



Chapter 7

Why are we Here? Challenging Agents of Revolutions through Independent Transformation

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Abstract

Artificial Intelligence (AI) simply informs us that humans can no longer trust each other, let alone trust themselves, and that we feel better immersing ourselves and trusting machines, robotics, simulated automation, etc. In the context of seeking appropriate analytical modes of understanding in the era of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR), the saying that *motho ke motho ka batho* is re-imagined, meaning you are human because of other people's humanness to you. If *motho ke motho ka batho* can machines that are tasked to do what human beings can do also become machinery because of other robust robotic machines? The search for answers also guards against contestations that warn against the existence of superstitious thinking to embrace evidence-led scientific thinking. However, in applying what may commonly be assumed as superstitious thinking when Credo Mutwa warned against the French and Russian industrial revolutions on actions that would propel Africans to adapt to foreign ways of living, we learn and observe as this chapter affirms that the perceived superstitious thinking was Mutwa's African scientific thinking which is evidenced today. 'We' is used here provocatively to denote in plurality the ancestors or those who walk with someone. It is fundamentally used in the realm and unity of considering that the AI algorithms are also categorised as a "set of rules that instruct a computer to execute specific tasks". Similarly, with the consideration of ancestors as guiding through a set of ancestral algorithms, one is also able to execute tasks that are instructed to them. We showcase how it is easier to

take up developments from algorithms that emerge elsewhere, specifically in the global North than for Africa and Africans to assume and resume development and independence from what they have in the global South and accelerate this development to the global world. The chapter concludes that Mutwa(ian) algorithms inform that the African Renaissance is the equivalence of self-discovery and the fearlessness of breaking the oath of one's cultural norms.

Introduction

While it is important to indicate why context matters, it is not only intersecting social theory with the epistemic and ontological realities of the (geo) politics of knowledge (Mignolo 2011) where transformation and adoption of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) development are navigated from one's locus of enunciation. The context in this chapter also applies partially to realities observed in the global North especially when there are ethical dilemmas because of newly-formed and engineered revolutions that shift how we work and pursue education in institutions of higher learning. Artificial intelligence (AI) simply informs us that humans can no longer trust each other, let alone trust themselves, and that we feel better immersing ourselves and trusting machines, robotics, simulated automation, etc. Asante (2004: 3) cautioned against technological advances and various modes of telecommunications in creating Africans who "move mindlessly in an abstract world of machines and telecommunication equipment". For example, dependence means "reliance on tools, instruments, machines, computers and weapons of war" with disconnection to the human spirit (Asante 2004: 4). Therefore, it is necessary to ask, if AI machines can do what human beings are created for and knowing being human is a function of other people's humanness, can humanity be robotised?

The 4IR, in the context of seeking appropriate analytical modes of understanding, create the reimagination of the saying that *motho ke motho ka batho*, meaning you are human because of other people's humanness to you. If *motho ke motho ka batho* can machines that are tasked to do what human beings can do also become intensely machinery because of other robust

robotic machines? Segun (2021: 104), Marwala (2020: 173; 2021) and others support that AI machines can be aligned with existing human values from an African perspective. I argue that overreliance and dependence on 4IR can be curbed when one asserts one's ancestral algorithms or ancestors that walk with you.

Öhman (2024: 3) also agrees that AI models "through their perceived extra human superiority are just like religious communities that submit to the superior wisdom of their ancestors". Öhman (2024: 2) asserts that "many forms of AI should be interpreted as forms of gods". Hence, this chapter argues that an African intellectual sage, Credo Mutwa, revolutionised the same superintelligence by drawing from his ancestral algorithms or hidden knowledge of his ancestors. I contend that it is problematic when Black or African-derived revolutions are superseded by revolutions that emerge elsewhere, in many cases from the global North. Therefore, this chapter uses the conceptual framework of Credo Mutwa to discuss how an African renaissance and revolution derived from the global South can be immortalised through Mutwa's indigenous ways of knowing.

The question asking why we are where we are is an appreciative inquiry into the emergence of the First, Second, Third, and, now the most palpable and disruptive Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR), which is more illuminated within the scope of this chapter. The positionality and contexts in this chapter depict real-life social and theoretical realities due to afflictions and confrontations caused by agents of powerful revolutions. In this regard, 4IR in creating modes of being left behind as industries of work, institutions of higher learning, and societies at large. The state and zone of being in the modes of feeling left behind is also an inquiry that asks where the elevation is and embraces a Black or African revolution. Why is it always Blacks in their numerical majority who are at the helm of promoting that which was not invented by them? Even in the state of being faced by the three spheres of inequality, poverty, and unemployment, Black people and the most marginalised are challenged by the niceties of every revolution (Chauke et al. 2023).

