

Decolonizing the knowledge linkages between Africa and the rest of the world

Panel B08 at the Africa Knows conference

10 December 2020

Convenors :

- Nkululeko Mabandla- University of Cape Town.
- Mayke Kaag- African Studies Centre Leiden.

Contributors (in order of presentation) :

1. Nkululeko Mabandla, University of Cape Town: He is a researcher associated at the Centre for African Studies, a lecturer at the Department of Sociology, and a doctoral fellow at the Institute for Humanities in Africa.
2. Paula Vermue, University of Amsterdam : MSc Junior Teacher, Research Assistant & Tutor Amsterdam.
3. Louise Muller, Leiden University: She is a university Lecturer in African Literature and Media at the Department of African Languages and Cultures, LUCAS, Leiden University Centre for Arts in Society. She studied Philosophy, World History and African Studies with a focus on literature, religion, media, politics and issues of gender.
4. Thando Njovane , Rhodes University. She is a Lecturer in the Department of Literary Studies in English at Rhodes University, where she teaches Early Modern, Modern and Postcolonial literatures.
5. Winnie Cherotich Ngeno: Senior Program Officer in PAL (People's Action for Learning) Network, Kenya. She is responsible for supporting growth and ensuring the smooth functioning of the PAL network as a whole, and supports the assessment for action strand.
Virginia Ngindiru: Program Manager in Zizi Afrique Kenya. She is the program manager at the Accelerated Learning Program. She is in charge of planning, budget management, program reporting and advocacy monitoring.
6. Moses Mwangi, South Eastern Kenya University. He is currently the Chairman of the Department of Hydrology and Water Resources Management in the South Eastern Kenya University (SEKU). He also performs in the capacity of the

National Consultant on Water for the Inter-Governmental Authority on Drought (IGAD).

Papers presented:

Title: Decolonization in a mobile world: Resurgent social movements, radical traditions, and the space of decolonial ethics.

Name: Nkululeko Mabandla

Title: “We have nothing to celebrate”. At the interplay of de-politicizing and re-politicizing processes in the feminist civil society space in the fight against gender-based violence in Cape Town.

Name: Paula Vermue.

Title: Towards an African epistemology in African Studies.

Name: Louise Muller

Title: Rethinking Trauma Theory through African Fiction.

Name: Thando Njovane

Title: Adaptation of solutions from South Asia: Experiences of improving learning outcomes in Africa.

Name: Winny Cherotich Ngeno, and Virginia Ngindiru

Title: Vanishing knowledge in water resources development and management in the arid and semiarid lands (ASALs) Kenya.

Name: Moses Mwangi

Abstract of the panel:

The panel was a diversified one dealing with different domains, starting with social movements in Cape Town and how the radical tradition continues, and how social movements negotiate the space in terms of its decolonization and across (post)-colonial borders. Likewise, an example of de-politicizing and re-politicizing processes is shown through the feminist social experience and their fight against gender-based violence and femicide in Cape Town in

the second paper. The next paper dealt with the crossing of African Cinema and African Intercultural Philosophy. The fourth paper suggested to decolonize Trauma Theory, and to reconsider it by including unofficial modes of theorizing. The next paper was about the TARL program which focused on how to teach children literacy and numeracy. Last but not least, the final paper concerned the indigenous vanishing knowledge in water resources development and management.

The discussion:

1. The first part of the discussion dealt with the two first papers of Nkululeko Mabandla and Paula Vermue about activist movements. The participants spoke how we need to deal with :
 - New humanism, “ The new humanity cannot do otherwise than define a new humanism for itself and for others” Fanon 1967:198
 - Tracing the long archeology of a decolonial ethic.
 - How to define a full sense of being/belonging.
 - How we need to speak about “decolonization of the decolonization”, as suggested by Nkululeko Mabandla, as we have too much talk about this subject.
2. The second part of the discussion was mainly about violence in films and the question of whether this generates a violent behavior among children. This question posed by Tony Dietz to Thando Njovane. She responded that she does not have an accurate response since it does not enter in her field of knowledge, but she does not think so. Other participants also intervened giving their point of view on the matter. Finally, Tony Dietz admitted that he agreed that “there is not a direct link from (violent) media to (violent) behavior, but it is a valid research question to find out how violence and domination is part of media production (or not), and how it has an impact on what is seen as ‘normal’”.
3. Afterwards, the discussion turned to the TARL method (Teaching at the Right Level) and if a local language or English was used in teaching the small children, question asked by Nkululeko Mabandla. He was responded by Virginia Ngindiru that English language is introduced, but most importantly, they work on how to include social knowledge in formal education.
4. Finally, Moses Mwangi was asked if the local knowledge is used actually in the management of arid and semi-arid lands, his answer was “it’s unfortunately missing even in the environments where they are most needed due to economic and water

poverty. In Kenyan water policies on development and management, again, this knowledge is largely not appreciated”.