AMASA NDOFIREPI AND MICHAEL CROSS

1. UNIVERSITY KNOWLEDGE FOR SOCIETAL CHANGE IN AFRICA

Unpacking Critical Debates

INTRODUCTION

The centrality of the role of university education in the future of society is indubitable as institutions of higher learning are, in practice, prime springs of new knowledge and skills—crucial and indispensable drivers of the economy. The university is charged with the responsibility of creating rich learning conditions that prepare learners for their place in society by providing access to scientific knowledge of high quality—an environment that bridges knowledge generation and the application of such knowledge in society. Knowledge is the common denominator on which the three traditional missions of academic teaching, research and social engagement are built (Abrahams, Burke, Gray, & Rens, 2008), and is the nucleus of the academic enterprise. Higher education systems and universities the world over are under immense pressure to reform by adjusting to the local and global demands for change in order to remain relevant.

The publication of the World Bank Report (1994) *Higher Education: Lessons of Experience* signalled the advent of a critical policy framework foregrounding the primacy of knowledge as a leading factor of production ahead of labour, capital and land, throughout the world economy. Contemporary global prosperity and power, characterised by more diffuse and benevolent expression to the world, continues to exhibit how knowledge has steadily gained significance as a critical influence for social change, including the manner in which ideas are generated, distributed and utilised. In line with the British Council Conference (2014) theme on *Universities as agents of social change: How do universities create economic and social equity,* this book speaks to the key question of how universities in Africa can contribute to the growth of local communities through knowledge production and skills generation. The primary concern is of an epistemological nature, namely: What is knowledge and what forms can and should it take in African universities?

Universities in Africa have often been accused of being semblances of western epistemologies propelling an encumbering and debilitating Eurocentric education, characterised by an attendant tenacity to exclude and marginalise an indigenous presence and 'ways of knowing' in higher education (see Hauser, Howlett, & Matthews, 2009; Nyamnjoh, 2004). After attaining political independence, new African states

inherited a western-educated elite who have continued to lead postcolonial African universities that perpetuate and espouse Eurocentric 'development' models (see Nabudere, 2003) by aping and replicating western hegemonic epistemologies on all fronts. This persuaded the editors of this two-volume book to invite critical scholarly contributions from academics and analysts of all persuasions, to engage in discourse about justifiable knowledge relevant for the 21st century citizen in Africa.

The literature is awash with generalisations on the role and function of the university, from Newman's ([1873]1982) idea of the university, to the Humboldtian model of higher education, through to the Castellian university as a system (see Castells, 2001). Nevertheless, there is a dearth of contributions by scholars on Africa and the role of knowledge as a change agent to address the African predicament in the globalising world. This book aims to fill the void in the postcolonial literature on knowledge production, research and dissemination in the African university. It foregrounds perspectives emerging from a continent that has traditionally been silenced and given insufficient consideration in the Anglo-American dominated epistemologies. Knowing what, knowing that, and knowing how, in order to change the African situation, have thus become topical concerns for policy makers, academic leaders and scholars on Africa, hence the focus of this book.

In their chapter in this book, *Knowledge, globalisation and the African university: The change agenda,* Kingston Nyamapfene and Amasa Ndofirepi discuss the extent to which the African university remains faithful and relevant to the African development process; including its efforts to carve out a place for itself as a key player in the global marketplace, while striving for visibility, recognition and acknowledgement. While conceding that their treatment of the subject is not exhaustive, given that there are nuances not captured in a broad, Africa-wide assessment, they posit that the need for change is no longer a matter for debate—it is in a general sense that the African university is in need of re-thinking. Starting with knowledge production and dissemination, their presentation proffers an opportunity for the African university to rethink and reinvent itself. They argue that the African university must, of necessity, work on the basis of priorities, rather than pursue an unrealistic agenda intended to address both past gaps and the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead.

KNOWING WHAT, THAT, AND HOW

Knowledge or knowing occurs in three ways, namely *knowledge of what, knowledge of that,* and *knowledge of how*. In its relational form, *knowing that* (knowledge by acquaintance) entails the knower's awareness of relationships between concepts, shapes, or people. *Knowledge of what* is the site of inquiry, permitting the knower access to definitions, meanings, and special characteristics of some content. *Knowledge of how (know-how)* refers to having the practical and theoretical instruments that are necessary to perform a particular activity with a certain level of skill. These three constructions of knowledge are at the heart of any real discourse on

the nature and role of universities. Given the currency of the knowledge economy or society, universities have become progressively more politically and economically critical institutions for the production and dissemination of knowledge. But as Bourdieu (2004) rightly avers, the production, positioning and consumption of knowledge are far from a neutral, objective and disinterested process. It is socially and politically mediated by hierarchies of humanity and human agency imposed by particular relations of power (pp. 18–21).