Transforming Higher Education Scholarship

The author of this chapter is not an expert in AI technologies. However, avowers, as an Indigenous African scholar, the importance of elevating African ways of thinking in developing Africa and the global world at the same wavelength with theories of Western modernity. For AI enhances the dominance of Western values and theories of knowledge that alienates African ways of knowing (Muldoon & Wu 2023). These concerns pose serious ontological and epistemological difficulties for transformation and its role in redressing the injustices of the past. This is important to elucidate especially in higher education systems where discourses on African epistemologies and Black existentialism ought to inform curriculum reform. It would also appear as if the arrival of the 4IR is the largest disrupter contributing to the widening inequalities in society (Mhlanga & Ndhlovu 2023). The chapter seeks to challenge the existing and dominant revolutions by demonstrating and arguing how Credo Mutwa's alleged superstitious thinking is in fact scientific thinking that utilises and applies algorithmic data enhanced by the ancestors.

It is the negated labelling of what is equally scientific thinking that should be embraced as a restoration of balance in all that seeks to destabilise and erase the value and relevance of Indigenous epistemologies. What is problematic is when Indigenous epistemologies as a potential area of research have less hegemony and currency than AI, a phenomenon that has more currency than other transformational aspects. Transformation, often applied as a “political keyword[,] is propelled from long experiences and intense contestations around hierarchical, authoritarian and exclusive practices of decision making” by the higher education sector (Jansen 2023: 103). The Council on Higher Education (2022: 1) views transformation in the higher education sector to show a nation's “social progress, in particular when all forms of unfair discrimination have been eradicated and injustices of the past are redressed”.

It is adequate to suggest that the application of AI should be rejected in some forms, especially when AI specifications do not demonstrate affection to African contexts. What Carman and Rosman (2021: 13,16) recommend has the potential for enactment

as they argue for the principle of explicability in AI as requiring contextual sensitivity in its application. They concur that this must be balanced with relevant principles compatible with the values and needs of where people live, that is, when considering our African realities. Some level of responsibility in rejecting AI should at least conform to Helfrich's (2024) attributes that AI technologies pose an existential risk. This is especially true in the global South where people may experience harm over the development and deployment of AI (Helfrich 2024: 4).

The noise and publicity given towards AI, machine learning, etc. far outweigh the vision for Agenda 2063 with its notion of striving for the Africa we want. It would appear as if the 4IR era is a catalyst to disrupt while spontaneously at speed AI is painting what it envisions for (South) Africa and the global community. Birhane (2020: 393) writes: "tech monopolies project algorithmic colonialism that is dressed in technological solutions for the developing world and often receive the applause as they rarely face resistance and scrutiny". As a result, there is more applause and a lack of resistance to AI algorithmic technology but resistance when accelerating the African Agenda.

Marwala (2020: 172) does concur that "AI fears are not completely baseless, that AI can be programmed to create AI weapons or develop destructive methods of performing otherwise-simple tasks, there are already misuses of digital and 4IR technology". What counts as knowledge in the 4IR era is also contested based on who and how many citizens are influenced, and what the impact is (Mbembe 2021: 87). Marwala (2020) gives an account worth noting, especially today. In 2019, the house of Nancy Pelosi, the speaker of the US House representative, was reduced in power by 25% so that her speech may appear altered as if her words were incoherent. Post the 2019 AI interference, in October 2022, Nancy Pelosi's husband was attacked with a hammer in their own house. To position this example in the context of this chapter, it supports the fact that indeed "AI fears are not unfounded" and that (lack of) showing independence on anything that poses as AI risks has the potential to bring unnecessary harm. It is Marwala (2020: 173) who also warns that

humans are the ones who should persist in the regulation of AI “so that AI machines can be able to do what we want them to do”.

