escape or erase the Africanness, but to confirm and articulate their roots.*[20]

Makgoba's emphasis on the curricula and his statement that "Africans in particular do not come to university to escape or erase the Africanness, but to confirm and articulate their roots" have stayed with me and are ingrained in my mind. Our higher education institutions have failed to grasp the implications of this statement. Take, for example, the continuing concerns about the use of official African languages in our basic and higher education. In twenty years we have only barked about—and not constructively responded to—this national urgency to make the African languages part of the curricula in our education system. This failure to implement African language policy in education disadvantages African research and scholarship because knowledge continues to be acknowledged only in the former colonial and apartheid languages—English and Afrikaans. In this status-quo scenario, the African and black pupils, students, teachers, lecturers, professors, and the African and black workforce leave their languages and cultures at the entrances of their schools, universities, and workplaces, only to collect them on their way out after school, lectures, and work; when Afrikaans and English languages and their cultures are part and parcel of the curricula, education, and the workplace in post-apartheid South Africa. Under these circumstances, social cohesion cannot be a practical exercise for the citizenry. Even the government recognises the implications of this two-decade postponement in African languages implementation; that is why President Jacob Zuma effected on May 2, 2013

and approved the Use of Official Languages Act, South African Language, 2012 (Act No. 12 of 2012).[21] The South African Parliament promulgated this legislation to regulate the use of official languages in government. Here again, the implementation of this Act and its policy remains South Africa's greatest problem, and it is a national challenge.

There have been some government measures to address the situation of African research and scholarship in higher education. Perhaps the most important was the November 2008 "Report of the Ministerial Committee on Transformation and Social Cohesion and the Elimination of Discrimination in Public Higher Education Institutions" by the Ministry of Education, led by Naledi Pandor.[22] The committee has also communicated these same redress concerns as characteristics that display a lack of genuine commitment from the academic institutions to change. The recommendations of the Soudien Report have never been effected, which is why in March 2014 the Council on Higher Education South Africa (HESA) presented them under the subtitle, "Epistemological Transformation: Critical Issue yet Poor Progress," with this statement:

> A key challenge at the heart of higher education transformation in South Africa is engaging effectively with the historical "legacies of intellectual colonisation and racialization" and patriarchy (Du Toit, 2000, 103). Du Toit argues "that the enemy" in the forms of colonial and racial discourses "has been within the gates all the time", and that are significant threats to the flowering of ideas and scholarship (ibid. 103). He links these discourses to institutional culture and academic freedom: cultures characterised by colonial and racial discourses endanger "empowering intellectual discourse communities" and "ongoing transformation of the institutional culture" is therefore a "necessary condition of academic freedom" (ibid.). Higher education transformation entails decolonizing, deracialising, demasculanising and degendering South African universities, and engaging with ontological and epistemological issues in all their complexity, including their implications for research, methodology, scholarship, learning and teaching, curriculum and pedagogy. It presents the challenge of creating institutional cultures that genuinely respect and appreciate difference and diversity—whether class, gender, national, linguistic, religious, sexual orientation, epistemological or methodological in nature —and creating spaces for the flowering of epistemologies,

> ontologies, theories, methodologies, objects and questions other than those that have long been hegemonic in intellectual and scholarly thought and writing. Thus, Mamdani argues that "the central question facing higher education in Africa today is what it means to teach the humanities and social sciences in the current historical context and, in particular, in the post-colonial African context" (Mamdani, 2011). Moreover, what does it mean to teach "in a location where the dominant intellectual paradigms are products not of Africa's own experience but of a particular Western experience" (Mamdani, 2011).[23]

This HESA Report was a presentation to the Portfolio Committee on Higher Education and Training, and further raises the following, which supports the arguments I make in this article:

> This highlights that questions of social exclusion and inclusion in South African higher education extend well beyond issues of access, opportunity and success. They also include issues of institutional and academic cultures, and largely ignored epistemological and ontological issues associated with learning and teaching, curriculum development and pedagogical practice. While there have been various changes related to curriculum, insufficient attention has been given to a number of key issues. These include: How have the dominant discourses that characterise the intellectual space of higher education developed and been reproduced historically? What are the implications of the dominant discourses for social inclusion and social justice in higher education, for the affirmation and promotion of human dignity and rights, social cohesion and respect for difference and diversity? What are the prevailing conceptions of epistemology and ontology and to what extent have these been or are being deracialised, degendered and decolonised. There is frequent reference to providing students with "epistemological access" rather than just physical access, but to which epistemologies? How do the dominant cultures of higher education affect student learning, progress and success and social equity and redress? Similarly, how do these dominant cultures also affect the development and retention of next generations of academics that must, in the light of historical and current inequalities, be increasingly women and black? Finally, how permeable is the currently constructed social space of higher education to a critical reflexivity, learning and innovation and institutional change? [24]