In support of the foregoing, the World Bank Report 1998/1999 reaffirms that economies are built not merely through the accumulation of physical capital and human skill, but on a foundation of information, learning, and adaptation. Because knowledge matters, understanding how people and societies acquire and use knowledge—and why they sometimes fail to do so is essential to improving people's lives, especially the lives of the poorest (World Bank, 1999). In his chapter *Africanisation and diverse epistemologies in higher education discourses: Limitations and possibilities,* Kai Horsthemke argues that the Africanisation of higher education is, by and large, assumed to involve institutional transformation, and more overtly the 'decolonisation' of higher education. He identifies the demand for the transformation of syllabus and content as a key component; as well as transformation of the curriculum (changing the whole way teaching and learning are organised). This includes the need to change the criteria that determine what counts as excellent research, acceptable throughput rates, etc., on the basis of acknowledging and respecting diverse and subaltern epistemologies.

Horsthemke's chapter concerns itself fundamentally with the question of whether the ideas of diverse and subaltern epistemologies, and 'indigenous/African knowledge' in particular, make any sense he provides not only conceptual clarification, but also a critical examination of existing debates within higher education discourses. Horsthemke posits that, given the tentativeness of these debates, discourses about Africanisation and epistemological diversity (in higher education, as elsewhere) need to continue. While acknowledging the centre–periphery binary (Altbach, 2007) between universities in the North and those in the South in terms of the control and management of knowledge research, production and dissemination, contributors to this book provide a justification for mutual existence in a shared academic milieu. In such a scenario, universities from all sides of the globe would develop research capacity for equitable participation in the global knowledge system in order to collectively change the world.

The chapter explains how knowledge has continued unabated to sustain economic growth and improve living standards of societies in which it is generated, and beyond. However, in the knowledge and power dynamic, certain elite institutions have used their powerful position to determine and reinforce the centre – periphery state of affairs in the global society. The result is a situation where certain knowledges have been allocated pole positions, in order to legitimate the power of selected races, gender or classes. But what kind of knowledges and knowledge ecologies are required?

Post-independence African states and their celebratory independence anniversaries have often been rhetorical about measurable achievements and shortcomings in their endeavours to invent and maintain a better society, especially through research in universities. This book follows up on Metz's (2009, p. 517) question as to whether "…publicly funded higher education ought to aim intrinsically to promote certain kinds of 'blue-sky' knowledge, knowledge that is unlikely to result in 'tangible' or 'concrete' social benefits such as health, wealth and liberty" (p. 517). Despite the normativity of the social change agenda as promulgated in national and regional policy statements, the majority of citizens in Africa are still living in abject poverty—they are poorly housed, unemployed, uneducated, and society is riddled with the increasing casualties of the killer HIV/Aids pandemic. This has earned the postcolonial African condition descriptors such as "the world's tragedy" (Oke, 2006, p. 332), "Africa in a precarious state" (Oguejiofor, 2001, p. 7), the "most humiliated, most dehumanised continent in the world", whose past is "a tale of dispossession and impoverishment" (Osundare, 1998, p. 231).

In the wake of the contemporary overall incapacity to expand the material conditions of life of the majority of Africa's citizens, we are confident in challenging the status quo by reconsidering the hierarchisation of social policies and the strategies adopted to implement them. This book goes beyond the previous choices made, by applying the change agenda for social advancement to knowledge processes in the university. Close, reflective attention is paid to the topic by offering a critical review of the course, trends and implications of contemporary change in civic society. The book proffers a detailed theoretical analysis of how the bond between knowledge research, its production and dissemination in the university in Africa is an important factor for societal change, not only at local, regional and regional levels, but also at the global level. In particular, the contributors enter the discourse by challenging how change in the socio-economic environment is impacting on the epistemic dimension of university knowledge processes in Africa, given the fact that "…institutions whose character is profoundly ethno-provincial keep masquerading as replicas of Oxford and Cambridge without demonstrating the same productivity as the original places they are mimicking" (Mbembe, 2015, n.p.).

