

Epistemology, African Scholarship in Human and Social Sciences and demands from African Societies

Bila-Isia Inogwabini*

Inter-Disciplinary Ethics Applied CETL, University of Leeds 8-12 Fenton, Street Leeds LS2 9JT, England, UK

*Corresponding author: Bila-Isia Inogwabini, Inter-Disciplinary Ethics Applied CETL, University of Leeds 8-12 Fenton, Street Leeds LS2 9JT, England, UK, Tel: +44 (0)113 34 38269; E-mail: ea13bii@leeds.ac.uk; bi4@kentforlife.net

Rec Date: April 23, 2016; Acc Date: December 24, 2017; Pub Date: December 29, 2017

Copyright: © 2017 Inogwabini BI. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.

Abstract

This paper is a re-assesses anthropological methods and frames broad epistemological question on knowledge production and distribution. Sampling published materials, it argues that the fundamental question African scholarship faces in the African Studies is the recourse to an outdated epistemology of comparative methods meant to serve the western views of otherness. Using Anthropological Hermeneutics would help lighten problems of comparison and lead other forms of knowledge. With that background and questioning the fundamentals of the intellectual property right, the paper concludes that knowledge is to be a public good, paid by society and should be accessible to all.

Keywords: Epistemological; Anthropological; Hermeneutics; Fundamentals; Society

Introduction

This work re-assesses some of the significant anthropological methods before framing broad epistemological questions on knowledge production and distribution processes. It uses that broad epistemological background to conduct a case study to substantiate emerging general patterns in knowledge creation and distribution. The work asks such major questions as how knowledge has been (and is still) acquired on and in African societies, what principles are at work in the development and accumulation of rational inquiry about African societies and where the acquired knowledge is stored and how it does go back and for what purposes the distribution on that knowledge does serve. As an epistemological inquiry into the question of the purpose of knowledge acquisition, the processes of its acquisition and sharing and its storage media, the work purposely took an historical perspective. I looked at the institutional framework in the production of knowledge looking at the recent history of the Central African Region. Central to this query was the question of methods, including the background of scholars, the language of research, which all influence the nature of data. This query was most needed in the case of African cultures, whose records have been stored in different oral forms. The other focal theme of this work was a review of the African studies as a form of an organized field of academic study [1]. I strove to come up with current trends in African Studies in Central Africa and what potential future outlooks seem to emerge given the process of acquiring knowledge and the on-going academic research in the continent. I also discussed the issue of the privilege to possess scientific knowledge, particularly the area where centers of knowledge production do not necessarily coincide with centers where the knowledge is stored and used. Addressing this particularly acute question led me to explore the myth of written records, which is at the heart of the debate over the intellectual property rights, open-access to collective knowledge and the question that Feyerabend [2], rightly though using a strong image, and called poaching of non-western knowledge by western researchers.

Questions and Methods

The first question I had to deal with an obvious one yet still probably the most critical one too since it is about the methods that are used in the African Studies. *Why work on research methods?* A simple answer to this question is that many people think, partly rightly, that the validity of the methods justifies the validity of the results. Sound results are conditional of sound research methods. This straightforward conditionality requests to question the legitimacy of the approaches adopted to reach sensible conclusions. Seen from this perspective, the methodology should be questioned perpetually rather than being an *a priori* casted-in-stone fix: methods should be constantly evaluated. Methods should not be used mechanistically since they have to be evaluated constantly and since each method also has its own limits. The above limits apply on different materials of inquiry but are more often so when dealing with unwritten records, unwritten form of knowledge. African cultural records have been stored in different oral forms. Clearly, the request to question methodology alongside the research deployment is of paramount value in the area of cultural and historical anthropology as applied in the context of oral cultures; and the process has been on-going for several decades now [3]. As MacMynowski [4] says, each method has a differential power associated with it; and rigidity, which is often confused with rigor, claims the power of infallibility of its approaches and, consequently the immovability of 'discoveries' they are supposed to lead to. Rigid mechanistic approaches, which are in play in academic research on African cultures, have several limitations. Rigid mechanistic approaches have serious drawbacks and miss important tracks of knowledge in the framework of oral traditions, which has been prevalent in Central Africa for centuries. The salvation from the fallacy of hardcore science is to be found in the inter-disciplinary approached. Inter-disciplinarity is far from 'forcing' evidence on facts and consists mainly on the epistemological question to understand the limits of each method and when it is appropriate to cross from a given model to another [5]. It is a recognition of the epistemological pluralism, which

recognizes that, in any given research context, there may be several valuable ways of knowing, and that accommodating this plurality can lead to more successful integrated study [6].

This is the first area I examined, using a sample of published materials and knowledge acquired on Central African societies. Data are always the materials on which any research is based on. The quality of the data dictates the results but different approaches can work on similar data and come up with different results. This has been often a particular case for the collection of data from oral tradition cultures. It is almost redundant to say that there are several problems with the anthropological methods in collecting data from African communities, involving several orders of things. I went through a detailed re-reading of the following issues, using the compilation of existing published and non-peered reviewed materials. I identified the human element in the researcher (the data collector), which is subjective by essence, on the data collection. Based on Turnbull [7] admission that each anthropologist brings on the work table his entire social personality from which he can never entirely divorce, as being one of the keys to understanding current trends in research in the African Studies. Hence, in this paper I tried to show the potential impacts of human element of the researchers on the results of their anthropological queries. This discussion led to questions such as participative observation, remote external observation, research for exotics, proselytizing lyricism, minimum needed margin between the researcher and the society [8], effects of the concept of civilization mission on the research, effects of Negritude [9] on research and philosophizing in Africa [10].

I also discussed the languages of the research in Africa. Since Herodotus, writing on and about Africa is done in Arabic, English, French, German, and Portuguese. These languages are foreigner languages to Africa. As Mafuta [11] rightly says, this poses a problem of the objectivity and the '*objectification*' of translation from the local languages to the communication languages. Translating African words in French, English or Portuguese is often done by a cohort of the descriptors and vice versa [8]. As a consequence, African narratives often lose in their richness, nuances and meanings during the process of translating. My research identified effects of this translation problem in transposable concepts, idioms and ideas in the process of the creation and acquisition knowledge on and in African cultures as the second most important key to unlock the understanding we possess of the African cultures today. As a consequence, the study reflected on the loyalty of translating from one language to another and the meaning and power of literary translation, the 'obligation of being loyal' and consequences of the obsession for objectivity [7] and that of mathematizing everything [12] in framing the global knowledge. This part will end by an inquiry on the nature of data, whether collected directly by the researcher (firsthand data) or data mined from previous studies (Secondhand data). I reviewed the relevance of the firsthand data and secondhand data in relationship with the problems posed by the human element of the researchers, transposability of concepts, idioms and ideas, the loyalty of translating from one language to another, the power of literary translation, the obsession for objectivity or the internal pulse to mathematize everything. In this section, I also assessed ideas such as cultural charlatanism and current knowledge fragmentation on African traditions [11].

Trying to make a compared assessment of the practice of African Studies, I also explored the production of knowledge on Africa and knowledge its distribution. My first aim here was to show the limitations of traditional comparative methods. My second aim was to

show the effects of the politics and policies of doing research on such a wide subject as Africa. To state the obvious, though somehow resembling itself globally in many instances, Africa is diverse in many ways too. As such, it is expected to be different in ways in which knowledge is created and shared by different cultural units. In trying to show this, I went through the history of knowledge in Africa to identify historical epistemological elements that demonstrate that the long history African history of knowledge has been that of the battle ground many hegemonies [13].

In doing the above, I tried to address the dear idea of decentralizing the powers around the rights to knowledge for all communities. To formulate a global scientific praxis to ignite the emergence of different thinking pathways leads not only to the problem of the comparative method but also to the crucial issue of sharing the thinking skills. I analyzed the concept of comparing and establishing ratios between quantities and/or testing for convergence of infinite series. The ratios introduce, inevitably the concepts of inferiority, equality or superiority. Similarly, in human and social sciences, comparison often is a search for constants. As such comparing looks at resemblance, inclusion (exclusion), compatibility (incompatibility) between different societies. Comparative approaches, therefore, begin with pre-established idea (taken-for-granted evidences), which might reveal to be unproductive as a scientific method for the research in human sciences [14]. I searched for areas of incommensurability [15-17] in comparative African Studies, with the idea that these areas should be seen as areas of inquiry in their own right. I went through literature and identified strengths and drawbacks of traditional comparison, methodical comparison [7], Keywords and key-concepts approaches [18] and endogenous comparison [14].

The question on the intellectual property rights was discussed but in tandem with the mechanisms of re-sharing acquired knowledge with communities that are currently in desperate need to access to the global wealth of knowledge that is stored in the western hemisphere. This was done in the spirit of searching for solutions to the poaching of non-western knowledge [2], though the discussion should also include the fact that many oral tradition treasuries are menaced by modern civilization [19] and will be washed away from the mainstream scientific inquiries in the near future. This analysis strove to identify ways to restore the rights of those who were denied their original contributions to the formulation and acquisition of the current global knowledge. The implications on the current debates over the intellectual property rights are broad and should be inserted in the framework of the globalization, which should be used as a means to achieve greater Humanity for all. My aim in the section on the intellectual property and oral knowledge was to frame broad epistemological process of knowledge production in Africa. I endeavored to use a broad epistemological background to discuss the myth of written records and the question for intellectual property rights (or open-access to collective knowledge) that are of serious implications for the knowledge basis for the modern African society.

Humans, Language and Data: Materials that Obviously Shape the Perspectives on Acquired Knowledge

To shape the materials on which one wants to work is the beginning point of any study that claims some seriousness. As a key for the rest of the enterprise, the collection of the data is most commonly the very origin of erroneous results. In fact, based on bad-established data it is almost impossible to reach a satisfying result, unless one proceeds by a scientific doping during the elaboration of hypotheses and theses. In

which case, one would have done nothing since a work done through forcing supposes a simple legitimization of pre-obtained results. These results are not necessarily bad or wrong since they can be obtained from the experience or from the intuition. The only problem with this is that these two methods of access to the 'truth' are not of the domain of science.

One of the fundamental problems that sciences and more particularly social sciences do encounter is the *human element* of the researcher himself, a subject by essence very subjective and subsequently difficult, if not impossible, to *objectivize* in the strong sense of the term. In fact, the collector of the data can wish to be *participative* (insider) or outsider [20]; an element which wills to be an integral part of the system that (s)he wants to scrutinize or an indolent assistant who wills only to see without giving more attention to the dimensions of the phenomena that (s)he observes. As Turnbull [7] did underline the case, each anthropologist brings on the work table his entire social personality from which he can never entirely divorce. In the first case of one person willing to be *participative*, the risk is to slide into a dithyrambic narrative which can cause damages on the methodological rigor, by emphasizing in a manner that would be naively congratulating the strong points or at least the positive aspects of the society he is studying. This is, to illustrate, very often the case with the autochthonous researchers, who otherwise legitimately, willing to valorize their cultural heritage, slide into personal reflections and force people to accept them as 'evidences' or the 'truths'. Can also be put into this category, the 'exotic researchers' who, using a proselytizing lyricism, are in the quest of sensational truths on the subjects they believe are taboos, mystical in Africa, as an exotic land or a heart of darkness on which they want to shed the light of science to try to explain the basis of life.

