

## Leadership and Identity

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On the 26th of September, Desmond Tutu delivered the seventh annual Steve Biko Memorial Lecture at the University of Cape Town. These lectures, in honour of one of the heroes of the South African struggle against apartheid, provide a forum for reflection on issues which confront the new democracy, in particular, issues of identity, agency and change. The lecture was introduced this year by writer and academic, Njabulo Ndebele, the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cape Town.

In his opening address, Ndebele emphasised the importance of working with memory in order to go beyond it. Quoting Steve Biko, he asserted, “Consciousness of self is part of the emancipatory programme” and added that it is easy to let the past imprison the future. These words echoed Tutu’s main theme, which concerned the problems surrounding the construction of selfhood in post-apartheid society. Analysing the language of apartheid, which defined black people as ‘non-white’, he argued that we are still trapped by these definitions. He suggested that ‘non-whiteness’ as a social category can be read as constituting “the gnawing away of being” and that South Africans continue to live with the effects of this imposed and destructive identity. For him, “we still depressingly do not respect one another; I have often said black consciousness did not finish the work it set out to do.”

In an earlier lecture, the Archbishop Desmond Tutu focused on how this lack of respect worked to undermine effective leadership. The issue of leadership is, of course, a pressing question facing many African postcolonies. In the Harold Wolpe Memorial Lecture, delivered by the Archbishop in Cape Town on the 23 August 2006, he suggested that: “The good leader in our African tradition was the one who listened to various and diverse points of view and would then sum up describing the consensus he believed had emerged. Everyone felt they had been listened to, that their views had been taken seriously into account and that indeed they mattered in the scheme of things. We experienced some of this when we made our transition from repression to freedom.” Tutu however goes on to argue that it is this spirit of respect and openness which is in danger of becoming lost in contemporary political and social discussions. We have chosen to begin this editorial with reference to Tutu’s lectures both because thematically his concerns about identity and leadership are reflected in the papers included in this issue and because of his encouragement of vigorous critical debate. In this issue, the papers approach these issue in diverse ways and from a number of different disciplinary backgrounds.

Olivier Tchouaffe’s *Homosexuality and the politics of sex, respectability and power in postcolonial Cameroon* historicises homophobia in Cameroon, making connections between “colonial corrupted sexual ideology” and “its contemporary, modern developments” in order to inform the recent ‘outing’ of homosexuals in the country. The author subsequently examines Jean-Pierre Bekolo’s *Les saignantes*<sup>1</sup> (2005), demonstrating the ways in which the artist’s portrayal of Cameroon’s sexual politics contrasts with a nationalist political agenda. Eva Franzidis discusses the problems the South African National Gallery faces as it strives toward reinventing itself within the new society. While this is a challenge such art institutions face globally, it is exacerbated in the South African context by a dire lack of funding. As she uncovers, this seems to stem from a (covert) scepticism about whether such an institution could play an important role in post-apartheid society and surpass its colonial and western

roots. Tanja E. Bosch's paper relates both to questions of identity and those of leadership, analysing the ways in which Bush Radio, a prominent community-based, Cape Town radio station, has used hip hop as a medium in developing an HIV/AIDS entertainment education strategy. Continuing on the theme of leadership, historian David Robinson analyses the contradictory evidence surrounding the plane crash in 1986, which resulted in the death of President Samora Machel. This crash, widely believed to have been an assassination, gave rise to a number of conspiracy theories. Suggesting that answers to the question are more likely to be found in a *political* analysis than in a *technical* one, Robinson explores in fascinating detail the complex landscape of Mozambican leadership struggles taking place at the time of the crash. Wanjiru Kariuki looks at the question of gender and leadership in Kenyan schools and through a series of interviews with female school principals examines whether such leadership is still bound by structures of patriarchy.

The papers in this edition of *postamble* broadly address issues of identity and leadership in contemporary Africa. Since *postamble* began as a postgraduate student journal, with a focus on the multidisciplinary study of Africa, its co-editors and contributors have attempted to orient this online publication around pressing issues and concerns that face Africa in the present, the past, and in the future, as well as to grapple with the question of multidisciplinary in an active sense.

This issue also sees the inclusion of a series of discussion papers which are to form part of the Workshop on African and African Diasporic Knowledges presented by the University of Cape Town's Centre for African Studies, The Centre for Caribbean Thought at the University of the West Indies, Mona and Brown University's Africana Studies Department. This conference, which takes place in October 2006, is described by conference organizers as seeking "to locate African and African Diasporic Knowledges in the arena where knowledge and the contemporary configurations of power converge for the production of narratives of the modern subject. It proposes to bring Africa and African Diasporic Knowledges to the centre of intellectual inquiry. It takes its cues from the fields of Postcolonial, Cultural and Subaltern Studies, challenging the pedagogical canons of modern discourse as well as the disciplinary and discursive boundaries that frame them."

The papers included in this issue are the part of the graduate session which seeks to ground the Workshop's overarching theme of African and African Diasporic Knowledges in more pragmatic discussions of epistemics – the tools employed to study knowledge and how it is processed – and methodologies. Within the context of these fields of study, which span and intersect with multiple disciplines, it is important to carve out a space through which knowledges can be structured. As students, researchers and educators, structure is a key element in creating the space(s) in which and through which new knowledges can emerge. However, because of the multiple and interdisciplinary nature of the study of Africa and the African diaspora, we constantly second-guess our methods of rediscovery and revision. Thus, we must ask, how can we carve out and refine the space(s) in which African and African Diasporic Knowledges reside?

*postamble* will continue to provide a forum through which these complex questions can be addressed. In the next issue, we welcome Danai Mupotsa as guest editor. Based at the University of Cape Town's African Gender Institute, Danai is a feminist researcher from Zimbabwe, currently completing a Masters degree. Danai's research interests currently involve a study of the performance of femininities on and through the body. We look forward to the insights she will bring to our editorial committee.

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<sup>1</sup> The Bloodettes