In response to the foregoing, the chapter by Thaddeus Metz calls for *Africanising institutional culture*. He proffers five rationales, namely relativism, democracy, redress, civilisation and identity, which inform the central dimensions of curriculum research, language aesthetics and governance through which universities in Africa can Africanise their functioning. Using the case of South Africa, Metz concludes that the above rationales, in combination, constitute a convincing case for moderate Africanisation of the institutional culture of public universities. Starting from the notion of *ubuntu* as an African philosophy of human interdependence and humaneness, Yusef Waghid goes a step further in his chapter, *Ubuntu: African philosophy of education and pedagogical encounters.* He invites the entry of the concept of *ubuntu* into university cultures in order to develop a humane and just

society, enable a locally relevant education, and promote democratic pedagogical encounters at African universities.

In *Pan-African curriculum in higher education: A reflection,* Tukumbi Lumumba-Kasongo explores the prospects of integrating the concept and politics of *Pax Africana* in the curriculum of university systems. He advances the view that there is a lot to learn from pan- Africanism in our efforts to redefine knowledge and change education systems in Africa. He posits that through the exploration of a pan-African curriculum, a reinvigorated national foundation of African development can be engendered. There is plenty of anecdotal evidence about the imposition and valorisation of western scientific knowledge and its rationalistic origins on the indigenous 'ways of knowing' in former colonial states in Africa (see Kaphagawani & Malherbe, 2003; Ngugi, 1986; Ramose, 2004). This has resulted in epistemological imperialism in established educational institutions, including universities. This draws us to the question of whose and what knowledge is worthwhile in the university in Africa? We begin with the establishment of the colonial university; move to the postcolonial university, and then to contemporary times. This allows us to identify a typology of four categories of universities over time, in terms of the nature of knowledge and the characterisation of *knowing*.

UNIVERSITIES IN AFRICA OVER TIME: A TYPOLOGY

The establishment of university colleges by colonial administrations in colonised African territories culminated in what we can call today *universities in Africa*. By their character, they were designed to be satellites of host universities located in the home country of the colonial power, for example the Ivy League universities such as Harvard, Yale and Cornell (in the United States of America) and Oxford, London and Cambridge (in the United Kingdom). Of epistemological interest was the importation of disciplines and faculty from the home universities, with their associated content and pedagogy. This practice was designed to train a crop of elite locals, suitable for service in the colonial governments. The newly established institutions were close replicas of their Eurocentric host universities; they aspired to become "local instantiations of a dominant academic model based on a Eurocentric epistemic canon" (Mbembe, 2015, n.p.).

The same sort of appropriation is experienced today, when universities in the North, by partnering with research centres they have funded in universities in Africa, continue to manipulate untapped local knowledges for the benefit of their home countries, and then trade such intellectual property products back to Africa. Such a situation locates Africa in the position of an object of study and as a centre for knowledge production, leaving it in a precarious state in the international division of intellectual labour. What remains is: how much of the Eurocentric epistemologies remain in 21st century universities in Africa in the five decades after political liberation from erstwhile colonisers? If the above explanation is plausible, then

epistemological practices in such institutions warrant them bearing the label *universities in Africa*.

The acquisition of power by early post-independence governments in the early 1960s and 1970s marked the emergence of nationalist scholars, including Kwame Nkrumah, Julius Nyerere, Leopold Senghor, Kofi Busia, Jomo Kenyatta, to mention a few. These scholars and statesmen held a common view of the role of the African university, including its critical agency for the socio-political and economic development of their countries. This era is discernible by a deliberate attempt to deviate from the colonial university in Africa to a *development African university*. At the now famous Accra Declaration of 1972, all universities were deemed to be *development universities* (Yesufu, 1973), with national governments being tasked to contribute a large share in driving universities in the direction of development. But how different was this ideal from the colonial university in Africa?

Contemporary Africanist higher education scholars have transcended the above two idealised universities to refer to what is, in our view and by implication, a globalised African university. The current globalisation agenda which has flooded the world has captivated Africans to reconsider their place in the world (Cossa, 2009, p. 1)—we are rethinking and redefining ourselves: "who we are and where we are going in the global community, through the reformulation of practical strategies and solutions for the future benefit of the Africans" (p. 1). In the context of university education, this movement is coupled with the emergence of descriptors of vision and mission statements, such as *world class African university*, *research university anchored in Africa, flagship university in Africa,* and *African university in the service of humanity*, among others. The common element among these different statements of universities on the African continent is the question of *identity*, revolving around *Africanness* as circumscribed in the global sphere. The issue is: What is African about the university? Do universities domiciled in Africa authentically deserve to be African? Are all university thus labelled homogeneous?