To indicate that the previous statement is problematic, Marwala (2020: 173) is also concerned with the challenge of how ensuring control would be measured and on what type or set of ethical principles. The previous example is once more relevant as one remembers how the same US government recently warned South Africa of an imminent terror attack that did not occur, a moment that had everyone questioning the security intelligence of South Africa (Arde 2022). What may be assumed as superstitious thinking would kick in in terms of questioning whether this false alert was a reckoning or reaction towards South Africa’s response to constantly abstain or even demonstrate condemnation in the continuing Russian-Ukraine war. Wiredu (1997) supports the idea that the African discourse has not always been supported by Western thinking. Could this have been a typical “misuse of digital and 4ir technology” (Marwala 2021) that was about to create AI weapons to strike terror in South Africa? In this case, I argue that whatever the response could be to this question, what remains a fact is that the ethical dilemmas, fears, and crises of the social-technological-political issues in AI have been substantiated to be a cause of concern (Helfrich 2024). Refusal of AI should apply when Western-developed AI is incompatible with African problems (Birhane 2020: 389).

A Conceptual Framework from Mutwa for Transformation

Compelling an African revolution and Black consciousness in his seminal book, *Indaba, My Children* (1964), healer and Indigenous knowledge holder, Credo Mutwa stimulates our revolution by locating us geopolitically:

One day our descendants will want to know something about their own native heritage in Africa. They will want to bring about a Bantu Renaissance. It has happened to many races, this is inevitable self-discovery, and it shall happen to you too. Oh my fellow Africans, and much sooner than you think. What is there for the modern African to

look back upon? If the French Revolution, the Industrial Revolution, the Russian Revolution, and the American War of Independence mean absolutely nothing to the African, as far as his heritage is concerned, what else is there that will mean anything to him? Can he find such things in a library? (Mutwa 1964: 690).

The threats and promises of foreign revolutions were already stated by Mutwa to pose weaknesses that would afflict the Black majority class in ways that would erode their emancipation. The realisation or awakening would command Black people to stimulate their African renaissance and Indigenous epistemologies. The calls for decolonisation, Africanisation, and transformation of knowledge systems in higher education are evidence of this renaissance.

Decolonisation, like transformation, is also a keyword illustrating the relevance of socialising Black people within their culture while unlearning the disconnections that have been posed by colonial mentality. Colonial mentality disengages Africans away from their ways of knowing and understanding, what Mutwa termed the works of the “strange ones” (Mutwa 1964). And when Black people lack the foresight presented to them by the strange Eurocentric knowledge production, everything about Africans becomes peripheral and marginal. Hence Mbembe (2021: 56) aptly argues that “the absence of a theory of knowledge and a theory of institutions” makes the order to decolonise a “compensatory act to heal what amounts to racial shame”. This is the shame that has caused Blacks to see themselves in the margins and periphery while they promote revolutions that emerge from the West (Nyamnjoh 2016). Hence Mbembe (2021: 56) contends that to date it is still not clear what a “truly decolonized knowledge might look like”. What Mbembe (2021) alludes to as a lack of both the theory of knowledge and the theory of institutions is what Africanisation seeks to do. When true Africanisation has taken place, what resembles decolonised knowledge will be evident. Msila (2021: 313) explores Africanisation as embedding African culture and values that promote an inculcation of African ways of thinking for an African renaissance. Mutwa was South Africa’s renowned

and phenomenal ancient knowledge keeper who was instructively clear about the Bantu or the African Renaissance as comparable to African her(story) or history.

As indicated, it remains unclear what decolonised knowledge might look like. I position Credo Mutwa as a mirror or *seipone* that portends what decolonisation and Africanisation are. *Seipone* is a Setswana translation for a mirror, *go ipona*, meaning to have pride in oneself, to look at oneself, for example, honour in African values and, in particular, humane values. In the context of this chapter, which asks why we are where we are, being challenged by revolution after revolution in poverty, unemployment, and inequality, I argue how Mutwa's gaze at Africans' challenges are unmatched. Mutwa said history should not be scoffed at or mocked. We learn the same from Kovach (2021), who is scholastic about this, stating that "the purpose of decolonization and transformation is to create space in everyday life. Through research, academia, and society to reach indigenous perspectives that are free from being neglected, shunted aside, mocked, or dismissed" (Kovach 2021: 85). This explains why Mutwa's elementary contribution in this chapter participates in epistemic and ontological disobedience by referring that "the reason the Strange Ones have repeatedly made ridiculous mistakes in South Africa and Africa is that the Black man has consistently been too scared, too reserved to explain himself clearly" (Mutwa 1964: 692). The mocking and scoffing acts of African Indigenous episteme not only inferiorise the domain of this knowledge but reveal contempt for those who relate with Indigenous episteme and by those who are "consistently too scared, too suspicious or even too reserved to explain the self clearly" (Mutwa 1964: 692).

