

Editorial

Encounters with obstacles to the creation of Southern Epistemologies

Attempting to disrupt dominant configurations of ways of knowing and being requires the mobilisation of tremendous resources. In the absence of such, tremendous will power and resourcefulness are required. Privilege and resources are a taken-for-granted absence in the armoury of those who challenge orthodoxy and hegemony. Consequently, we have been confronted with a significant staff turnover, have experienced some difficulty receiving the required number of quality articles, and finding the right spaces for exposure in order to optimize the visibility of the journal has been somewhat of a challenge.

The establishment of the Journal of Critical Southern Studies is in itself an act of resistance: a means to confront social injustice and global inequality. We knew from the onset that it would be a challenge, but one we still feel committed to taking head on. In understanding our present height, we urge our readers to imagine the starting point from which we are emerging. In this third overdue issue, we present a range of complexities confronting epistemologies of the South. Each article offers the excellence we seek for this journal, and in that excellence, the promise of epistemological alternatives and the call to counter-hegemonic views and actions.

In the first paper, Eshun, Zakaria and Segbefia explore methodological choices and traditions in tourism research in Ghana through a selected study of lecturers and undergraduates from the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology. The authors expose tensions related to methodological complexities, situatedness and positionality, arguing for a shift from “neo-positivism to considering alternative methodological approaches that promote sustainable development” in Ghana, in particular, and Africa, in general.

In the second paper, Manful et al. delve into the challenges of the Ghana School Feeding Programme as a social intervention strategy to retain pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds in education and its attendant challenges. Drawing on data from six beneficiary and non-beneficiary schools in Sekyere Kuumawu District in the Ashanti Region, they present an analysis of the gains, contradictions and challenges of the School Feeding Programme, questioning its implementation as an instrument that is there to equalise inequality, but at the same time generating inequalities in its identification of pupils.

Following from there, Madzokere and Machingura invite the reader to consider the criteria used to judge true and false prophets/esses in the light of current miracles in Zimbabwe in order to make a distinction between the two. Drawing from biblical knowledge and times in the Ancient Near East, Palestine and during Jesus’ time,

contextualised in contemporary Zimbabwe, the authors critically analyse claims of prophethood. Considering the performance of miracles as a manifestation of one of many controversially set criteria to pass the test of prophethood, the authors consider the upsurge of prophets, used openly as titles in contemporary Zimbabwe.

Spangler moves away from the African continent to examine, in a complex analysis, the work of 19th Century Cuban poet, Jose Marti, in relation to Cuba's political and poetic redemption. Drawing from the intersection of poetry and politics, as well as the nexus of Cuba, Spain and the United States, the author positions patria, as espoused in Marti's work, as ultimate sacrifice. Exploring colonialism, imperialism, mortality, liberation and many other interrelated themes through his life and writings, the author concludes that Jose Marti has written himself "into the sacred mythologies of the Bible and takes upon himself the bitter cross that transforms him from victimized martyr to selfless saviour for Cuba."

In the last paper of this issue, Swanson stretches our normality through her onto-epistemology of conscience, imbued by radical hope through the Southern/alternative epistemology and African indigenous thought of Ubuntu. The author postulates Ubuntu as "an ontological relationality of the human condition that brings into play both the courage of hope and the hope of a more fully human existence". Drawing on an incident she witnessed in September 2015 in Hungary relating to the Middle Eastern refugee crisis and the treatment of refugees and migrants in the European Union, Swanson, drawing on Ubuntu philosophy, argues against the potential loss of our humanity in the "globally-legitimised vulnerability and dehumanisation" faced by the Middle Eastern refugees, to one that is premised on an Ubuntu-inspired onto-epistemology of conscience.

In conclusion, the central theme that holds this issue together is that of the various configurations of otherness. It therefore holds the opportunity to grapple with counter-orthodoxy views, to confront other ways of knowing and being, and other logics than those dominantly held.

The editorial team would also want to put on record the pioneering roles Dr Abou Jeng, Dr Baaba Jallow and Sam Bamkin played in conceptualising and operationalising this journal. We are confident that without their pivotal involvement during our embryonic stages, this journal will not exist in its current form. We salute you and hope that we can continue to call on you where needed.