In the second case of someone who is a true outsider the risk is that by forcing himself to stand outside, he does not see what is going inside, becoming by that very fact a true *outsider* who does not have any grasp of any reality - even the most apparent ones - for a good understanding of the subject of his quest. It is true that a certain distance is absolutely indispensable in doing research. However, the laconic admonition that 'you can see well only by standing outside the system' is not sufficient in itself; it has to be completed by the reality that being too far too is not the best option. Of course, the distance between the researcher and the reality is a guaranty of objectivity but it should not be justified by purely ideological prejudices. Indeed, there are many ideological prejudices that often led to disdain. True too: disdain causes equal damage on the methodological rigor as total immersion in societies being studied. Many pre-colonial and colonial writings on Africa were largely written under the guise of outsiders who had very little internal astuteness of the societies. This type of writings has major gaps that would need being filled. Some other writings even need simply to be corrected. But the origins of both can be tracked back to wide margins between the desk-researchers and studied African communities. Examples of this type of would include the work of such leading thinkers as Hegel [21]. It is a fact that a margin always exists between the researchers' own ideas and the realities of the societies being studied [8], which reveals personal inclinations. That permanent margin between ideas and ideals of the researcher and the real society can be logically seen as a reflective image of the background, school of thought and era. Viewed through these lenses, the pre-colonial European writing can be easily understood by way of evoking the philosophical mindsets of civilization mission; they had to look for primitivism, backwardness, darkness etc. of the Africans in most of what they had to produce.

Using the same lenses would also allow to understand that the 1960s-African intellectuals, deconstructing [20] the colonial thesis that Africa had no history before the coming of the white men [22], took emboldened themes affirming the black identity through such movements as Negritude for Senghor, Damas and Césaire [23], African Consciencism for Nkrumah, African Socialism for Nyerere, Authenticity for Mobutu [24], etc. Quite understandably, some of that bulk of collective works has led into the eulogium of the heavenly African past, which was thought to be completely destroyed by the inopportune incursion by the Europeans. Of course, logically, using this argument through its end, the opposite claim has been often that all that was European was diabolic. One only can think of 'the reason is *Hellenic*, and the poetry is African' of Senghor. It is not very clear what Senghor meant by poetry but it fair to think that he meant feeling emotional was the African way of reasoning, a position that is difficult to defend today. Of course, ideology too was blatant here and, sometimes blurred the lines between genuine scholarship and a political discourse aimed at positioning *Africans* [22]. Briefly, the notion of the background, which is composed of three important elements consisting of the socialization process, education philosophy and the era, underlay all the glitches of comparative methods between different societies. Seen from this angle, it would be safe to conclude with Djelo [9] that comparison is more than often colored with unilateral observations.

Languages: Translating Masks Critical Knowledge Components

There is no need to recall here that the languages we use to write about Africa (German, English, French, Portuguese or even Arabic) are foreigner languages to Africa. There is thus the problem of the objective translation from the local dialect into the languages we have adopted to communicate with the universal community. This problem is classical and pivotal one for the research in human sciences in Africa. As Langley [8] elegantly stipulated this problem as: it is very often very difficult to translate in one French word the descriptors of African languages. Things are the same whether the language is English or Portuguese and it the inverse process is equally difficult. One knows how cumbersome it can be to translate from French to English and vice-versa; these two languages are both from the Western culture. So, the question that comes to the mind is: how do people deal with the problem of translating?

The first attempt of solution is made by the people who try to escape this problem by learning themselves the local language of the society they want to study in order to have a good grasp of locutions, expressions and concepts to translate. This is what I would call the missionary approach; it has been practiced by the early missionaries and other father of the African Studies. This approach has produced a fairly good number of the written monuments on Africa. However, this approach raises several questions, including the general question of the necessary time to master a new language [25] and the question the *transposability* of concepts [8]. The *transposability* issue is often thought to be circumvented by forcefully seeking the equivalent of European concepts in African languages and, if not found (which is often the case), Africanizing these European concepts.

The second attempt for solving this problem has been to incorporate in their research team's batteries of research assistants, comprised of the native Africans, often from societies they want to study. They believe, quite logically, that these native-interpreter informants [3] have a good command of the local languages of communities from

which they originate and might possess extended knowledge and many other key cultural resources of their societies. This pathway to knowledge raises the question of the real knowledge possessed by the native elite of their own local languages. It is not rare to be in front of an African intellectual claiming to be of one tribe without knowing even the rudimentary stereotype expressions of that tribe, including simple expressions such as greeting ones. The process of the urbanization, the globalization and the mass media culture have not been only opening Africans to the universal culture but also catalyzing massive losses of important part of their millenary cultures. Hence, Feyerabend [2] was right in alerting us that in the process of globalization poaching of everything which non-western is a norm. Precious cultural values are being slaughtered by the lethal knives of the globalization's distillation, among which diversity of local languages that are disappearing within the major agglomerations such as Dakar, Kampala, Kinshasa, Lagos, etc. Indeed, for those who live in these megalopolises, belonging to a tribe (or an ethnical group) is now more and more a question of the origins of one's parents (a biological link) but less and a question cultural heritage; much less that of linguistic affiliation. This is a new phenomenon to which only slight attention has been devoted when people talk about tribalism in Africa. Once more, one is said of tribe X not because he practices the language of tribe X nor because he knows the significance of some cultural rites of tribe X nor even because he feels expressively of tribe X but more because his parents were of that tribe X.

The other fundamental question this raises is that of the mastery by the Africans of the languages of the work (French, English, Portuguese, etc.). Indeed, the hybridization of cultures that has been happening in Africa through the education process also means that many people do not possess the command of French, English or Portuguese; they have intermediary languages and often are not necessary the best in their newly acquired languages. The emergence of intermediary slangs and languages is a fact; it shows that languages are not pieces of archeological stones, but they are enriched and evolve as they move outside of their origins. But as instruments of research, that evolution comes with the problems of a sufficient mastery of the language of work.

Both methods clearly lead to a language gap between the researcher and the communities due to the linguistic gaps between the younger generations and the community ageing leadership and between the younger generations and the western cultures they try to emulate. Community leaderships (cultural depositories) believe that younger (the native intellectuals) generations increasingly disdain whatever is linked to customs. Conversely, these cultural depositories (old men and other key possessors of the tradition) also disdain the native intellectuals claiming that African intellectuals are alienated and that are, therefore, not qualified to access the millenary ancestral heritage. This bi-directional aloofness makes the inter-comprehension between the two groups, at least, sensibly tense and reproduces the social incoherence model, which has been described by Spivak [26] involving gaps between the sources, the representatives and the executive control and calls for the critique of the subjectivity of a collective agency. The tension thus generated is cause of all serious obstacles to collect appropriate data [11].

The third attempt is to transcribe expressions and locutions that are thought un-translatable, which are always there, in their original formulations in the local language. To these original formulations are attached logical literary explanations. This attempt is done through translating in two times, the first time being the loyal or literal

translation while the second is the *literary translation*, which constitutes an interpretative description. Most researchers currently go this way. Opposed to the traditional '*obligation of being loyal*' which exposes the locutions and expressions, the literary translation is an effort to give a sense to the crude facts; it is, hence, a huge responsibility of the researcher. Of course, through this arduous process, one can read in the two-tier translation a real effort toward the objectivity. Nevertheless, there are still unsolved imponderables tied to the very nature of languages, which are not solely verbs, words or strings of words. Indeed, languages are also symbols; they are clusters of expressions not always easily translatable or even impossible to transcribe into a written symbolism. Words in African languages are known to shift meanings as accents and tones are slightly modified. Also, a conversational language would also include the body language; which can be a stare, a gnawing, etc. Moreover, if the objectivity by itself stands as a laudable thing to pursue, the obsession for objectivity can uselessly burden the inquiry process in social sciences research [7]. This is particularly true if objectivity is equated with the will to *westernize* everything [27] or the obsession to *mathematize* all in order to appear to be doing hardcore science. Worst, objectivity as the will to *westernize* and the obsession to *mathematize* can deprive data of some subjective but fundamental elements which can shed lights into some matters that are seemingly dark in social sciences [12].

Data, their Natures and Levels of their Credentials

Every social science researcher finds data of two different natures. The first type of that is data from the field work, those collected directly from the studied society. Known as the first order data, they are often in the oral and iconic forms. The second type consists of data that one owes to the previous studies done on the same society. Known as secondary data, they come often as previously published materials. Almost all studies rely on both types. These two sources, however, are sometimes difficult to reconcile and are equally imprinted of the pivotal question of their authenticity and of the validity of the information they provide access to. In the section bellows, I will discuss the extent of that problem and its impact on the knowledge about African oral societies.

First order data

Obtained directly and orally, as said above, these *first-hand-data* always pose the problem of the veracity of what crude facts presented by the informants hide. This is the question to know whether the facts given by informants are not shaped for a different end. This is reduced to the epistemological quest of capital of confidence bestowed to informants. Obviously, a lack of confidence in informants leads only to a catastrophic situation, which is a mutual rejection and will end the inquiry; it would push logically the change informants. But also, the question of the confidence is asked in terms of what to trust among the information provided by the informants, even the most trusted ones. In fact, the informants, because they are (or at least supposed to be) of the studied have innocently some values of his culture. That cannot be questioned because noticeable facts that have significant print on the collective imagination take long enough history but once ingrained in the collective memories they become widely shared by members of the community globally. However, some important questions are always to be answered. *The informant whose information you trust is he the appropriate person or the key person in the sense of Smith* [20]? That is, does the informant really possess the real culture? Is the informant in the age and capable of reproducing with fidelity memories of the

collective knowledge? Notice here that the contention in repeating that 'an old man is a library' is true but only partly so. What is ignored or what we do not want to say is that, at some ages some (not all certainly) old men lose significant parts of the collective social knowledge. They can give contradictory accounts on the same events. There are also those who do not know many things on the tradition despite their being old. Ageing does not lead *ipso facto* to the mastery of the traditions; the mastery of traditional cultures comes through a learning process and, as it is the case for all learning processes, it takes personal investment in training. This has nothing to do with the acknowledged value of the experience that old men possess. In the opposite, this expresses the fact that in the traditional societies, as it also the case in the modern societies, there were always those who are prepared to herald discussions on behalf their societies. Those accredited speakers assisted chiefs and other the depositories of the culture as a judges and speakers [28]. *The informant, no matter how much true knowledge possessed on the traditional society, what are the motives for which does (s)he has to deliver that knowledge?* Indeed, since the proliferation of anthropological research in Africa, some people believe that researchers (whether European or African) amass material fortunes, beyond academic prestige, from the work published on the African oral tradition. Thus, some cultural depositories, believing that they are subjected to exploitation, demand for counterpart material profits before they can actually share what they rightly take as part of their traditional treasuries. The international debate over the author rights, which I discuss below, has greatly contributed to this situation. More than that, trading traditional treasuries with some material benefits has given birth to a kind of *cultural charlatanism*, which makes people exhibit for sale things that range from the fragmentary, half-truth to the completely fake traditional chattels being channeled for the consumption of researchers. Cultural forgeries, often nice ones but without being original, are therefore, available in many different markets in different countries. These charlatans concoct and sell forgeries, but all tagged as *traditional* as advertisement. This is how pieces of art work, beautiful and truly African and part of modern African art are sold falsely as relics of historic notability or other dynastic lines of known historical African kingdoms. Such traps are numerous and mercantile declarations lead to superficiality. Fortunately, not so many of academics are that naïve and would swallow everything but the risk of getting mercantile information is nonetheless there.