What is the purpose of conceptualising Mutwa's Indigenous African knowledge as appropriate for transformation in the education sector? I put it forward that as a historically marginalised knower, his knowledge of the Bantu or Africans centres concrete African ontologies, epistemologies, spiritualism, and ways of how to constitute African institutions of power. This positionality is useful for transformation because the level of criticism and lack of support for revolutionary thinking from Mutwa's lens has been misunderstood (Kgope 2023; Podolecka

2018). I argue Mutwa's position here by indicating reasons why Black women and men of Africa have allowed themselves to consistently be dominated by revolutions of the "robot-like world" (Mutwa 1964: 691) using Lewis Gordon's analyses from *Fear of Black Consciousness* (2022). The fact that "the Black man has consistently been too scared" (Mutwa 1964) and to date is even frightened to elevate their existence is a disengaged mode of epistemic disobedience by suicidally engaging in their epistemicide.

For Gordon (2022: 19,125) the zone of being scared or too reserved implies that one would still face the oppression of the dominant revolutions that are rife and that another reason could also be a "revelation of a feared truth of Black empowerment". This is the fear that Mutwa describes the African as being too scared and reserved to express his or her knowledge. It is my contention that being "too scared or too reserved" as espoused by Mutwa (1964) explains the question this chapter so aptly asks, why are we where we are, that is, the question is based on the timelines that constantly prove that the marginalised knowledges, herein, Indigenous epistemologies of the global South are always overpowered by knowledges derived from the global North. Therefore, I argue that being too scared, too suspicious, or even too reserved to promote African revolutionary epistemologies can have several meanings in higher education. It can result from feelings of being ashamed of one's culture and African beingness, an epistemology that demands a theory and praxis of African identities; the suspiciousness emanates from *batho ba tlareng*, i.e., what will people say when one promotes a scholarship that has complexities that have been painted as barbaric and backward, in this regard Black men and women become frightened. I maintain again that the 'reserved' mode is observed when it is easier to accept and approve developments that emerge elsewhere, specifically in the North than for Africa and Africans to begin their development and independence from what they have in the South and take this development to the global world as Africa's renaissance and revolution to the world.

On another point, Mutwa (1964) believes that Western knowledge has repeatedly made mistakes in Africa that made

Blacks too scared to challenge Western modernity. Gordon (2022) alludes to the repetitions of mistakes made by Western worldviews, what Mutwa refers to as the strange ones as a validation of fear that Black consciousness will happen, specifically, Black power in its essence and existence. To advance these arguments it also implies a response to why we are where we are. It is because agents of domineering revolutions, revolutions that Credo Mutwa referred to continue these “ridiculous mistakes” (Mutwa 1964: 692) that propel Western paradigms because of Black inferiority complex being scared and too reserved to exude Black power what yields African unity and African renaissance.

Transforming Societal Rituals According to Decolonial Principles and Thinking in Black

Using the context of real-life social and theoretical realities this depicts and indicates where we are in terms of the transformation of a reformed curriculum that speaks to our own African realities. I highlight some of the Eurocentric mistakes mentioned by Mutwa (1964) as characterised by the symbolic posturing of the developments of the inauguration of the Zulu monarch, King Misuzulu kaZwelithini. During the inauguration, the Anglican church rituals were performed on the king. The act of the ritual attracted myriad contestations, claiming that the king’s “handing-over ceremony amounts to an attempt at recolonisation” (Mavuso 2022).

The concept of recolonisation is not new. When it was advocated by Ali Mazrui (1993: 60), he referred to it foreseeably as follows: “the recolonisation of the future will not be based on the white man’s burden or lion of Judah, it may instead be shared on a shared human burden”. Mazrui, like Mutwa, is very instinctive in writings that compel African revolution and existentialism. Mazrui’s (1993) analogy of recolonisation, when used with what appears as contestations of the Anglican rituals performed on the Zulu monarch’s coronation, does in some ways impart that Africans will continue to have a burden when Judeo-Christian faiths encroach on their African traditional religions

and Zulu culture. The term ‘recolonisation’, according to Mazrui, can also be argued that the “burden over the lion of Judah” is synonymous with Black discourses that argue on the relevance of Jesus in African history, hence the burden of the “lion of Judah” or Christianity. This aspect posed a cultural dilemma for the Zulu royal king’s coronation. Again, the question of why we are where we are, discussing these matters remains pertinent for posterity.