Felix Maringe enters the debate in his chapter: *Transforming knowledge production systems in the new African university,* by introducing the reader to the complexities of the notion of a new African university's resonance with the imperatives of transformation in postcolonial states. Using Ngugi wa Thiongo's *Decolonising the Mind* (1986) as a frame of reference, Maringe discusses how the epistemological decolonisation of African universities will remain in its infancy, unless efforts to emancipate the academy are accelerated. The chapter draws the reader to three critical issues, namely: the imperatives behind knowledge production transformation in postcolonial Africa; how knowledge research, curriculum, teaching and learning, and the training of postgraduates have remained unchanged; and lastly how the challenges therein can be confronted to serve not only the universities as institutions, but also the societies they are expected to change.

The difficulty that we continue to grapple with is agreeing on a settled definition of an *African university* in an environment typified by the perpetuation of the dominating ideas and practices of North America and Europe in the academy.

What does the future hold for the African university if Africans as a people claim legitimate entitlement to the use of the term *African* to refer to something exclusively and uniquely belonging to their local and indigenous experiences, just as their counterparts in Europe, America and Australasia would do? Given the impact of globalisation and the ongoing epistemological hegemony, Africans need to affirm their identity and autonomy as a communocratic—rooted in a common oppressive background due to colonisation by the west—as part of the contemporary decolonial discourses project, otherwise the African intellectual space will become extinct.

DECOLONISING THE AFRICAN UNIVERSITY

There have been recent diversified and intensified demands to decolonise universities (see Blumbergai, 2012; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2014; Ndofirepi, 2014) by creating a radically changed curriculum from the one inherited from the colonial era, and producing a genuinely plural academic population. The act of knowing and the knowledge so produced, continue to this day, to exhibit the hegemonic tradition of the erstwhile colonisers. The call for Africanisation of the university and subsequent epistemological emancipation is a demand by African voices to reimagine the place of African contextual realities as the centre of the university and its knowledges. This is one way of making universities in Africa true African universities. 'Decolonisation' is a buzzword in contemporary academic and public fora, although it transcends merely replacing white with black in the academy. Rather, it foregrounds the need to make knowledge in the university relevant and responsive to the priorities, challenges and realities of the African people. Such a mindset should take care to avoid falling into the trap of nostalgia, overglorification and reification of Africanness in a tremendously globalising world.

Engaging in a comparative debate of African and South American experiences, Julia Suárez-Krabbe's chapter, *The conditions that make a difference: Decolonial historical realism and the decolonisation of knowledge and education*, employs decolonial historical materialism to explain how coloniality, as a globalised system of oppression, informs our realities and identities differently. Most critical in her question of identity is: How do we articulate the conditions that make us who and what we are, in a world where epistemicide and imposition have been intrinsic to the colonial endeavour, and where the frameworks of understanding that legitimated that colonial endeavour are still presented as true, scientific, universal, and objective? Neo Lekgotla laga Ramoupi and Roland Ndille Ntongwe use their South African and Cameroonian experiences respectively to critique the *Africanisation of humanities knowledges in the universities in Africa*. They agree with the view that for university knowledge to be referred to as African "it must be done the African way, by African authors in Africa, on African issues within the African context of time and space, to generate African doctrines" (Ndofirepi, 2014, p. 157). Ramoupi and Ntongwe present their case as a social justice case that prioritises African values in determining worthwhile knowledges to be pursued by universities in Africa.

Birgit Brock-Utne's chapter, *Decolonisation of knowledge in the African university*, enters the decolonisation discourse by offering the possibility of limiting the meaning of globalising learning to the incorporation of African elites into the culture of erstwhile colonisers. For her, Africanist scholars and academic leaders are the epitome of fronting the study of Eurocentric texts—hence the difficulty of de-yoking knowledge change in the African universities from epistemic imperialism. This chapter draws on the language question by arguing for the restoration of African languages and cultures in the academy. To this end, Brock-Utne concludes that advances in science and technology in African universities, and the accompanying knowledge creation, are best realised through mutual cooperation between local people and researchers. However, she acknowledges the presence of the challenges that circumscribe the decolonisation project. Brock-Utne's chapter is complemented by the one by Bheki Mngomezulu and Marshall Maposa, *The challenges facing academic scholarship in Africa: A critical analysis*. These authors explore how the types of leadership and governance in African universities contribute to the decay of academic scholarship; although they accept that change in university knowledges cannot be left in the hands of leadership alone, but should be equally the responsibility of society at large.