Of all this, it is the authenticity of the information which is exposed to the corrosion and if Africans do not pay attention they will make write and write a debauched African History. This perspective is somber and queer because this is far from what the scholarship in African Studies expects: a decadent view of Africa conveyed or written by the Africans. That poses also the problem of what we mean by traditional. Is it the leftover of the past in the past? Or is it anything that bears the marks of the past?

If the informant is, finally, the true chancellor of the culture, how do we reach out to him? How, once reached, to extract from him (her) the needed data? Especially under circumstances where actually many people are afraid of telling their stories in fear that they might be denigrated somewhere else? This feeling of fearing being denigrated is fairly justifiable by mediatizing images that foreigners (western, in most cases) make of the life in Africa. They find exotics, if not exotic erotic or otherwise droughts, hungers, AIDS, Ebola, wars, arms, extreme poverty and even death everywhere [29]. In the narrative of otherness [30] where all that is African equates to negation, why should one expose his (her) views? In this sense, silence is loud enough

to express either the anger or the fear, often both. *If finally, by any cost or any sacrifice, the true cultural chancellor accepts to deliver his knowledge, what is amplitude of his knowledge?* This question is important once one remembers that over the past decades the cultural globalization process to which African cultures were continuously exposed has bitten some significant portions of the traditional heritage and the African knowledge of the African own traditions is becoming more and fragmentary and it is shrinking at a pace that should be alarming those of care about cultural diversity [11].

Second order data

As indicated above, these are data that we obtain not from the source but through another person. Otherwise, the researcher has not plowed them from the rugged field, but he works on a material which has been already hammered and shaped before, maybe for reasons or ends which are different from his own. In the particular case of the African cultures, it consists of the published studies carried out on different cultures by different authors and that one wants to use for his (her) inquiry. I will present the problems, or the general criticisms made on this second-hand type of data in a condensed form in the following paragraphs.

African Studies: Theory and Current Practices

Despite the fact that studying Africa has always been part of the intellectual history of world, and be traced back as far as Herodotus or Ibn-Khaldun, African Studies as a form of an organized field of academic study is a recent invention [1]. However, communicating the idea of Africa [31] through a narrative invented by outsiders [32] leads to perspectives that are primarily and inherently entrenched in the historical and current distribution of the political powers [33]. The wide gap between the lived reality and the picture from the academic epistemologies [34] reflects both the epistemological backgrounds of researchers (as described above: see Turnbull) [7], which are in their turn demonstrations of power distribution across the world. In this sense, my work here firstly consists of a literary re-reading and linguistic criticism using both dissembling and assembling techniques constructed on a variety of existing theoretical frameworks, including such methods as the myth criticism, key words [14] and key concept analysis [35]. I have, therefore, re-read dimensions of 'Heart of darkness' by Joseph Conrad [36] in the current chronicles on Central Africa. I explored political myths and social meanings built on this archetype and how these social meanings had influenced the academic discourses over the last century [37]. I argue that the idea of Africa has been built on this myth and has changed only slimly since then. I secondly used the social agency theory and critical social theory to explain why it has been difficult for the African elite to break the mold in which their intellectual production process has been encapsulated. At the same time, I dissembled and assembled the African Paradigm [38], which though based on a strong theoretical background to challenge the post-colonial legacies of ethnocentricity in the examination of underdevelopment and class based cultural identities [39] has also its narrowness in a world where academic productivity is an open and unending process. I, thirdly, examined the exportation (the transposition) to African realities of the foreigner concepts. The analysis covered the domain of meanings of metaphors and narratives and their effects on knowledge production and transmission. I also worked on perceptions people across Africa hold of new discoveries and innovations. I departed from the understanding that the vocabulary, the structural configuration of concepts and their

packaging modes have different meanings for different audiences. As Langley [8] says, because of this reality, significant deviations should be expected on how African knowledge has been interpreted and perceived elsewhere because most of the research was conducted under circumstances wherein western cultures did not find the echoes of their own cultures and ended up by negating the existence of any knowledge, indeed the absence of culture altogether, in African cultures [40]. This section covered such topics as value judgments in scientific knowledge production and dissemination, the right place of the African knowledge as different from being essentially an appendix of the Western Knowledge History [1].

A compared assessment of the practice of African studies

African Studies cover the extent all the research in all the domains of human and social sciences in Africa. In this presenting this part of my essay, I distinguished the knowledge produced about Africa and distributed by Africans and knowledge produced about Africa and distributed by foreigners. My argument here is based on the assumption that it is within this framework of hegemonic battle that Africans construct the existence of an African knowledge system by opposition, which many see as lack of originality or, as Lonkama [41] says, aping the westerners, simplistic eulogy of a sacrosanct lost African past. It is also in this same hegemonic battle ground that Africans, while accepting serious critique, loudly reject 'criticism for criticism' by western peers [42]. Rejecting criticism for fear of ungrounded criticism has drawbacks [43]; it ignores that innovation is partly a product of constructive destruction of acquired habits, methods and reaching out one's comfort zones. But since the creation of this knowledge is founded on the deconstruction of the western scholarship [20,32] and hegemonic claims for universality, for Africans, western scholars of African studies act by fixed frameworks; their capacity to decipher the multiple nuances of African metaphorical mores, styles and their meanings accumulated over centuries is minimal, at its best. African scholars question the unidirectional and uni-linearity in the knowledge production and distribution schemes [43]. That said, a Look into a sample of existing research records provides a blueprint of why the multidimensional scientific production [44] is necessary and should be sufficiently broad to include all the angles and, except when proven wrong, all avenues leading to the production of knowledge should be explored to expand the breadth of the current knowledge on oral tradition societies with, as suggested by Vansina [45], an account of the influence of environmental opportunities and constraints on historical developments. Of course, this is not to infer that environments shape everything in the process of creating knowledge, since the collective imagination of populations is far more important in the emergence and elaboration of the three different developmental paths as Vansina [45] also strongly phrases it. The final question in this is how to formulate a global scientific praxis enabling the emergence of different thinking ways about the creation of knowledge, how to store and distribute the existing knowledge.

Addressing the dear idea of decentralizing the powers around the rights to knowledge for all communities what emerges from the exploration of the existing literature is that we first need to decentralize the thinking around the methods. This means to think beyond comparisons thought it is always tempting while looking at issues to compare them with known situations. Comparison is felt almost like the most natural and a brain-ingrained way of looking at things, but it does have its own limits. The first of these limits is really about establishing the frame of reference. Indeed, an important

epistemological question here is why should western cultures be taken as the referential against which all other cultures should be measured, as it has been obviously the case over the past? This calls for new ways of looking for meanings, which would call for some anthropological hermeneutics, which is seen in this perspective not only as interpretative efforts of the objects of study [46] and a critical enterprise [47] but to which is added other methodological constraints. Going back to the introduction where I suggested that the epistemological query on methods should be a continuous process, my suggestion is that methodologies in the African Studies, particularly the anthropological hermeneutics, should be a reflection on how to repeatedly adjust methods when limits of traditional methods are established and reached. This Ad hoc exploratory quest on the methods should be an analytical framework rather than a method per se; its main contribution would be to introduce the reflection on the methods throughout the research. Of course, this echoes what has been often named as inter-disciplinarily research epistemology also demands to refrain from ostentatiously relying on comparisons even when the referential would lead to fake ratios, maladroitness convergences and, consequently oblique conclusions. Surely, anthropological hermeneutics also calls for a deep understanding of contexts and the contextualization of interpretations of observed facts and would render to facts their originality. Indeed, restituting observations and discussions back to the context in which they were made is not only essential before the analysis of the data, as suggested by Petit and Trefon [48] but this restitution should also include the process of interpreting and the story-making process. The Anthropological hermeneutics also means that data gathering, discussions, contextualization and the story-making processes are all gendered and are inclusive of the power layouts to ensure that all perspectives are taken into account. As such, anthropological hermeneutics would open wide epistemological margins for African scholars not to forge fake knowledge but to provide their own interpretation of the facts past and present in their cultures. Of course, rules and tools of the philosophical hermeneutics would need to be adapted to anthropological hermeneutics. But the backbones of philosophical hermeneutics are already part of the renewed and reinvigorated epistemological quest for decentralizing the powers around the creation of new forms of knowledge. This quest is also about rights to for communities to influence the interpretation being given to the knowledge they have generated and that is being shared with researchers as they are the ones that know better than many different contexts that led to generating that knowledge. Also, participating in the interpretive efforts, these communities would have the first access to new forms of knowledge created using their empirical knowledge. Indeed, from this standpoint, anthropological hermeneutics is to include not only the collection, the indexing, the classification of pieces of knowledge and the structuring of disparate fragments of knowledge [46] but would also offer the capacity to see things anew and the power to change, to predict, and to solve puzzles [49]. In a sense, anthropological hermeneutics, as delineated here and in its search to see things anew, would be part of the general the grounded theory method [50] but, beyond minimizing preconceived ideas about the research problem and the data, using simultaneous data collection and analysis to inform each other, remaining open to varied explanations and understandings of the data, and focusing data analysis to construct middle-range theories [50], would add the space for studied societies to provide their own narratives of facts being depicted and for the researchers to continuously reflect on how the methods being used are capturing both facts and the narration from those communities.

Pioneers in African studies versus African Scholars in African studies

Most of the written records on the African History of the African origins are of very recent times. Whether they are tracked back to Herodotus or Ibn-Khaldun, the rapid conclusion is that almost all the first written records on Africa are those produced by foreigners; they are either Arabic or European. However, most of this wealth of documentation is essentially a traveller's chronicle in its character [30], the western reflexive transposition to Africa of its own metaphysical epistemological quests and, at least in its earlier forms, of racist denegation of humanity to Africa. As indicated above, *the chronicle character of certain writings on Africa* was the style in vogue during the exploration times, with their archetype the *heart of darkness* of Joseph Conrad. But that novel inspired many others of the same vein and their effects were to show how this chronicle narration depicted the African and its effects are still felt in many ways today. Exporting western metaphysical and epistemological quests and concepts to African contexts was extensively used. This was done through studying African metaphysics, ontology and epistemology using terms of reference, vocabularies, the structures and configuration that all were European (Langley, [8]; the word European is mine). As an illustration, to see if Africans were interested in Astronomy, one would look in African languages for the equivalent of Comets, Sirius, Hydra, etc. Of course, when there was none, the conclusion was obviously the negation of any preliminary idea on stars. Concepts, methods and vocabulary used to study Africa served as a screen for expanding the European culture and, as Tempels (1969) expresses it, because Europeans could not find the echo of their own cultures, they ended up negating the existence of these concepts in African cultures. Misplaced *values judgments*, subsequent to the overall racial prejudice, too marred the scholarship expected of those pioneers of the African Studies. In some cases, where value judgment and racial prejudice were so obvious, Africans could only have the feeling of racism in what was written about them and their multiple cultures. For some of the pre-colonial and colonial western white supremacists and skin-puritans such as Gobineau [51] and, at some degrees, some of the post-colonial times, all that was African was less human and, in any case, inferior to its western counter-part, if that does exist. It is through these lenses, which can be easily understood, a very negative and very severe judgment on some cultural practices. As a consequence, and tied to the above two points, the treatment of African History as essentially an appendix of the Western History [1]. But it should also be acknowledged immediately that those who wrote on Africa in those times were travelers, merchants, adventurers and journalists whose appropriate style, even today, is chronicle. They did have very little knowledge of the contexts that they were talking. In the final analysis the quest for honesty compels to acknowledge that the work of the pioneers of African Studies is today, as they might likely remain tomorrow, of non-negligible value. This is very true especially when we are conscious of the fact that those pieces work, with their imperfections, are the first on our languages and practices, they include the first publications on indigenous grammars, their lexical assemblages, their proverbs, myths, and legends. In brief, they include all the treasury of the oral tradition that the modern civilization is menacing to sweep away [19].