In the context of this chapter, the disjuncture performed engages a need for institutions of higher learning to engage with traditional authorities in intellectual decolonisation (Mamdani 2016). Mamdani espouses that when a scholar or academic engages with organic or public intellectuals there is social cohesion. This form of social cohesion has been welcomed by scholarly networks, however, more work that is free from fear of Black consciousness needs to bring a revolution and ascend (College of Graduate Studies 2021). These social and scholarly collaborators are crucial for the independent transformation of all sectors. It is scholarly collaborations in the form of community partnerships that address the challenges of working in isolation at the community level (Ditlhake 2022: 186). According to Gram-Hanssen et al. (2022), transformation and decolonisation demonstrate ‘interconnections that ensure sustainability in different relations’. Gram-Hanssen et al. (2022) believe that when the concept of ‘right relations’ is exercised transformation is reciprocal. This reciprocity is in terms of Black thoughts and Black thinking claiming their traditions because they have been misused and misinterpreted (Andrews 2018; Chidester 2013).

Challenges with Current Coloniality in Scholarly Traditions

Vuyo Mvoko asked not long ago why are we where we are based on the lack of diversity in the context of schools in South Africa, where Andile Mngxitama, political leader and leader of Black First Land First, lambasted the lack of transformation in the schooling sector which he blamed on the lack of not forging justice by starting with the victimised, i.e., Black people, “the Black child” (SABC News 2022). Dlamini (2022), excluded from the academy

for not being “too scared or too reserved” to explain and tell the world what Black existentialism and renaissance should entail, writes that:

In SA, black people have to work hard to be integrated in a system that was meant to exclude them and once in the system they have to ensure they do not offend those who control the system (Dlamini 2022).

Dlamini’s exposition is his lived reality of having suffered being expelled for applying what Mutwa recommends as a method of challenging the claws of foreign revolutions. By expressing his ‘likes and dislikes’ in the higher education sector resulted in him being socially and economically excluded. I argue that applying Mutwa’s framework of thinking in Black (Andrews 2018) and in a place of African justice validates that those who exclude others are sell-outs. Those who are selling out, sell the knowledge that is emanating from the strange ones (Mutwa 1964), i.e., knowledge from the global North.

Mngxitama (SABC News 2022) also attests that it is the experiences of the victimised that must be attended to, alluding that Westernisation or whiteness has not adequately come to the fore or raised its hands to say it has benefited from dominant revolutions. With this acknowledgement, Mngxitama posits that Westernisation must come up with a plan for reparations (SABC News 2022). Mngxitama’s ventilation herein corroborates what Mutwa (1964: 692) said about “the strange ones or Westernisation as repeatedly making mistakes in Africa because the Black man is too scared or too reserved”. The repeated mistakes are what Mngxitama rightly describe as failures of whiteness and agents of dominating revolutions to raise a hand and say this is how reparations will be conveyed.

Mutwa (1964: 692) would respond to the question of emerging revolutions that it is because the Black man has not adequately stressed to the whole world “who and what he (she) is, what are his (her) likes and dislikes, what we believe in and what we hope for”. Mutwa (1964: 534) would further reiterate that we are in this current timeline challenged by every revolution

after revolution because “the troubles seen in Africa today, the unnecessary death and suffering for which agitators and communists are conveniently blamed have origin in one thing only, the ignorance of your forebears”. Mutwa is very explicit here, advancing that we are in this rude awakening as a people, as a nation, as institutions of higher learning because of the ill-conceived superiority and arrogance that was assumed post-1994. Mutwa (1964) states that it is this arrogance that is entrenched as “colonial powers of Africa” that will continue to cause “much bloodshed and suffering in Africa in the near future” due to arrogance. In the context of this chapter, the arrogance observed in the current situations of unnecessary strife, suffering, deaths, etc., where little is done to remedy the situations are implications that depict the existing dismemberment and erosion of African epistemologies from institutions of higher learning. The latter is also because “universities have failed to do much, if anything, to change the curriculum since the demise of apartheid” (Heleta 2016: 3).

Similarly, the notion of inclusive education when it comes to Black scholarship and curriculum transformation is not given the necessary attention it deserves compared to the dominating Western-centric system as an included form of education. In the context of this chapter and this section, a summation is made that concurs with Gordon (2022: 162) that “Black consciousness is political, but it is a quest for liberation which requires a radical change of society, we could also call it revolution”. This statement is also evidenced next when key observations of Credo Mutwa’s statements and evidence are politicised and not conferred the deserved liberating revolution as with statements and corroborations that originate from Western domination.