In pursuance of the above opinions, Thaddeus Metz's chapter on *Managerialism as anti-social: Some implications of ubuntu for knowledge production*, acknowledges the impediments of managerialism in South African higher education, in relation to knowledge production in universities in Africa. He argues that in its varied dimensions, and especially in research, managerialism is indefensible if measured against the salient ideas of human relationships that are enshrined in the ubuntu philosophy. Metz employs the moral-theoretic interpretation from this traditional African philosophy, to invoke some practical compass points for navigating research in the university, which he refers to as "the first comprehensive critique to be informed by salient sub-Saharan values". Following this thread, in her chapter *Performance management in the African university as panopticism: Embedding prison-like conditions*, Sadi Sayema corroborates the fact that performance management in higher education has become steadily an oppressive panoptic tower in its pursuit for institutional accountability, 'efficiency' and rankings. She views managerialism as a neoliberal project in university education, immersed in western hegemony and characterised by oppressive tendencies that hinder and monitor the transformative agenda of universities as institutions of societal change.

Higher education institutions have no choice but to re-invent themselves in order to respond to specific local and global conditions (Wilson-Tagoe, 2007). Universities worldwide are faced with pressure to deliver successful graduates and bridge the gap between higher education and society (Waghid, 2002); there is a need for graduates with applied knowledge to serve communities in ameliorating societal problems. But how can African universities develop revitalised curricula, among other changes, to address African developmental problems and reply to the demands of a new global economy, while simultaneously maintaining the traditional

occupation of a university as a place of objective and critical reflection? How can an African university transform knowledge, change knowledge relations, and vouch for epistemic openness (Augusto, 2007)? To what extent can we reinvent knowledge production and dissemination in the African university in order to enhance their relevance to the spaces and contexts in which they are located?

Envisioned as a 'new university' in the 21st century, the African university has to play the vital role of freeing knowledge production from narrow class, technical, and instrumentalist dominance by a few specialists, to a broader theatre of recognition of producers of knowledge (Nabudere, 2003). From an epistemological viewpoint, such a university provides prospects not only for the acquisition, but also the construction of new knowledge that speaks to the context of the African condition first, before the global environment in which we exist, rather than being a mirror image of western epistemology. But how can such epistemological change survive the test of the lived and dependent Eurocentric knowledge that is so pervasive in, and characteristic of universities in Africa? How can these satellite universities be transformed to assist the African people instead of serving external interests and agendas? Contributors to this book have put forward debates that view African universities as "…new forms of assemblies that become points of convergence of and platforms for the redistribution of different kinds of knowledges" (Mbembe, 2015 n.p.). Sipho Seepe's chapter, *Higher Education transformation in South Africa*, challenges the perpetuation of white supremacy in the academy, which dates back to the colonial times even prior to the apartheid era in South Africa. He argues that despite the universally-held view that university knowledge is a critical medium for social change, there has been a failure to defy white supremacy and the associated epistemological imports in South African higher education. Seepe calls on progressive Africanist scholars to stand up to the occasion, to counter the retrogressive character of segregatory knowledge tendencies inherent in white supremacy, and steer towards discrete intellectual and research cultures that address African challenges.

There have been repeated calls for the "…endogenisation of the curriculum, including mother-tongue instruction; local, alternative or African knowledges and philosophy; and non-western technologies of development" (see Cloete & Muller, 1998, p. 3). An important question is: Do African scholars and academic leaders in the university need to wait for students to protest in favour of the decolonisation of knowledge, as was the case of the 2015–2016 student uprising in South African universities, starting with the *Fees Must Fall campaign?* What key ideas can be drawn from such student activism to steer a nuanced framework for a transformed African university in the 21st century?

This book underscores the key role of the symbiosis between knowledge processes and systemic change in society, by pursuing knowledge that epitomises social justice and equality. This imperative enables partnerships between universities as institutions, and the communities in which they are located, whilst endeavouring to build egalitarian institutional structures that are necessary to elevate Africanist

critical consciousness to the global platform, without compromising the advancement of African excellence. Nevertheless, scholars and academics in higher education need to acknowledge the innate complexities at the cultural interface of western knowledge and skills with indigenous ones. What then is the role of curriculum and programme designers in evaluating content biases and distortions which adversely frame African cultures and deleteriously fail to integrate content that reflects other cultural centres?.