A serious point that needs to be made is that we are good at forming commissions and committees and drafting good policies, but we've been totally disappointing when it comes to their implementation. If we had responded to the concerns raised from the time of our liberation in 1994, or if we had learned from the educational examples of Ghana and Tanzania, the continuing public complaints and defensive arguments in our universities about the predominantly white professors and the lack of black professors would not be such a topical issue twenty years into our freedom. Here I want to illustrate with two current examples that make a mockery of this debate. First, if you go to the official Wits University webpage of a member of the History Department the faculty picture you see is of an African female, and in the Linkedin account of the same faculty member, the picture is, on face value, of a white female.[25] What is the hidden meaning or ulterior motive? Of the two pictures, which one is the picture of the faculty member at this university?

The second example comes from the latest newsletter of the Southern African Historical Association, October 2014. The newsletter lists twenty PhD and Masters students at the University of Free State (UFS) who are supported by Mellon and Oppenheimer Funding. While all of the students are from Africa, none is a black South African:[26]

Research Students (Thesis titles)

PhD

- Helen Garnett: "Knowledge Mobilization, Development and Planning Reform In Postcolonial Zambia."
- Musiwaro Ndakaripa: "State, Civil Society and the Politics of Economic Indigenisation in Zimbabwe, 1980 to 2015."
- Ivo Mhike: "'Deviance and Colonial Power' A History of Juvenile Delinquency in Zimbabwe, 1929-1979."
- Tinashe Nyamunda: "Financing Rebellion: The Rhodesian State and Fiscal Reconstruction, 1962-1979."
- Anusa Daimon: "'Mabhurandaya': Identity, Marginalization and Agency of the Malawian 'Diaspora' in Zimbabwe: 1953 to 2008."
- Abraham Mlombo: "South African and Rhodeisan relations, 1890-1980: Settler relations in an Africa Setting."

- Alfred Tembo: "The Impact of the Second World War on Northern Rhodesia (Zambia), 1939-1949."
- Noel Ndumeya: "Acquisition, Ownership and Use of Land in the South Eastern Highlands of Zimbabwe, 1939-1969."
- Kudakwashe Chitofiri: "Urban Protest, Citizenship and the City: The history of Residents Associations and African urban Representation in Harare, Zimbabwe."
- Adam Houldsworth: "The Nature of the Relationship between the National Party and Inkatha, 1979-1990."
- Cornelis Muller: "Policing the South African Republic: Crime, Law Enforcement and the Judiciary, 1886-1899."
- Kundai Manamere: "African Experiences with Malaria In The South Eastern Lowveld of Zimbabwe, 1920- 2011."
- Lazlo Passemiers: "South Africa and the 'Crisis' During Congo's First Republic, 1960-65."

Masters

- Victor Gwande: "Foreign Capital, State and the Development of Secondary Industry in Southern Rhodesia, 1939-1956."
- George Bishi: "Archives, Governance and Chieftainships: Changes in the Interpretation of Archives with Special Reference to Chieftainship Conflicts in Zimbabwe, 1935 to 2014."
- Unaludo Sechele: "A History of Marriage and Citizenship: Kalanga women's experiences in Post-Colonial Botswana until 2005."
- Joyline Takudzwa Kufandirori: "Fast Track Land Reform in Matepatepa Commercial Farming Area, Bindura District, Zimbabwe: Effects on Commercial Farm Workers, 2000-2010."
- Buzandi Mufinda: "A History of Mining in Broken Hill (Kabwe), 1902-1929."

This list represents more or less the nationalities that are in the PhD and MA graduate programs in the South African universities, especially in the former white institutions, and this has implications for which Africans and blacks get to be employed as faculty in these universities. Don't tell me that there is *nothing sinister about [the] paucity of black South African professors* in our academy! Further research is required to audit the number of MA and PhD graduates in the South African universities produced in the past twenty years, and then to trace how many were employed as faculty in these institutions or other South African universities

to address the institutional transformation that every university seems to have in its strategic and annual plan documents. Additional research could identify the rationales for those graduates that the universities let go after awarding them PhD degrees, especially in the case of African and black South Africans. This will help the higher education sector to demystify the claim that there are no black South Africans who hold PhD degrees!

I want to conclude this critique of the efforts in last twenty years to transform the higher education landscape in South Africa on a note of optimism. The newly established National Institute for the Humanities and Social Sciences (NIHSS) was created precisely to address and advance African research and scholarship in the universities.[27] It arises out of the recommendations of the "Charter for Humanities and Social Sciences, Final Report", June 30, 2011, that the Minister of Higher Education and Training, Dr Blade Nzimande, had commissioned.[28] NIHSS was formally constituted as an independent entity in December 2013 after a consultative process, and should be fully operational by January 2015. One of its aims that I see favourably speaking to the concerns that I raise is to "define a post-apartheid trajectory of scholarship."[29] In my view, this is the intellectual challenge for higher education in South Africa, and particularly for an African scholarship that the academic institutions failed to cultivate *meaningfully* in the first twenty years of our freedom. That scholarship should be one that embraces both African and Pan-Africanist theories and frameworks—because the Eurocentric pedagogy permeates our scholarship and research already. Throughout the entire modern era, specifically the past hundred years that began with the creation of the Union of South Africa in 1910 and continued to 1994, writings with original African and pan-African perspectives were downgraded to advance Eurocentric paradigms and knowledge. This remains the critical challenge of defining a postapartheid trajectory of scholarship and research.