4IR Scholarship and Doing Knowledge in the Context of Covid-19

Although the challenges that emerge from the 4IR are numerous, studies in the institutionalisation of 4IR in the context of higher education indicate that “most universities have adopted blended learning to implement the convergence between human and

machines in the 4IR era” (Moloi & Salawu 2020). While in the category of those who hold managerial positions, Mayer et al. (2021:10) report that managers have a good understanding of the need to upskill and reskill during the 4IR. However, they indicate that their study included the participation of a population of ten white males and seven females. The survey does not depict various South African cultures.

These challenges in the form of inequality, poverty, and unemployment are also incited by the 4IR as a disrupter of all things (Kgope 2022: 216,219; Nhede et al. 2022) and encourage a mode of re-thinking, re-memembering, and re-learning processes that increase local and marginalised scholarship as espoused by Mkandawire (2011) for the sake of African development and radical change that call for better livelihoods. Mkandawire (2011: 13) emphasises that “the catch-up mode of proceeding with the demands of the competitive global world is fraught with all kinds of risks”. In other words, the constant pursuit of running to speed up African or Africa’s development with the rest of the world is not without disparities that always hamper the livelihoods of those who are vulnerable. In his recent book, *The New Apartheid*, Mpfu-Walsh (2021: 106) points out that the current and emerging new apartheid in South Africa “has entered the age of techno-capital, in this age Black people still risk becoming hewers of code and drawers of data”. A phenomenon which is the true reality of many Black people.

Alexander (2021) states that the transformation brought by AI and the 4IR not only poses risks and ethical dilemmas but also changes “how the economy operates and how people’s daily lives are structured”. As indicated previously, 4IR may pose threats that come with shortcomings in skills. This is why Feyerabend’s (1978) ancient philosophy of science remains relevant and important as it challenges African nations to be cautious of “the kind of technology and science it imports into the continent” (Akpan 2005: 61).

This section addresses the context of this chapter as an interrogation of why we are where we are, the response deliberating on rejecting AI is unwise. Rejecting some of these

revolutions is often not an option for many African countries and nations which remain underdeveloped. Also, the modes of wanting to catch up with the rolling technological advancements that are brought by Western development often leave Africa and Africans as consumers and hewers of big data. This is despite the inequalities that affect Africans in the main, e.g., the rate of high unemployment in the youth in South Africa (Oyedemi & Choung 2020; Statistics South Africa 2023) remains a challenge for the transformation of the higher education sector. In summarising this section for a transformed scholarship, I concur with Marwala (2021:2) that

[t]hose who are interested in science and technology should also be required to study the human and social sciences and similarly, those who are interested in human and social sciences should also be required to study science and technology (Marwala 2021: 2).

Using this leadership style alluded to by Marwala (2021) in the academy is an act of “decolonizing research sensibility” (Donald 2012). Breaking the oath of being rigid in disciplinarity, which means disengaging the “abyssal divide found in western thinking” (De Sousa Santos 2007). A critical point that a transformed scholarship ought to drive home is when an African will feel comfortable wherever they are in the world, that is, in scholarship and their interpretations of such a scholarship in terms of African ways of understanding (Kgope 2022: iv). Similarly, Hart et al. (2023) assert that scholarship should entail reciprocal partnerships.

Superstitious Thinking Versus Scientific Thinking: Doing Knowledge in the Context of Covid-19 and 4IR

This section underscores what a disengaged mode of Western scientific thinking is and how the alleged superstitious thinking in Mutwa’s work is essentially scientific thinking. I also expand on how this knowledge and its thinking is merged with ancestral algorithms as a set of rules that also apply to African spiritual healers. Mutwa (1964: 657) writes that African indigenous people

“believe in omens which they interpret as outward warning signals sent by the soul to warn the body” but “Europeans call this phenomenon superstition”. It is these signals that are a pattern of one’s ancestral algorithms. The case in point is how in March 2020 when the COVID-19 pandemic hit the global world including in South Africa, the warning signals that Mutwa discovered many years ago would be experienced as positions of indecent human capture by the 4IR. But because of the paralysis of undermining African knowledge systems what Mutwa designed as sculptures of metal works that epitomised exactly what resembles what the world of the 4IR employs as caricatures of the world and symbolism of robotics has not been comprehended by many. This implies that the educational sector is lagging in dissecting in theory and praxis what those who like Mutwa *see* as visions.