Michael Cross and Amasa Ndofirepi, in their chapter *Critical scholarship in South Africa: Considerations on epistemology, theory and method*, provide theoretical insights by recapitulating the discourse of researching the 'other' in South Africa. They expand the horizons while traversing the domain of the cognitive and political fields of knowledge production. Taking the debate to the area of social science research in higher education, these authors provide theoretical evidence of how epistemological and the social domains interface with individual action in research. In this chapter the authors make the case that, given the legacies of colonialism and apartheid, relationships between the subjects and objects of study in social science research are intentionally (or unintentionally) conditioned by the constructed boundaries of race, class and gender, and other forms of social difference. This, in turn, has profound implications for knowledge conception, formulation and validation.

Epistemic communities do not operate in a vacuum—the problems faced by higher education institutions and the prescriptions to solve them are highly influenced by international bureaucracies, particularly the Breton Woods institutions and other powerful business groups evincing power dynamics and the associated politics of knowledge. Consequently, any examination of the process of epistemological change in the African university cannot overlook the dynamics of defensively justify the relocation of epistemologies from the North for the sake of maintaining western universalised academic standards. Examples of such practices include sending doctoral theses and other examination materials to overseas universities, especially in Europe and North America, for assessment in the name of 'quality assurance. Added to such practices is the uncritical dependence on standards and ratings driven by the west through global university rankings as a form of legitimation of knowledge hierarchies. Such tendencies are tantamount to the "singularisation of human diversity by being forced onto a singular track of historical 'progress' grounded on an emulation and/or mimicry of European historicity" (Serequeberhan, 2002, p. 92). The demand for knowledge change in the African university refers to the "re-narration of the African existence" (Okeke, 2008, p. 61) and the need for constructive "…discourse that mainstreams local relevance and vocalises the silent voices" (Lebakeng, Phalane, & Dalindjebo, 2006, p. 70) of African experiences.

It is unjustified and inexplicable that even basic research in the ideal African university minimally addresses the key issues afflicting African people and African society, despite the large number of universities that mushroomed after gaining

political independence from the west (see Ndofirepi, 2014). In Mamdani's (1993) words, these universities are "triumphantly universalistic and uncompromisingly foreign" to local cultures, populations and predicaments (Mamdani, 1993, pp. 11–15). Such a position is located in (Weiler, 2003)'s (2003) notion of the "politics of knowledge", in which the hegemonic power of western epistemologies makes it "…very difficult for universities modeled on these western precepts to break their paradigmatic umbilicus (Odora-Hoppers, 2005, p. 13).

This book brings to the fore debates on how we need to deliberately turn our gaze and expose how knowledge is controlled in universities in Africa, in ways that witness African people being further marginalised, denigrated and exploited. The debates question the problematic nature of the dominant western epistemological export to university education in Africa (Nyamnjoh, 2011), thereby unmasking the systemic marginalisation of dominated local knowledges in higher education. The book calls for African universities to relocate from this position of object to subject, in order to expose a liberated epistemological voice (Hook, 1989), by responding to Devon Mihesuah's challenge: "If we do not take charge and create strategies for empowerment, who will?" (Mihesuah, 2003).

Knowledge systems in the African university should be a reflection of African ownership and participation that "…contextualizes standards and set[s] parameters of excellence based on the needs of African society and people" (Odora-Hoppers, 2005, p. 12). The construction of such a new African epistemology and methodology in the university would be an instrument to emasculate existing dominant interests, while also challenging the fortress of Eurocentric paradigms and western 'scientistic' epistemologies of knowledge (Nabudere, 2003). It is hoped that this movement will go some way to fulfilling the African Union Commission's (2014) Agenda 2063: The Africa we want. Their call for action declares: "We are deeply conscious that Africa in 2015 stands at a crossroads and we are determined to transform the continent and ensure irreversible and universal change of the African condition" (African Union Commission, 2014, p. 14). This call avows the quest for a major and genuine change of paradigm, asserting the right of African people to be human—African in their own entity, and legitimate citizens of the world.

In *Reinventing greatness: Responding to urgent global-level responsibilities and critical university-level priorities*, Ihron Rensburg reflects on the contemporary significance of knowledge institutions, particularly research universities. His discussion includes both emerging and established economies, and the world as a whole, with particular reference to Africa and South Africa. He argues that for universities to attain greatness, they must evolve, as greatness is evolving in this globalising world. He concludes that institutional research alone is incomplete without a practical response to the grand challenges of cooperation, integration, inclusion, caring and civic-mindedness. To this end, his chapter calls for universities in Africa to refocus on the contemporary global development logic and its attendant agenda of partner or perish in order to reinvent greatness.

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