African studies African scholarship in early days

In the following lines, I am concentrating essentially on the African Studies done by the African scholars and methodological and

epistemological concerns raised on their work. First of all, it should be noted that the African Studies conducted by the African is, but for very few exceptions of autonomous centers for research as Aequatoria, CEEBA, and CICIBA... a labor of the western universities, with a particular weight on North American universities. Even those African students who end up studying in African Studies do this essentially in those western universities and are supervised by professors that are, in their majority, not of African cultures. This remark is very critical because it means that African Studies are not yet that African; they are still done within the western epistemological background. A consequence of this situation is that while people are talking about the decolonizing science and minds, the very foundations of their own scholarships are not different from the ones that have been used to denigrate their own cultures. Indeed, academic training is not only what it taught in classrooms but also the philosophy, the politics and the objectives behind it. Seen from this angle, the African scholarship in African Studies, because conducted in a philosophical context that is far from being African, is also marred with the prejudices. That is partly why most African academics are good in western countries where they have been educated and not good in their own environments; they are trained to serve the standards of those countries and not those in countries of their origins. Obiechina [52] was only partly right that educating Africans in the colonies was at the beginning utilitarian for the colonial masters; it was geared toward producing clerks, teachers, evangelists and artisans [...], personnel of the lower ranks of the civil services because even more subtle was the fact that the knowledge taught to those civil servants was essentially from an epistemological background that was far from being constructed around real questions of the Africans. This is an important epistemological issue and to decolonize science and minds, a re-appraisal of the current academic epistemological matrices is a *sine qua non* condition. To become an independent inquiry, African Studies as conducted by African scholars has to be grounded in a quest of formulating a new epistemology and wander beyond the unstoppable temptation to *affirm African existence by opposition to the western culture*. There is no compelling epistemological reason of wanting to find the equivalent and the opposite of all that is European (concept, mode, vision, etc.) in African societies at any cost. Stereotyped texts full of formulations such as "*If in Europe..., in Africa... "and "contrary to the western..., Africa..."*" are not necessary proofs of pertinence of knowledge. Affirmation of the identity is not bad, and affirmation of identities necessarily means introducing characterizations that exclude the otherness. Yet, this way of affirming identities by opposition weighs a lot on the methods used and, quite logically, on the work produced and the conclusions derived from these prejudiced methods. In the same inclination of affirming own identity by opposition, many African scholars spend significant time criticizing the work produced by their western colleagues and that of the pioneers. Indeed, learned and informed criticism is the core of scientific inquiry and, as such, it is valuable and a healthy process for the production of knowledge. Nevertheless, unfounded criticism or *criticism for criticism* is far from healthy and leads to nothing more than useless and unproductive quarrels. A deconstructive criticism should be based on real facts and that when it is made it should lead to something concrete; if it does not produce new truths on African cultures, it should, at least, correct some mistakes. A deconstructive criticism needs to open up paths to a new way of identifying solutions to problems it raises itself. Unfortunately, that seems not to be the case for some of our criticisms that target the work of the pioneers, which, as I said earlier, despite numerous imperfections have some undeniable values and should inspire African scholarship to go beyond stating the

obvious. It is not candid to pick up Tempels' mistake of generalizing observations on the Katanga's Luba to the entirety of the Bantu peoples while one easily generalizes geographically and culturally-confined monographs to the scales of the African Continent. This is a widespread practice, and no one sees anything bad about it. Conversely and astonishing as this appears, despite all the violent criticisms formulated against the work of pioneers of the African Studies, many African students of African Studies fervently yet uncritically cite Leroy-Beaulieu [53], Evans-Pritchard [54,55] and Griaule [56]; or to cite Lonkama [41] they would be aping Van der Kerken, Gustave Hulstaert, Lessens, etc. This has been termed as lack of originality of the work produced by the African scholars, particularly those that evolve within the universities in their own countries. However, there are also good reasons why positive fervent and uncritical citations of the very works being deconstructed happen: African universities are poorly equipped in libraries and laboratories; courses are taught by people whose qualifications are sometimes dubious and research budgets are almost inexistent. African scholars in African Studies also have been said to have a bent towards making the eulogy of their own traditions (Masolo, 1994), which can easily lead to sacrificing the scientific rigor, and often to lack of clarity in methods being used. One can read in the fear of eulogy of traditions the reason why some scholars have hesitated to embrace the African Sage Philosophy that Oruka [57] had promoted.

One important epistemological moment in the struggle to deconstruct the western views on Africa came with the publications of Cheikh Anta Diop [58-64]. Indeed, Cheikh Anta Diop's monumental work on Egyptology had massive and diversified epistemological influences on several people of his time and even currently and contributed to the emergence of the Afrocentric paradigm. But, the most important of these influences was, surely, the fact that many African scholars [65-67] worked on finding links between Pharaoh's Egypt and the rest of the continent's cultures and societies not only to establish the fact that Pharaoh's Egypt was African but also to demonstrate that Black Africa has also contributed to the scientific, cultural and political hegemony that Pharaoh's Egypt had enjoyed. Of course, there are significant parts of truth in the fact that Pharaoh's Egypt was African; indeed at least physically and geographically, Egypt has always been part of Africa as a continent. It is also fairly established that Black Africa too contributed something to its glamorous past. But that does mean that all the African tribes and cultures have either descendent Pharaoh's Egypt or that all Ancient Egyptians came from Black Africa alone. All African tribes and cultures did not equally contribute to its technical and intellectual progress. But this reasoning has been put forward and supported both by an ideological drive, which as Obenga [68] said, was essentially to fight the Euro-centrism of Africa Studies. As scholarship to debunk the western supremacist ideologies, the findings from African scholarship on Ancient Egypt have been always politically very loaded and, even when they convey sensibly undeniable results, they are countered by those who argue that many Africans use Egyptology as a means to present Africa as the cradle of the world civilization and that, in doing so, Africans do simply exaggerate their findings [69]. Some as, [69], go as far as seeing the Afrocentric reading of the Ancient Egypt history as an exaggerated form of ethno-nationalism essentially based on a political project unclear of choosing whether to integrate or separate [from the rest of the world?] and whose conclusions are dangerous because it preaches a reverted form of racism and directed toward the past [70]. One thing that remains of this discussion is that this is an epistemological battle and that there is no side that entirely right or entirely wrong. Indeed,

Africans are rightly happy that their ancestors, as many other cultures in the past, contributed to construct a great civilization in the past but this can be asserted without necessarily claiming the entirety of every accomplishment. Ancient Egypt was, as all other human civilizations (Greek, Roman, Mayan, Celtic, etc.), part of the global human history and received influences from different parts of the world. There is no single example of a great historical civilization that has been built without receiving influences from outside. That said there is no reason why everything Africans say about Ancient Egypt has to be taken as essentially political and dangerously reverted racisms. Indeed, it is this very stiff, ideological and racially-prejudiced way of treating African scholarship that has led the Egyptology to become more of the political and ideological battleground rather than being driven by genuine and decent scientific pulses.

African studies and African scholarship in the early 21st Century

Of a more recent birth has been the myth of statistics in trying to be seen like doing hardcore science. There is nothing wrong with using statistics, but that instrument is not the only way to arrive at proper knowledge and badly handled or misplaced statistics tell nothing are nothing more than mere idiosyncrasies, at their very best. Furthermore, statistics when handled by those who have less acquaintance with them, as it is the case with many of the African Scholars working in Africa, is more dangerous than providing personal reflections because of the falsity of the scientific power they seem to convey. Yet, the desire to obtain statistics has been pushed by numerous international development agencies such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund for their own interests who want to have quantitative measurements of what the money they invest in African countries have achieved. But that myth of statistics leaves behind so many other pieces of the story that can be told about large expanses of African societies in their diversity. Along with the myth of statistics comes the called rapid assessment through which scholars are expected to produce quick and comprehensive understanding of communities. Rapid assessment focus on speed and quickness; but these have had a negative effect on the production of knowledge because they have led to the iteration and recycling of same ideas over and over again. Aided with the cut-and-paste easiness of computer text-typing packages, scholars conducting rapid assessment come to the field with pieces of their work already written and start filling in dotted areas. This far from being helpful in producing such deep knowledge as would be expected from a long field work as required by the Anthropological hermeneutics because there is no sufficient time to grasp different realities. Once more, rapid assessments are the mode of thoughts imposed by the desire to get the report rapidly submitted to development agencies and donors that need something to construct their own projects. No wonder, many of those projects fail because they are supported by fragile knowledge of the environmental and social ecosystems in which they are deployed. A more dangerous development in the beginning of this century on African Scholarship is the proliferation of open-access and paid online publication, which has drastically reduced the stiffness of the historical peer-review process. Of course, there are good reasons to have knowledge to be open-access and readily available to those who are craving for it. Indeed, open-access journals hold the potential to equalize the principles of decolonizing the possession of knowledge and should be supported as such. However, many of these open-access journals have no scruples of checking even language before they can get something published online; all they care about is getting publication fees. Obviously, many

young African scholars who have been through difficult publication processes and have not been able to publish their ideas, sometimes because simply their names were not seen as appropriate for authorships of valuable pieces, are now attracted by the easiness of publishing through these media, which do not offer adequate peer-review process and publish even very low-quality works. More than that, given the difficulty of accessing appropriate reading materials in their areas of expertise, African scholars heavily rely on the materials published through open-access journals, including the ones that simply upload junk information online. Hence, there is a new phenomenon whereby the power of the Internet to salvage many people from scholarship illiteracy is also conducting those who have not been properly trained to digest the information they read using critical thinking tools to swallow junk information and believe that they now know something. It needs to be recalled that every single written document or a book is not always the evidence in itself of the truth or of a sensible knowledge; there are, indeed, forgeries [14]) and misleading interpretations sometimes even in very reputed science journals.