Mutwa was also perceived as controversial and, most of the time, he was misunderstood. For example, his exposition of having seen extra-terrestrial beings or aliens, which he later called the Chitauri, became evident during the COVID-19 era. I contend that what Mutwa foresaw as the Chitauri is similar to what today the 4IR utilises to epitomise the world of AI robotics in the images used. AI has captured the world by propelling accelerated digital transformation that divides human beings. Mutwa (1999: 30) alerted us that the:

Chitauli means the dictators, the ones who tell us the law and that these are the creatures that took away the great powers that human beings had, the power of speaking through the mind only, the power of moving objects with their mind only, the power of seeing into the future and their past and the power to travel spiritually to different worlds.

Producing knowledge in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and the 4IR brought elements of what Mutwa attests to in this statement. As observed with many technological tools that emerged during the COVID-19 pandemic, it is evident how the innate powers that human beings possess are made to lie dormant and less functional due to the overreliance on these technological advancements. The value of superstitious thinking as would be

demeaned by many is again empirically scientifically observed in what is evidenced to date with the 4IR. What I argue is that Mutwa had already visualised the AI era through the Chitauli and metalworks he sculptured. A study that corroborates the relevance of superstitious thinking concluded that:

As coping mechanisms, superstitions are culturally specific and have documented effectiveness for understanding events that cannot be controlled. If their use during the COVID-19 pandemic provided a therapeutic benefit for direct care providers and any perceived control over the challenging circumstances, superstitions should be embraced and supported. (Thomassy et al. 2021: 217).

By alluding that superstitious thinking may have the inclination to be found in specific cultural groups, Thomassy et al. (2021) confirm what Mutwa (1964: 657) and Taher et al. (2020) posited that African people are intensely superstitious and modern technologies have not been able to reduce their superstitious tendencies. These superstitious tendencies are also equivalent to one's ancestors' algorithms or *ditaelo* or instructions as superior wisdom from ancestors as entrenched in the individual or, in this context, the higher institution of learning's level of self-knowledge. That is from the perspective of how our educational sector understands itself.

Self-Discovery and Breaking the Oath as Symbolic of the African Renaissance and Black Revolution

In this section, I use the term 'tolerance' to imply that breaking the oath is unprotest-like. Those who embark on its path do not participate in *toyi-toying* despite what confronts them as their daily African realities. My observation is that this muted, unprotest-like state and posture are implicit because of the vast immersion and reliance on the African spiritual, metaphysical lens.

In arguing for counter-hegemony of treating African epistemologies as if they do not exist, it is important to dissect how Africans also downplay the need to uphold and embrace Black

scholarship as critical pedagogy. I argue that using indigenous research concepts and methodologies produces an upsurge in African experiences to be in a state of Black supremacy, the supremacy of imperative pedagogy (Kgope 2022: 67). This is an independent transformation in knowledge production and sustainability. For Asante (2011: 50), this independence in transformation is through “interrogating domination”, in this case, “being interested in breaking down the barriers that impose unnaturally, herein, artificial, and sometimes arbitrary barriers on human communication”. In this way, the application of Mutwa’s revolutionary writings makes an exposition to coin them as paving a framework for humanity’s liberation (Mutwa 1964: 534) because of their motifs of “interrogating domination”. I conclude that Mutwa’s framework of human liberation theorises how to obtain an African revolution and renaissance in the algorithmic method of self-discovery and breaking the oath, both yielding a need for a renaissance or revolution in African existentialism. For Mutwa (1964: 693) breaking the oath is an action and curriculum of “bringing out many things hidden in our villages, things that whisper of Africa’s not-yet forgotten past”.

Mutwa (1964: 693) defends the mode of being in the state of breaking the oath, saying “it is not selling people out to strangers”. To advance Mutwa’s statement is characteristic of demonstrating epistemic disobedience, and independent thoughts (Mignolo 2009) that have the potential to yield Black independent transformation. Mutwa’s (1964: 693) assertion of breaking the oath, as not selling people to strangers but demonstrating independent thoughts of people, was experienced during the COVID-19 outbreak. This was the case particularly when some academic institutions introduced mandatory COVID-19 vaccination shots to those who had access to the sector, i.e., the students and staff. The idea of vaccination was met with a lot of resistance and hesitancy as the ravages of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic were widespread (George et al. 2022). The lessons that are learned from one who was a Sanusi, *Credo Mutwa*, i.e., one who senses things from far, are emphasised by Kgope (2023: 7-8) stating that:

Why are we Here?