Dedication:
Ridwan "Ridwan Laher Nytagodien" Laher, PhD (1964-2014)

Endnotes

[1] Neo Lekgotla *laga* Ramoupi, "Deconstructing Eurocentric Education: A Comparative Study of Teaching Africa-centred Curriculum at the University of Cape Town and the University of Ghana, Legon," *Postamble*, 7:2, 2012.

[2] Brian Figaji interviewed by Richard Fehnel, May 2001, http://chet.org.za/files/FEHNEL%202001%20Figaji%20interview.pdf, accessed December 10, 2014.

[3] Quoted by Peter Kallaway, and cited by the Michigan State University "South Africa: Overcoming Apartheid Building Democracy" website for educators, http://overcomingapartheid.msu.edu/sidebar.php?id=65-258-2, accessed December 10, 2014.

[4] See *Archie Mafeje: A Tribute* (CODESRIA, July 2007), Archie Mafeje - codesria. Accessed December 10, 2014.

[5] Lungisile Ntsebeza, "The Mafeje and the UCT saga; unfinished business?," *Social Dynamics*, 40:2, 2014, pp. 276.

[6] Ibid., p. 275.

[7] "Lessons of the Mafeje Affair," Official Program of the UCT symposium to mark 40 years since UCT appointed and then withdrew the appointment of Professor Archie Mafeje, August 18, 2008, https://www.uct.ac.za/downloads/uct.ac.za/about/management/vcinstallation/Mafeje_brochure.pdf, accessed December 9, 2014.

[8] Max Price, "Nothing sinister about paucity of black professors at UCT," *Sunday Times*, July 13, 2014).

[9] "Installation Address by Dr. Max Price, University of Cape Town, August 19, 2008", https://www.uct.ac.za/downloads/uct.ac.za/about/management/vcinstallation/installation_address.pdf, accessed December 10, 2014.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Ntsebeza, "The Mafeje and the UCT saga", p. 280.

[12] Ibid., p. 283.

[13] Ibid., p. 285.

[14] Ibid..

[15] Ibid..

[16] Ibid., p. 281.

[17] Ibid..

[18] April 22, 1998, http://www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/30/136.html, accessed December 10, 2014.

[19] Mamdani, "Is African Studies to be turned into a new home for Bantu education at UCT?", http://www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/30/136.html, accessed December 10, 2014.

[20] *Mokoko: The Makgoba Affair: A Reflection on Transformation*, pp. 76-77; my emphasis.

[21] For the full text of the Act see http://www.pmg.org.za/node/47764, accessed December 10, 2014.

[22] The full text of the report, known as the Soudien Report, is available at http://www.polity.org.za/article/report-of-the-ministerial-committee-on-transformation-and-social-cohesion-and-the-elimination-of-discrimination-in-public-higher-education-institutions-june-2009-2009-06-11, accessed December 10, 2014.

[23] See the "South African Higher Education in the 20th Year of Democracy: Context, Achievements and Key Challenges, Presentation to the Portfolio Committee on Higher Education and Training, Cape Town, March 5, 2014", http://www.hesa.org.za/sites/hesa.org.za/files/HESA_Portfolio%20Committee%20Presentation_5%20March%202014_Final.pdf, p.7, accessed December 10, 2014. The references to Mamdani, 2011 in the report are to Mamdani, "Africa's post-colonial scourge", *Mail & Guardian*, May 27, 2011, http://mg.co.za/article/2011-05-27-africas-postcolonial-scourge, accessed December 10, 2014.

[24] Ibid., *HESA Report*, pp. 7-8.

[25] For the Wits Department of History official web page see http://www.wits.ac.za/staff/maria.suriano.htm; for the Linkedin web page see https://za.linkedin.com/pub/maria-suriano/6b/706/697, both accessed December 10, 2014.

[26] *Southern Africa Historical Society Newsletter*, Issue 8, October 2014, p. 13

[27] See the website of the National Institute for the Humanities and Social Sciences, http://www.hssi.org.za/keywords/nihss, accessed December 10, 2014.

[28] Department of Higher Education and Training, "Report Commissioned by the Department of Higher Education and Training for the Charter for Humanities and Social Sciences, Final Report, June 30, 2011".

[29] Ibid., p. 24.