The above being said, it has also to be recognized that African Studies have come to a maturation stage. Indeed, African Studies have contributed to the general production of knowledge [71] and the idea that studying African societies is isolated from the main stream scientific inquiry has been vanishing accordingly. Africans intellectuals of high stature such as Appiah, Mbembe and Mudimbé hardly have any complex to exhibit the originality of the African thoughts though they too have been educated within the decried mono-linear and self-referenced western epistemological background. Working from the former master's epistemological background and using it to fight back has been the most important feature of this affirmed scholarship; however, it is still disturbing that most of this work is still being produced from western universities in its majority. Reasons for this situation include the fact that African universities are still very poor and cannot afford providing sufficient resources to academics [72]. But, beyond the lack of financial resources, most of African societies are still governed by political regimes that are rather relatively low-profile democracies, which have direct impact on the freedom of free speech [73]. Limited freedom of speech has been prevented academics working in social and human sciences to thrive in most of local African conditions [74]; philosophy and other human sciences having been seen as dangerous by the political regimes in place. Most genuine scholars were, therefore, forced to leave their countries in search of places where they could continue with their ideas without risking being imprisoned. Those who remained within their countries were, in many cases, simply co-opted by the regimes and requested to sing the applauding hymns for the political leaders in place, setting aside the moral obligations tied to their roles as scholars. The unfortunate thing about this later case is that the very same people continue to teach at universities and exert serious influence on the future generations of scholars. But, one should bear in mind the fact that the use of intellectuals to support emerging dictatorships is not new and it is not entirely African in its essence. This recalls to the memories of whoever has had slight understanding of the history of Germany the support provided by Martin Heidegger to the third Reich. Martin Heidegger was one of the 20th Century German philosophers; he was elected the rector of the University of Freiburg, a highly regarded position in Academy. However, according to Jürgen Habermas, he was prolific in eulogizing the ideas promoted by the third Reich: on 11 November 1933 at Leipzig, Martin Heidegger professed his faith in Adolf Hitler and the national socialist movement in an electoral rally to convince

the German scholars and scientists [75]. The very same was also true in the recent history of Africa where, people like Mobutu invited a long list of the cream of the then Zairian academics to give a scientific content to his idea of authenticity [24]. Unless significant changes happen within these societies, the trend is likely to continue and its effects on the African scholarship decupled.

The impact of Foucault and deconstruction on African scholarship

African scholars have come, shortly after the fights for independences, to acknowledge the fact that historical conjunctures have created deeply imbedded injustices; some groups have unfairly accumulated more goods than others, particularly the global knowledge. Those injustices require that we answer to the question: *'should we unconditionally respect the justice* [75]? Otherwise, should we be neutral simply because justice requires us to be neutral in the search of impartial spectator (Sen, 2009)? In answering these questions, they have argued that given the fact that current conditions were constructed on historical injustices (slavery, colonization and globalization), justice should strive to repair the injustices that have led to current conditions. The first place where this repairing justice should start is for the Africans to own their own epistemology. But how the own one's epistemology? Deconstruction was, of course the best place to start. Indeed, borrowing and expanding the ideas of Michel Foucault that "nothing is innocent, and everything is dangerous" [76] as embodied in his works such as the *Archeology of Knowledge and Order of Things*, African scholars went on to deconstruct everything that was previously said about the Africans, their knowledge and their culture. Analysis using Foucault's Theory that knowledge was ideological and, hence, linked to power relations eminent African scholars such as Mudimbé [31] showed that the very idea and interpretations of Africa and African cultures held by African intelligentsia was the product of contexts that were external to Africa [34]. As a consequence, these concepts needed to be deconstructed in order to allow something new and typically African to emerge from the ashes of the colonial narrative. Deconstruction of the colonial and neo-colonial narrative, hence, has been seen as a way to render an epistemological justice to African scholarship, which Dabo [77] thought to justify the African nationalisms. However, the deconstruction has not been used only against the colonial and neo-colonial narrative but also on different myths and mythologies that were created by Africans themselves.

Deconstructing and reconstructing a new African space

Hence, one sees works such as those of Osha [78], Ibhawoh and Dibua, Keita, Mudimbé, [79-81] etc. deconstructing the post-independence political ideologies of the leaders known as nations' fathers, neoliberal economics, ethno-philosophy, and other myths. More than those polished philosophical discussions, other authors have gone down to real life experiences and tried to deconstruct what has been seen as obstacles for the African societies to move forward. This particularly is the case of the work of Kabou [82,83] to take the most popular examples. Kabou [82] is of the opinion that the hurdles for the African development are not only external but do also have their roots in some of the African culture, which inertia has led to the current situation of being behind all other continents with the regard to development [83]. This line of argument is the one that Kalanda [84] described in early sixties with compelling details from a psychological analysis with only difference that for Kalanda the inertia

and lethargies that prevent Africans from moving forward are a consequence of combined efforts to mentally de-link Africans with their own humanity [84,85]. Once more, the question is broader than just collecting current apparent realities; it does embrace the epistemological background on how Africans create the knowledge and meanings of that that knowledge and its potential uses. If one reads new research works such as the one from Kouassi [86] one comes to the conclusion that Africans have not been always so soft on themselves as often inferred. But, it should be acknowledged that this cathartic exercise to deconstruct myths and mythologies that hold Africans hostages of a modified image of who they are is a long tradition. An interesting example is that of Amin [87] who launched the search for fundamental determinants of lack of economic progress observed in many African countries. That work laid the foundations for a better understanding of the context in which the African intelligentsia was held hostage of economic theories that were far-fetched in view of the conditions that really prevailed in most African countries. This led to the critique of the role of the intelligentsia itself, which was already initiated several years earlier in works such as those of Mudimbé, Wamba [88,89] and a long cohort of African thinkers. In the end, the question that was being raised was essentially of the intellectual, cultural and roles that the intelligentsia should play.

In so doing, the main aim of the African Scholarship has been to domesticate the world and the time, which should ensure that African resources, once disconnected with the African realities and African people, are once more the sources of meanings for the people to survive on and in ways they think are sensible for them collectively. Indeed, Mbembe [90] believes that the disconnection between Africans and the resources of their continent is one of the reasons why there are forms of violence that have as their chief goal the physical destruction of people (massacres of civilians, genocides, various kinds of killing) and the primary exploitation of things. Deconstruction and regaining meaning would, in this sense, be a pathway to a reconciled epistemology, an authentically African Epistemology that would ground the actions of the African Scholars in their own repossessed world and enable them to create new meanings for their communities, without necessarily having to rely on the distorted consciences that the outside has imposed upon them. It is a way to redeem sovereignty that was established outside [90] a way to invent an African practice of thinking [91].

To sum up, travelers, merchants, adventurers and journalists whose wrote about Africa in its early contacts with the western did so using the chronicles to capture the reality that they tried to measure its distances from what they left in their own cultures. It is almost certain that given the epistemological modes of thoughts prevailing at those days they could do otherwise. This does not however absolve them of many errors committed but should be acknowledged. Then came the missionaries with their civilizing mission and its epistemology, which can be summarize in the belief of Leroy-Beaulieu that the people who colonize the most are the leading people [92]. In this sense, Christian missionaries would only create knowledge that was globally biased toward ensuring the supremacy of the race of the people they represented. However, despite these flaws, missionaries did assemble oral tradition philological elements, proverbs, myths, and legends, which can be accessed today. And, despite apparent division between Christian missionaries and anthropologists [93], both were doing similar work and they equally contributed to the creation of the knowledge on African cultures. Therefore, it is sensible to lump them together here. Also despite weaknesses of described on the work produced by early African Scholars, they have also contributed in

asking epistemological questions that were absent of the scientific debate before the emergence of the Africans on the international research scenes. Hence, 18–19 Centuries travelers, adventurers and journalists as well as Christian missionaries and the wave of the first African scholars produced a work that can be only of a non-trivial value. But, as people move out of the colonial mentality, the colonial epistemology has to be shaken as well. And, it firstly has to be uprooted is that of *comparative method*. Indeed, all these caveats formulated above are, with good reasons for most of the cases, reducible to the problem of the *comparative method*, with the exceptions being those of lack of resources, lack of academic freedom and the support provided by African scholars to the political regimes in their own countries.

Comparison in African Studies: An auto-referenced western culture?

In the mathematical and for natural sciences, to compare is fundamentally to establish a ratio between two quantities of the same nature. The notion of ratio introduces inevitably the concepts of inferiority, equality or superiority. In social sciences, comparison appears, as it is the case for algebraic homology, a search for things that remain constant whether the topography is changed, twisted or not. As such, it looks for resemblance or dissemblance; when these are not identifying, it tries to identify relationships of inclusion or exclusion, relationships of compatibility or incompatibility between different socio-cultural aspects of different cultures. Thus understood, the comparison starts with establishing a referential from which to compare cultures. The problem here is that the frame of reference in the African Studies has been the western culture, which supposes pre-established western evidences. The epistemological question here is that comparing the western and the African cultures, one would have needed a referential system that should have been outside both cultures. More than that, comparisons pose quite logically the question of scales and that of comparability of units. The other questions stemming from general comparison are in the ways it envisages compared entities. Indeed, in the context of African Studies, it can envisage the western world and Africa as in a time-simultaneity, which means looking at the two worlds as they were at the time of the comparison. Still, time-wise, comparison could have been done comparing the two worlds with reference to different periods. Also, comparing the two worlds in their geographies was obviously flawed because these two worlds were and are still geographically obviously different. Acquiring knowledge being far from being a linear process, it is only fair to indicate that comparing two different worlds that ecologically evolved separately would have lead only misdirected conclusions. However, despite these vexing unanswered epistemological glitches, comparison is so strong that it pulls everybody starting to look at different things, whether in a masked or open way seeming the most natural way despite its unproductivity as a research method in human and social sciences [14].

Comparing known western culture with a cloudy African picture

At its beginning, African Anthropology compared two worlds; each of these worlds had its own history, social and economic structures and its own culture. European Ethnographers and missionaries of that time had sufficient knowledge of their own culture but had none or, at most very meager portion of what was to be known about Africa. The comparison of the early African Anthropology was done between the

western cultures whose realities were discursively established and, at most, very preliminary and partial conclusions made from very rough and rapid evaluation of the situation in Africa. The mistake was in the fact that western anthropological scholars of that time compared established certainties from the western cultures and their guesses on African cultures and draw conclusions that they generalized. Epistemologically many of things they compared were, almost certainly, not by nature comparable and scales as well as units used were, most likely, not appropriate as research instruments. Logically, most of conclusions drawn from these precipitated inferences should be revisited in order to check them and keep only the part that knowledge that resists the scrutiny of much detailed query grounded on a different epistemological background. Looking at the persistence of the impact of the 'Heart of Darkness', there is need to go beyond and further from the conclusions of the early Anthropological scholarship. To rectify what should be mended, the first step is not to resort to comparison itself but rather to recreate an epistemological background that would include new institutional capacity, an appraisal of African social sciences methodologies and re-appropriation of the knowledge creation processes by communities once excluded. Indeed, in the second half of the 20th Century, some anthropologists noticed this epistemological necessity and tried to correct these flaws in the comparative approaches; they proposed the *methodical comparison* [7]. Within the framework of the *methodical comparison* approach, comparison should be discreet, occasional and employed only to provide some new internal visions on the evolutionary process of the societies [7]. Comparison was supposed just to accompany a scholar along inquiries, as a way of the cabinet research towards the knowledge of different components constituting a given culture. The comparison steps into the play only when it does appear necessary or inescapable to emphasis one fact or another. Despite some advances it promotes, *methodical comparison* remained a comparison in that defining 'being discreet and occasional' is not that easy. Indeed, what might seem discreet to the scholars can easily be what societies find more intrusive in their own private and public lives; what looks occasional on a paper might simply had been the most recurrent in the process of data gathering. Furthermore, and more importantly, the difficult epistemological questions on referential framework and nature of measuring units and scales could not be shifted simply because comparison has become more discreet and less frequent.