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Mutwa is reimagined asking about *abantu bethu bazohlawulwa ngani? batho ba rona batla rufiwa ka eng?* (What is it that will be compensated for our people?) for this sufferance? During the week the nationwide lockdown was announced, Mutwa decided he was drained, that South Africa could go to hell for all he cared because when he spoke he was stoned, he begged to speak and he would be called a wizard.

Kgope (2023: 7) writes that the global COVID-19 pandemic was a period that also repeated images of the pass-law systems, as observed during the colonial times when Black people had to negotiate their freedom to speak or to pass at certain areas. Hence, during the COVID-19 period, the freedom to be was constrained and negotiated. And as the amalgam of self-knowledge and the ability to break the oath by choosing what appeals and applies to our contexts yield motifs of an African revolution. Those who are imbued with the ancient wisdom that superstitious thinking with its signs and idiosyncrasies is equivalent to scientific thinking, interpreted the timeline at which Mutwa transitioned to his ancestors on 25 March 2020 as critical and meaningful to what futures can be imagined. As he points out in the previous section, Africans believe in signs and warnings which they interpret as warning signals sent by the soul to warn the body (Mutwa 1964: 657).

Since Mutwa was in his geriatric phase, the period of his passing before the COVID-19 pandemic national lockdown is fundamental to highlight as it would warn of many negatives rather than positives that would be experienced. It is the COVID-19 pandemic that propelled the acceleration and introduction of the 4IR scholarship and remote working environments in various sectors. As Mhlanga and Moloji (2020: 9) also assert that although the COVID-19 pandemic “brought massive human suffering across the globe, it presented an opportunity to assess successes and failures of deployed systems because, during the lockdown, various 4IR tools were unleashed for primary education to higher and tertiary education where educational activities switched to remote learning or online learning”. When we reflect

on the emergence of the Chitauri, as highlighted in the previous section by Mutwa (1999), the Chitauri qualify the prescripts of Indigenous knowledge. I posit that Mutwa's observations of the Chitauri resemble various 4IR tools that remain to be released to date. Therefore, it becomes evident from Mutwa's approach and lens that provided African epistemologies are treated at the same wavelength as Western scholarship, developments that shape Africans and the African continent can also be capitalised on, to shape the global world. Simply put, the voices and visions of those who are like Mutwa should not be left behind, ignored, or locked down. As also examined by Kgope (2023: 7), leadership in South Africa did not consider the Indigenous knowledge wisdom of Mutwa.

Conclusion

The journey of this chapter cannot be concluded as it is aimed to continue to unravel many other aspects that critically reflect on why (South) Africa and Africans are where they are in the current timelines. This chapter has demonstrated through unsystematic accounts that the revolution and renaissance of those who have been oppressed and marginalised are often challenged by already dominating foreign revolutions, in this regard 4IR and rapid changes that were brought by the COVID-19 pandemic. My arguments and analyses also highlighted how exclusion and modes of the need to change in favour of these revolutions are always the norm whether the shoe fits or not.

The chapter illustrated the advanced revolutionary thinking of Credo Mutwa as conceptualised from his seminal work (Mutwa 1964). As painted in some of the scenarios in the chapter, industries and institutions of higher learning have all adopted mechanisms to upskill and reskill to level up with the rest of the world. We have allowed ourselves to be eroded by foreign revolutions that emerge, while what fosters movements of the African revolution, Africanisation, and decolonisation remains at the bottom. Often without questioning and re-questioning, when will we give credibility to an African revolution? 'We' is in this summation applied advisedly to state that the quest and rights to continue this discourse for an African renaissance

need Africans who understand themselves. How do Africans understand themselves, Mutwa(ian) conception of self-discovery and breaking the oath leads to a Black man and Black woman's revolution and renaissance. Through breaking the oath, that is, rejecting being 'too scared' and 'too reserved' when foreign revolutions are 'repeatedly' brought to us. This chapter has reignited the need to call for an African revolution so that South Africa and Africa can be positioned in their true African identity to which they belong. The conceptual analysis illustrates that a standard of procedure can be made as an analytical tool that proves that Mutwa's algorithmic method of self-discovery and breaking the oath can lead to an African renaissance and African revolution that delivers a framework for human liberation.

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