Discussion

Key-concepts of the approaches

Claude Sumner [18] too thinks that words reveal thoughts and structures; the only difference between Sumner [18] and Vansina [14] is that the first does not have to define the subject before his inquiry. Indeed, based on the assumption that languages are not only string of words [94] and that words embody textures of ideas and concepts they convey, Sumner [18] suggests that key words should orient a scholar toward identifying the subject of inquiry. For Sumner [18] a keyword is not only a word that is repeated throughout a given form of speech but also a word that comes with qualitative dimensions. Claude Sumner was looking at the Ethiopian Philosophy; hence his approach to look key words can be viewed as hermeneutical in its essence. Claude Sumner was a Jesuit and had, among many others, degrees in English Literature and in Linguistics [95], which can explain his emphasis on words with qualitative dimensions, which he thought would reveal the philosophical thinking of the Ethiopians in the past. An anthropological method built on this philosophical approach is the

summative content analysis [96] whereby keywords are identified before and during data analysis. As part of the general content analysis, the keyword approach has a long history in research, dating back to the 18th century in Scandinavia [96] though it has taken long before coming into the African Studies. This tardy introduction can be attributed to the attraction that comparison has played on many scholars interested in Africa during the colonial times. But, the keyword approach can be used to assemble fragments of knowledge from a variety of social, historical and cultural ecosystems. In order to extend and deepen its scope, the keyword approach would benefit greatly if it could add the social finalities of keywords and sociological clustering analysis on its deployment as a research method.

Logically, these additions would allow the keyword approach to cumulate knowledge without being pulled towards the unproductive comparisons. One may that way reach very informative insights which might lead to studies of institutions, social structures, and economic trends of a society. Of course, this brings back the epistemological question of the innocence of the information that words, proverbs, songs and admonitions carry with them. In responding to this right epistemological question, mention should be made of the fact all these forms of communication are literary work. Literature, as it is known to its specialists, is far from being a neutral endeavor; literature bears the historical traces of different political and ecological struggles that communities have endured to survive. Literary work is, thus by its essence always politically and philosophically engaged and, as such, there is no reason to be thinking on innocence of the message keywords would be conveying. In order to gather a full picture of the message keywords and other forms of oral literature are conveying, there is obligation to use the available and ordinary means for the exegesis, no matter should these be structural or analytical, to confer not only literary sense but also contextual frame to keywords. The exegesis to confer the literary meaning is a normal part of the hermeneutics and conferring the contextual frame to keywords is to restitute them back to historical, anthropological and cultural background, which is part of the Anthropological hermeneutics.

Vansina and endogenous comparison

A conspicuous evolution in comparative methods came through *Paths in the rainforests* published by Jan Vansina in 1990. *Paths in the rainforests* brought a fresh and new vision on the comparative methods for anthropological quest in the African contexts. Vansina [14] grounded his epistemological intuitions on the work that Forde published in 1934 [97] on the relationships between physical environment, techniques of production and social structure. This new vision took presupposed the unity of the actual Bantu cultures. Of course, that presupposition does not exclude the fact that Africa is also diversified in many ways, as is the western culture. However, phylogenetically, the approach assumes that all the Bantu cultures descend from one nucleus. With established proto-Bantu words (vocabulary), Jan Vansina established the proof this fundamental assumption of the historical unity of the current Bantu cultures. Of course, being phylogenetically linked means that all of the Bantu cultures, diversified as they occur today, kept some common inheritance that has still apparent today. As such, and having evolved in conditions that at larger scales similar, there is no component of the Bantu cultures that is superior (or inferior) to another. This allowed Vansina to compare internal linguistic elements between different cultures with common Bantu roots. Jan Vansina has thus come out with consistent evidences on a large span of the actual different African cultures descending from the Bantu nucleus. Hence, Jan Vansina

identified African migration routes and their directions, social and economic structures and activities, mechanisms through which societies were constituted and established themselves [45]. For a proper use of endogenous comparison, Jan Vansina [14] suggests that to study institutions, objects and concepts (thoughts), one should collect large enough vocabulary relative to their foundations, their constructions (manufactures), their forms, their multiple utilizations' process and their social finalities. Hence, the precepts of the endogenous comparison require an extensive linguistic knowledge of diverse internal ramifications of the African cultures; requiring therefore a lengthy endeavor. Of course, the time length demanded by endogenous comparison leads to acquiring a deeper and deeper understanding of African cultures, which is already benefits scholarship in that it avoid hasty and fragmentary conclusions. Vansina [14] proposes an approach that poses that once a study subject is identified, the work that remains is to circumscribe its social and historical frames, to track the vocabularies (words) related to the subject until their source (the proto-vocabulary), to map the vocabulary geographical distribution and to find their semantic structures. Endogenous comparison is, in this this view a dynamic process whereby objects of the research tracked back to their phylogenetic relationships and are situated in the networks of different systems through panoplies of the proto-words. After scrutinizing these links, relationships and systems from within, one is led by factual evidence to correlations and indices of different anthropological, sociological and historical elements of the study subject, defining therefore the eigenvalue of each element where it seats within the networks. Also, the length of the time that it takes for one scholar to acquire an extensive linguistic knowledge of diverse internal ramifications of the African cultures makes it possible for the scholar to interact with studied communities and invest, de facto, efforts to allow a space for these communities to provide their own narratives of facts being depicted, which is demanded by the Anthropological hermeneutics as described above and provide the space to reflect and assess the deployment of the methodologies across the space and time.

The Anthropological hermeneutics as a methodological paradigm is the usage of different methods as required by the circumstances. Far from being a fixed methodological framework, the nature of the data, the forms in which they come through and the contexts in which data are provided should lead the way the study approaches the subject. The endogenous comparison and the keywords methodological paradigms are eloquently linguistic phylogenetic methods in the sense that they lead scholars to link internal elements within the same linguistic landscape. They are, thus an effort to understand communities and societies and their systems internally. Even as they lead to comparisons, these are reduced to minimal in that they carried internally and between languages deriving from the same origins. In the perspectives of the Anthropological hermeneutics, comparison is not even necessary unless required by the nature of the data but, even in that case, the premises of Anthropological hermeneutics require that it is used only to bring precision on the directions and mutations of different internal transfers. In this sense, comparison becomes is naturally required by data and circumstances under which the study is being deployed but not imposed by ideological search for differences between communities without common history and that have evolved in different ecological circumstances. This effort for the internal comprehension, not forcing for comparison between different cultures, will bring more light that should lead the monographic studies in the future. Studies carried under such new light will be much more interesting since they will yield constructive conclusions, as was the

case of Vansina. For the key-words to conserve cultural colorants of what was condemned to disappear, it would be advantageous to collect them with discretion to avoid cohorts of manipulation [11]. This can be achieved through contacts that are naturally possible only when scholars erase their personal inclinations, ideologies, and other prejudices on the studied societies or communities, at least at moment of collecting data. Scholars in African Studies need, hence, a form of tabula rasa before stepping into the field of research. Certainly, beside all important insights that scholars might gain from the genetic method, these insights need to be formatted into scientific texts; science here being understood as knowledge attained through study or practice, to unable the results obtained from the Anthropological hermeneutics either through Glottochronology, keywords or any other approach to be converted into a formal knowledge, the text has to have its context (situated in a particular time and in a specific space) and recourse to dearly acquired techniques from other areas of science should be used to check whether the ideas being generated are plausible or even possible. Anthropological hermeneutics as being used here does not mean the rejection of the appropriate classical methods but rather a wise combinatorial use of these that are fit for the purpose of describing and inferring things in Africa using a new epistemological background.

Mystification of written records and intellectual property rights

Knowledge, as power, drives the world since historical times and it certainly became the most important of the forces in the modern world. However, despite the availability of unprecedented communication channels and praises for globalization, scientific knowledge is still a privilege that only socially and economically powerful nations possess. In fact, only socially and economically powerful nations can afford to produce and distribute knowledge to reach large tracks of societies. This particular situation raises an epistemological problem in that centers of knowledge production are not necessarily centers where the knowledge is stored. Many societies that produce knowledge and on which knowledge is produced are not even given back that knowledge. Furthermore, the currently available bulk of knowledge has been acquired through a long and tedious historical process [98] and it is a collective good for the global humanity. It is a fact that knowledge apparently 'created' on the oral tradition societies is often truly 'borrowed' from these communities. What researchers in human and social scientists on oral traditions do is simply conceptualizing dormant knowledge and distributing it at wider audience than the original locations is what is often done. However, oral tradition societies have been excluded in the redistribution of knowledge to which they had contributed. There is more knowledge on traditional societies in western universities and other research institutions than anywhere in countries where studies to produce that knowledge were undertaken.

The above situation can be attributed to several factors, chief among them the fact that African history of knowledge has always been seen through the lenses of the written records. Looking at the production of knowledge only through written records, has led to depicting oral tradition African communities as a 'knowledge vacuum' since the paucity of written records is often equated to lack of knowledge production [57]. Of course, since Evans-Pritchard [55], things have moved but very slowly and oral traditions are still often seen as lacking sophistications in creating abstract knowledge. This view lacks deep understanding of what knowledge really is since it confuses the

codification of knowledge with knowledge and identifies the process of writing as the only sole way of codifying acquired knowledge. Taking writing as the only way to codify any form of knowledge is mistaken. My argument here is that the deficit of written speech doesn't necessarily mean lacking other forms of human expression and the written records is not the only manifestation of truth and knowledge. Across the human history, plenty of other sources have been used as evidence of intellectual activities; oral tradition societies have had different information storage capacity. Also, the humanity globally begun as an oral society before discovering the written speech; it should not be seen like African cultures were the only ones that begun from oral societies. Also, the written speech has come to the western world from cultures that were not western in their origins. Whether the origins of writing are tracked down do Egypt as Obenga [99] wants to do or to Sumer (Southern Iraq) as Ray [100] puts it, the reality is that none of those locations can be said to be part of the western cultures. Therefore, it must be admitted that all cultures have inherited of the current writing forms from civilizations that were not originally in the west. Hence, the dichotomies opposing cultures in the issue of coding and storing knowledge should not be seen like opposition between western culture and non-western (African cultures). I posit that the myth of the written records as the single and sole most important aspect of the scientific inquiry and the only mode of codification is wrong and has contributed to dispossessing people of the knowledge they generated over centuries, denying them of their memories and forced them to think of things in false universal unity of cultures and created a sense of interiorized marginality.

Truly, the myth of written records is the right place where the question of intellectual property rights has to be discussed against the existing international legal framework to identify ways in which people can be attributed true credits they deserve from knowledge they share with the international scientific community. This is sensible since if one looks back in the history, knowledge created by the African oral traditions have been shared with other cultures without imposing any constraints and without asking for payment back. This is because Africans have taken knowledge to be so valuable that its costs can only be symbolic, if there is need to pay for anything. They have been sharing knowledge on medicinal plants; techniques of manufacturing tools and other goods were shared with very minimal mercantile demands of the sort being currently requested by those to whom their own knowledge has been given for free. Coffee, one the world most consumed commodities, originated from Africa and people that first transformed and used it have never had a patent from its use and are now simply ignored. The knowledge of the curative properties of Quinquina (*Cinchona ledgeriana*), a plant that has always been used by Andeans oral communities, had been passed on to commercial enterprises that now produce quinine to treat malaria without asking any payment in terms of intellectual properties but, ironically, modern quinine-producing industries have acquired legal intellectual right. According to Osseo-Asare (2005), the San people, an oral tradition community in the Southern Africa, mastered fire about 30,000 years ago. The San passed their knowledge on the use of fire on to future generations that we make today without intellectual property. Mastering fire meant the beginning of human mastery over the energy, which has brought the rest of what can be said about human civilization globally. Indeed, in that sense, the true Prometheus could be said to have been an African, but did he not have his search for mastering fire be paid but people that improved the use of energy in different ways have had patented their inventions.

The question that emerges from reading history in this sense is then: why is the knowledge sharing being so inherently problematic? The intellectual property right has been promoted to pay for the hard work of those who conduct research and take the risks. Viewed in this sense, it makes sense in many ways that those who work hard are given the due retribution. But there remains the question of those who contribute to the very knowledge behind the scenes and are not reattributed, except maybe in token ways. The epistemological quest posited by the idea of the Anthropological hermeneutics as described here would resolve this question in several ways. First, the knowledge acquired through the proposed scheme would have to be shared with the studied communities so that they add inputs of their own narration. This would, according to the modern rules of scientific production make of these communities and interrogated key people true co-producers of knowledge. In this sense, they would share the intellectual property rights, if there is any to be acquired. Secondly, the approach being proposed here is to return to early African epistemology of knowledge sharing, which was that collectively created knowledge to remained open in its access, as was the case for fire and all other knowledge of medicinal plants, etc. This should be particularly the case when the knowledge in question is of a paramount value that surpasses any material price to pay it. This paradigm implies that knowledge is restituted back to countries where studies have been conducted. Indeed, this has been in the center of the discussions on the intellectual property rights for many years now; the issue is not that simple. But true efforts have to be invested by the scholars; the issue here is that the intellectual property right discussions have been conducted by politicians. The effort and the novelty of the situation should come from scholars; they should view this as an ethical issue of knowledge production that should be discussed by scholars among themselves. Of course, this means that communities should acknowledge the value of knowledge and be willing to pay for its creation as a public service, which would benefit all the communities.

New quests from the society

Events in Africa that have pushed many of the continent's dictatorships to relinquish the grips since 1990s, it has become current for different African communities to ask the question: "African Intelligentsia for what purpose?" Indeed, in the early 1990s, most of Africans thought that all that was needed was to get democratic elections and changes in constitutions for things to evolve on themselves. This was, of course, simply short-sighted and very limited understanding of political processes. This was so because of several reasons. First, social mobilization cannot go far when people are not sufficiently sensitized and politicized to understand what and why they should fight for something. This role should have been played by the African intelligentsia since the continent acquired its political independence. Unfortunately, most intellectuals have been caught in a situation where they relied heavily on the regimes that were decried by populations and have lost the moral authority and legitimacy they would have gained. Secondly, there is no tradition of strong labor unions in most of the African countries, a major exception being that of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) in South Africa. But, even in this case, COSATU has been transformed into a political entity in itself though it plays politics only through the support it provides to the African National Congress (ANC), the post-Apartheid ruling party in South Africa. As it has been described by Chomsky [101], the best way to galvanize people to fight for their rights is through persistent demands from strong labor unions.

Unfortunately, the 30-year long period that followed the continent independence saw dictators simply smashed every embryonic idea of creating labor unions. Indeed, most of these dictators created their own sounding boards whose leaderships were nominated and paid by the government budgets, curtailing thus any sensible initiative to raise the mass conscience in order to fight for their rights. Thirdly, the success to advance democracies has to do in many aspects with the unified front made of the Civil Society Organizations, political parties, security forces, strong iconic personalities and the external actors that have come together to stand for one single objective. There are very few instances in African where their elements are all combined; the civil society actors are divided; politicians are saying one thing in the morning and doing the other in the afternoon; intellectuals sell their voices for the political parties that promise them positions and other services and goods. Even churches are divided; the long history of the brutalities of the security forces, inherited from the spirit and operational manners of the former colonial powers, when combined with the fact that most of the security forces owe their very existence to the present system and do not see any other future for themselves, leaves very narrow window to think that they would stay neutral in what is really a political dispute. Fourthly, Africa simply does not have a tradition of public intellectuals who would, like Franz Fanon, take off the mantle of white collar-elites and go toward espousing the public causes and try to explain why taking action is better than doing nothing in some cases. A good example of this is that when Nicolas Sarkozy, then president of France, told the African intelligentsia on 26 July 2007 in Dakar, not so much has been heard from the African intelligentsia; the collective response written by several Africans [102] was rather pathetic compared to what would have been expected from a mature intelligentsia. Sarkozy then visited several African countries and gave speeches in different parliaments without an intelligent voice to rise from the intellectuals to say: we don't agree with you that Africa has never entered in History. Sixthly, the only force that was able to shake the system in the most recent history of many African countries was made of students. Students' demonstrations in 1990s, combined with the perestroika, pushed dictators to reform constitutional arrangements that kept regimes in place for so long. However, poverty and low quality of education have reduced students and student's unions to a silent board or worst to the sounding board of politicians. In conclusion, lack of ideological mobilization experience, lack of social mobilization through labor unions and divided social structures does make hard for the African elite to respond to the needs from the populations. Briefly sketched, what Africans need from their intelligentsia now is for them to deepen the understanding of democracy. As Wamba [89] rightly pointed out in early 1990s, we need to go beyond the elite democracy; we need to deepen the quest for democracy in order to spearhead the process of how that concept, universal as it is, would be brought to embrace the realities that are African such as tribe and its importance in the Africa politics [103,104].

Conclusion

The topic discussed on this work addressed a wider issue: not just the spaces of technology *application*, but also of *implication* through putting theory, people and place into perspectives. The topic allowed considering the tensions and potential synergies for innovative, sustainability knowledge conceptualization, design and development at the nexus of knowledge sharing, and language-conveyed ideas and information. With that background, the paper discussed several issues of the perception of knowledge, the creation of meanings and

motivations to create knowledge; etc. One of the most important this paper was this link between the knowledge and what is expected of its production, distribution and usage throughout the global south. After identifying problems and gaps, I was brought to consider ways in which knowledge could be organized and shared. The work took that discussion forward and produced some thinking on how to make the sharing of knowledge become a reality. I argued that in order for African scholarship to affirm itself, there is no reason to posit itself in opposition with the western scholarship, but it has to recreate a new epistemological background, which should allow the re-appropriation of the process to generate new knowledge on Africa. That epistemology focuses on the fact that knowledge should not be essentially comparative but should be drawn from understanding the societies internally using the anthropological hermeneutics. An interesting theme that emerged from the discussions of several issues about the intellectual property right was that knowledge has to be valued as public asset for which communities should be willing to pay so that it can be accessible to all.

References

1. Soja E (1970): Prologue to African experience, Essais. In: Paden J, Soja E (eds) *African Experience Essais*. Northwestern University Press, Evanston, IL USA.
2. Feyerabend P (1988) *Contre la méthode, esquisse d'une théorie anarchiste de la connaissance*. Editions du Seuil.
3. Owusu M (1978) *Ethnography of Africa: The usefulness of the useless*. *American Anthropologist*. Volume 80: 310-334.
4. MacMynowski DP (2007) Pausing at the brink of interdisciplinarity: Power and knowledge at the meeting of social and biophysical science. *Ecology and Society* 12: 20.
5. Nissani M (1999) Ten cheers for interdisciplinarity: The case for interdisciplinary knowledge and research. *The Social Science Journal*. Volume 34: 201-216.
6. Miller TR, Baird TD, Littlefield CM, Kofinas G, Chapin III FS (2008) Epistemological pluralism: Reorganizing interdisciplinary research. *Ecology and Society* 13: 46.
7. Turnbull CM (1973) *Africa and change*, Alfred A. Knopf. New York, USA.
8. Langley P (1976) *Approche ethnolinguistique de l'environnement rural et son utilité pour l'aménagement*. *Environnement Africain, problèmes et perspectives*. Institut International Africain.
9. Djelo EO (1990) *L'impact de la coutume sur l'exercice du pouvoir en Afrique*. *Cas du Zaïre Le bel élan*.
10. Jones D (2010) *The racial discourses of life philosophy: Négritude vitalism and modernity*. Columbia University Press, USA.
11. Mafuta K (1986) *L'ambivalence de l'approche de littératures orales africaines et sa polarisation positive in Problèmes de méthodes en philosophie et sciences humaines en Afrique -- Actes de la VIIe semaine philosophique de Kinshasa FTC/ Kinshasa*. pp: 111-118.
12. Kanza TR (1959) *Propos d'un congolais naïf discours sur la vocation coloniale dans l'Afrique de demain*. *Présence Africaine*.
13. Jenkins K (1995) *Re-thinking history*. Routledge, USA.
14. Vansina J (1990) *Paths in the rainforests-Towards a history of political tradition in equatorial Africa*. University of Wisconsin Press. Madison.
15. Griffin J (1997) *Incommensurability: What's the problem?* in Ruth Chang (Ed). *Incommensurability incomparability and practical reason*. Harvard University Press 35-51.
16. Scharffs BG (2001) *Adjudication and the problems of incommensurability*. *William and Mary Law Review* 42: 1367-1435.
17. Chang R (2013) *Incommensurability (and Incomparability)*. *The International Encyclopedia of Ethics*. Blackwell Publishing Ltd. USA.

18. Sumner C (1988) *Aux sources éthiopiennes de la philosophie Africaine philosophie de l'homme*. Editions des Facultés de Théologie Catholique de Kinshasa. République du Zaïre.
19. De Meester P (1980) *Eglise d'Afrique Hier et aujourd'hui*. Saint Paul, USA.
20. Smith LM (2012) *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and indigenous peoples*. (2nd edn). Z-Books Ltd., UK.
21. Taiwo O (1998) Exorcising Hegel's ghost: Africa's challenge to philosophy. *African Studies Quarterly*. Volume 1: 3-16.
22. Irele A (1991) The African scholar: Is black Africa entering the dark ages of scholarship? *Transition* 51: 56-69.
23. Thésée G, Carr PR (2009) Le Baobab en quête de ses racines : la Négritude d'Aimé Césaire ou l'éveil à un humanisme identitaire et écologique dans l'espace francophone. *Éducation et francophonie*. Volume 37: 204-221.
24. UEZA (Union des Ecrivains Zaïrois) (1981) Authenticité et Développement: colloque national sur l'authenticité organisé à Kinshasa du 14 au 21 Septembre 1981. Union des Ecrivains Zaïrois et Présence Africaine.
25. Collier VP (1989) How long? A synthesis of research on academic achievement in a second language. *TESOL Quarterly*. Volume 23: 509-531.
26. Spivak GC (2006) Can the subaltern speak? *The post-colonial studies Readers*. Routledge: 28-37.
27. Lassiter JE (2000) African culture and personality: Bad social science effective social activism or a call to reinvent ethnology? *African Studies Quarterly*. Volume 3: 2-21.
28. Shinkiti K, Naohiko M, Yoko M, Shonosuke Z (1976) Preparation of 2, 3, 4, 6-tetra-O-benzyl-D-mannose. *Bulletin of the Chemical Society of Japan*. 49: 2639-2640.
29. Jourdan L (2006) Recherche ethnographique dans une drôle de guerre. *Expériences de recherche en République Démocratique du Congo: méthodes et contextes*. Civilisations. Volume 54: 179-190.
30. Lüsebrink HJ (1996) La perception de l'Autre : Jalons pour une critique littéraire interculturelle. *Tangence*. 51: 51-66.
31. Mudimbé VY (1994) *The idea of Africa*. Indiana University Press USA.
32. Mudimbé VY (1998) The invention of Africa: Gnosis philosophy and the order of knowledge. Indiana University Press, USA.
33. Vansina J (2010) *Being colonized - The Kuba experience in Rural Congo 1880-1960*. The University of Wisconsin Press, USA.
34. Vansina J (1994). *Living with Africa*. University of Wisconsin Press, USA.
35. Inogwabini BI, Williams NL (2013) Conservation paradigms seen through the lenses of bonobos. *Conservation biology: Lessons from the tropics*. Oxford University Press. Oxford. 7-18.
36. Conrad J (1899) *Heart of darkness and other stories*. The 1998 Wordsworth Edition. Wordsworth Editions Ltd., UK.
37. Farn R (2004) Colonial and postcolonial rewritings of heart of darkness: A century of dialogue with Joseph Conrad. Ph.D Dissertation submitted to the University of Dortmund, Germany.
38. Mazama A (2002) *The Afrocentric paradigm*. Africa World Press, USA.
39. Mbembe A (2001) *On the post-colony*. University of California Press, USA.
40. Lucassen J, Tempel MVD (1972) Dynamic measurements of dilational properties of a liquid interface. *Chemical Engineering Science* 27: 1283-1291.
41. Lonkama EB (1989) *Africanistique au Zaïre : Activités du centre Aequatoria - Actes du premier colloque Aequatoria*, Annales Aequatoria.
42. Hallen B (2009) *A short history of african philosophy*-(2nd edn). Indiana University Press, USA.
43. Masolo DA (1994) *African philosophy in search of identity*. Indiana University Press, USA.
44. Haslanger S (1999) What knowledge is and what it ought to be: Feminist values and normative epistemology. *Philosophical perspective Epistemology*. 13: 459-480.
45. Vansina J (2012) *How societies are born: Governance in West Central Africa before 1600* Charlottesville, University of Virginia Press, USA.
46. Hansson J (2005) Hermeneutics as a bridge between the modern and the postmodern in library and information science. *Journal of Documentation*. 61: 102-113.
47. Myers MD (1994) Dialectical hermeneutics: A theoretical framework for the implementation of information systems. *Information Systems Journal*. 5: 51-70.
48. Petit P, Trefon T (2006) Expériences de recherche en RDC : méthodes et contextes. In Trefon T, Petit P (Editors). *Expériences de recherche en République Démocratique du Congo: méthodes et contextes*. Civilisations. 54: 9-24.
49. Moules NJ (2002) Hermeneutic inquiry: Paying heed to history and hermes: An ancestral substantive and methodological tale. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*. 1: 1-21.
50. Charmaz K (2008) Grounded theory as an emergent method. In: Hesse-Biber SN, Leavy P (Eds). *Handbook of Emergent Methods*. Guilford Press, USA. 155-172.
51. Gobineau A (1967) *Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines*. Éditions Pierre Belfond.
52. Obiechina E (1975) Culture, tradition and society in the West African novel. *African Studies Series 14*. Cambridge University Press USA.
53. Leroy-Beaulieu P (1874) *De la Colonisation chez les peuples modernes*. Guillaumin-l'Édition de 1882.
54. Evans-Pritchard EE (1929) The morphology and function of magic: a comparative study of Trobriand and Zande ritual spells. *American Anthropologist*. 31: 619-641.
55. Pritchard EE (1937) *Witchcraft oracles and magic among the Azande*. 1976 abridged edition, Oxford University Press. Oxford. USA.
56. Griaule M (1965) *Conversations with Ogotemméli: An introduction to Dogon religious ideas*. Oxford University Press, Oxford. USA.
57. Orlu HO (1990) *Sage Philosophy: Indigenous Thinkers and Modern Debate on African Philosophy*. Leiden. Netherlands.
58. Diop CA. (1974) *Les Fondements économiques et culturels d'un état fédéral d'Afrique noire*. Seconde Edition: revue et corrigée. Présence Africaine.
59. Diop CA (1977) Parenté génétique de l'égyptien pharaonique et des langues négro-africaines: processus de sémitisation Ifan-Dakar: Les Nouvelles Éditions Africaines.
60. Diop CA (1978) UNESCO Symposium on the Peopling of Ancient Egypt and the Deciphering of Meroitic Script. The peopling of ancient Egypt and the deciphering of Meroitic script. proceedings of the symposium. Subsequent edition (1997) London: Karnak House.
61. Diop CA (1979) Nations nègres et culture: de l'antiquité nègre-égyptienne aux problèmes culturels de l'Afrique noire d'aujourd'hui Paris: Éditions Africaines. 4eme Edition. Présence Africaine.
62. Diop CA (1982). *L'unité culturelle de l'Afrique noire: domaines du patriarcat et du matriarcat dans l'antiquité classique* Paris: Présence Africaine. Seconde Edition. Présence Africaine.
63. Diop CA (1987) *L' Afrique noire pré-coloniale Étude comparée des systèmes politiques et sociaux de l'Europe et de l'Afrique noire de l'antiquité à la formation des états modernes*. Seconde Edition. Présence africaine.
64. Diop CA (1993) Antériorité des civilisations nègres: mythe ou vérité historique? Seconde Edition Series: Collection Préhistoire-antiquité négro-africaine. Présence Africaine.
65. Ngom G (1989) L'égyptien et les langues Bantu le cas du Duala. *Présence Africaine - Revue Culturelle du Monde Noir*. 149,150: 203-213.
66. Ngom G (1993) Parenté génétique entre l'égyptien pharaonique et les langues négro-africaines modernes: exemple du Duala. *Ankh*. 2: 29-83.
67. Ngom G (1997) Variantes graphiques hiéroglyphiques et phonétique historique de l'égyptien ancien et des langues négro-africaines modernes. *Ankh*. 67: 75-89.
68. Obenga T (2001) *Le sens de la lutte contre l'africanisme eurocentriste*. Kheper/ L'Harmattan.

69. Howe S (1998) *Afrocentrism: Mythical Past and Imagined Homes*. Verso, London.
70. Mboj M, Howe S (2000) *Afrocentrism: Mythical Past and Imagined Homes*. Chrétien (Jean-Pierre), Fauvelle-Aymar (François-Xavier), Perrot (Claude-Hélène) (sous la direction de.) *Afrocentrismes : L'histoire des Africains entre Égypte et Amérique* (Paris, Karthala, 2000, 402 pages): Le point de vue de Mohamed Mboj. *Politique Africaine*. Volume 79: 165–169.
71. Mudimbé VY, Appiah KA (1993) The impact of African studies on philosophy. *Africa and the Disciplines. The Contributions of Research in Africa to the Social Sciences and Humanities*. University of Chicago Press, USA.
72. Tefera D, Altbach PG (2004) African higher education: Challenges for the 21st century. *Higher Education* 47: 21–50.
73. Farah N (1994) Civil society and freedom of research. *Academic Freedom in Africa*. CODESRIA Book Series. 262–273.
74. Zeleza PT (2003) Academic freedom in the neo-liberal order: Governments globalization governance and gender. *Journal of Higher Education in Africa/ Revue de l'enseignement supérieur en Afrique*.1: 149–194.
75. Habermass J (2007) *The philosophical discourse of modernity*. Eighth English Reprint Polity Press, UK.
76. Brown KD, Brown AL (2012) Useful and dangerous discourse: Deconstructing racialized knowledge about African-American Students. *Educational Foundations*. 26: 11–26.
77. Dabo SK (1978) Negro-african Nationalism as a Quest for Justice. *Présence Africaine*. 107: 57–92.
78. Osha S (2005) Legacies of a critique of ethnophilosophy - Hountondji's African philosophy: Myth and reality revisited. *Quest–philosophical discussions: An African Journal of Philosophy*. 17: 13–34.
79. Ibhawoh B, Dibua JI (2003) Deconstructing Ujamaa: The Legacy of Julius Nyerere in the Quest for Social and Economic Development in Africa. *African Journal of Political Sciences*. 8: 60–82.
80. Keita L (1993) Neoclassical Economics: Science or Ideology? *Philosophical discussions. An African Journal of Philosophy*. 7: 56–77.
81. Mudimbe VY (1983) An African criticism of christianity. *Genève-Afrique: acta africana*. 21: 91–100.
82. Kabou A (2000) *Et si l'Afrique refusait le développement?* Editions L'Harmattan.
83. Kabou, A. (2010). *Comment l'Afrique en est arrivée là*. Editions L'Harmattan.
84. Kalanda M (1967) *La remise en question: Base de la décolonisation mentale*. Éditions Remarques africaines.
85. Mudimbé VY (1979) *Civilisation et Eglise Catholique: Vers une décolonisation du catholicisme africain?* Cahiers de Religions Africaines. 13: 145–151.
86. Kouassi RN (2015) *L'Afrique: Un géant qui refuse de naître : La solution, c'est de tout reprendre à zéro*. L'Harmattan.
87. Amin S (1989) *La faillite du développement en Afrique et dans le tiers monde*. L'Harmattan.
88. Mudimbé VY (1976) Des philosophes africains en mal de développement. *Zaire-Afrique*. 108: 453–458.
89. Wamba DWE (1991) Philosophy and African intellectuals: Mimesis of Western Classicism. *Ethno-philosophical Romanticism or African Self-Mastery? Philosophical discussions: An African Journal of Philosophy* 5: 4–17.
90. Mbembe A (2000) At the edge of the world: Boundaries, Territoriality and Sovereignty in Africa. *Public Culture*. 12: 259–284.
91. Appiah KA (1992) Inventing an African practice in philosophy. Epistemological issues. In Mudimbé VY (Ed). *The surreptitious speech. Présence Africaine and the Politics of Otherness 1947-1987*. The University of Chicago Press. 227–237.
92. Pasler, J. (2008). Theorizing race in nineteenth-century in France: Music as emblem of identity. *The Musical Quarterly*.
93. Van der Geest S (1990) Anthropologists and missionaries: Brothers under the skin. *Man–New Series*. 25: 588–601.
94. Ngugi WT (2003) The language of African Literature. In: Ashcroft B, Griffiths G, Tiffin H (eds). *Post-colonial Studies Reader*.
95. Presbey GM, McLean GF (2013) In Memory: The significance of Claude Sumner SJ's Contribution to Africa Philosophy.
96. Hsieh HF, Shannon SE (2005) Three approaches to qualitative content analysis. *Qualitative Health Research*.15: 1277–1288.
97. Vansina J (1992) *Habitat economy and society in Central African rain forest*. Berg occasional papers on anthropology. Berg Publishers UK.
98. Foucault M (1969) *The archaeology of knowledge*. The 1972-Routledge Edition. Routledge, UK.
99. Obenga T (1999-2000) Africa the cradle of writing. *Ankh*. 8,9: 87–95.
100. Ray JD (1986) The emergence of writing in Egypt. *World Archeology*. 17: 307–316.
101. Chomsky N (2003) Problems of projection. *Lingua* 130: 33–49.
102. Gassama IJ (2008) Africa and the politics of destruction: A critical re-examination of neocolonialism and its consequences. *Or Rev Int'l L* 10: 327.
103. Mbonigaba MMH (1993) *Tuer le tribalisme sans tuer la tribu*. Renaitre. p: 13.
104. Mizeka M (1994) *Les professeurs d'universités et les dictatures en Afrique noire*. Renaitre.