Contours of African Studies in the United Kingdom, the United States of America, and South Africa

by

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Abstract

The study of Africa has been a contested terrain for many years. But, in the past half century, the long-held canonical position of the white scholar – supposedly an 'expert' on Africa – (henceforth referred to as the Africanist) has been eroded by the ascension of the African American voice. This development heralded two worldviews insofar as the study of Africa(ns) is concerned. In the last thirty years or so, a third way buttressed by the emergence of the African scholar from Africa has also added to alternative opinion about Africa. For this and other reasons, the conceptions housing the study of Africa(ns) are shrouded in considerable differences of interpretations; hence the purpose of this paper, which is to examine fundamental characteristics of the 'conceptions' housing the study of Africa(ns) as they obtain in the three definitive regions, namely the United Kingdom, the United States of America and South Africa.

Introduction

The study of Africa has been a contested terrain for many years. Initially deemed a forte of the European, the ascension of the African American scholar in the last century, and lately that of the African, is systemically beginning to erode this claim.

The long-held position of the Africanist is shaken; first by the enthronement of the concept of Black Studies, and then by the coming of age of the African scholar who questions the intentions of academic representation of one race by the other (Agawu, 1992). The voice of the African scholar from Africa is undoubtedly on the rise. Befittingly, the conceptions housing the study of Africa and African people have come to resemble the battlegrounds of competing ideologies and epistemologies.

Seen from three vantage points; the United Kingdom, the United States of America and in South Africa, the contours of the study of Africa(ns) attest to the raging competition insofar as knowledge on and about Africa is concerned. The conceptualisation of African Studies that has served Europe and lately America is undergoing several evolutionary challenges. In the U.S. as stated already, it has had to contend with Black Studies. The contestations between the two (African Studies and Black Studies) have come to denote separate schools of thought or disciplines defined virtually by race. Whereas African Studies is seen as the preserve for the Africanist, Black Studies has generally been the preserve of the African American. The African scholars, especially after the dissipation of a nationalist agenda, represent the third contender to the throne of championing the study of Africa.

The European Version of African Studies

The concept of *African Studies* in the United Kingdom, and indeed in Europe has its roots in the colonial era. According to Olukoshi (2006:11), "[i]ts remote origins are traceable to the anthropological research activities carried out by adventurers, missionaries, and different categories of imperial administrators in the period just ahead and immediately following the onset of European rule in Africa." These Europeans of the 17th century landed on the African continent for three reasons. The first, as advanced by Mazrui (cited in Khapoya, 2012:101-103), concerns the need to gather knowledge about the unknown and the exotic; hence explorations and the eventual invention of the concept of *The Dark Continent* in reference to Africa (Mudimbe 1988; Murunga 2008; Bradley 2006).

The second, refers to ethnocentricism and racism encapsulated in Western Christianity (Bastide, 1967). The "missionary zeal" of Christianity has always been to spiritually, materially and epistemologically supplant African people's existential sensibilities (Agawu, 1992:247). The last reason refers to pure imperialism – a motivation to venture into Africa for purposes of control. In view of all these reasons, and as Mungwini (2011) argues, discourse about modernity propounded by early anthropologists made the study of Africa a legitimate academic investment aiming to justify colonial control.

To gain a meaningful understanding of the contours and the business of the construct of African Studies, we may be well served by paying attention to the actions of the agent within the construct itself, that is, the Africanist; for such actions derive from the agenda of the construct. Whereas the European version of African Studies is perpetually entangled in the multiple atrocities inflicted on Africa, it would be myopic to ignore the fact that it has also produced individual Africanists who have positively contributed towards the development of Africa. Scholars such as Barry Hallen, whose work has effectively located the ordinary language philosophy within African philosophy, come to mind.

Work by such scholars has provided a counterbalance to the otherwise lopsided tendency that borders on 'Afro-pessimism' (Jules-Rosette, 2002). The reality, however, overwhelmingly points to a collective difficulty experienced by Africanists in shedding this pessimism. Rather, Afro-pessimism continues to manifest in different forms, amongst others; ideations such as affirmative action, lowering the standards, and so on. The ultimate message of the Afro-pessimists is that Africans are less than capable of anything; all this amidst the glaring truism that Africa is the cradle of humankind and, not least, civilisation (Ben-Jochannan, 1988). Not to challenge Afro-pessimism is tantamount to succumbing to the assertion that Africans are subhuman (Motshekga, 2008). In the final analysis, although liberal in its projection, the focus and aim of the concept *African Studies* hardly deviates from its colonial heritage (Murunga, 2008). In fact, the impact of African Studies on Africa(ns), viewed from the developmental perspective of the continent, is profoundly detrimental.

Regardless of one's position, the Africanist stands accused of having served in the breaking down of Africa, and its subsequent downgrading in terms of esteem and worth in the global arena. Rationalised through constituent elements of African Studies, for instance, European politicians, in 1884, convened a conference in Berlin for the purpose of fragmenting the once-united African continent into splinters for the benefit of different colonial powers (Idolor, 2007; Murengi, 2011).

Another arena that energises the Africanist's enterprise within African Studies is the notion of Africa's 'backwardness'. This notion, as Murunga (2008:45) argues, was 'never a self-evident fact'; it was actually imagined into existence by those experts on Africa whose works swell libraries around the world. Choosing to ignore the many decades of violence meted on Africa(ns) through different forms of imperialism; enslavement, colonialism, neo-colonialism, and including, in the case of South Africa, apartheid, Africanists are able to juxtapose the ill-gotten gains of Western civilisation and advancements (Windschuttle, 2002) against the perceptibly humble achievements of an impoverished Africa, and then declare her 'backwardness'.

Furthermore, in fashioning the notion of Africa's backwardness, the Africanist ignored the fact that African knowledge forms encapsulated in African history, indigenous African music, indigenous art, and so forth were once considered undesirable elements in the imperialist's narrative, and therefore needed to be expunged (Mapaya, 2012). To this end, Ramose (2003) and Lebakeng *at al* (2006) speak of epistemecide – a genocide of African forms of knowledge. The most overt and vicious exercise of African epistemecide occurs within the religion and the education sectors, notwithstanding what these have come to represent today. Churches and schools, as Shaffer (1956:39) recounts, "…placed a strict ban on all forms of native music, musical instruments, and rhythmical devices, which were feared would encourage the people in their old practices." Needless to say, the appetite to conquer Africa was as much insatiable.

However camouflaged, the Africanist had always distrusted the intelligence of the African (Asante, 1992). For whenever African communities were to be studied, it was usually with the presumption that they are less than capable of either articulating their thoughts, or simply oblivious of the theoretical implications of their praxis.

Dr James D. Watson, the 1962 Nobel Peace Prize recipient and DNA pioneer of the time, for instance, went as far as using his privileged position to put to question the intelligence of an African. Arguably, he was simply using his stature as a scientist to give currency to the then commonly held belief amongst most Europeans and white Americans. In today's terms, this is a shameful logic. Yet the question remains; how could Dr Watson, and the Africanists in general, atone themselves for this and similar atrocious acts? A logical explanation implicates the Africanist's 'scientific' *modus operandi*, which enthrones the notion of objectification. And by so doing, the Africanist is able to shun the question of Africa's, (and indeed their own) senses of subjectivity, especially on matters African. Besides the whim of scientific realism (Leeds, 2007), the notion of objectivity was used for ill-intentions as evidenced by the legitimisation of the general plundering of Africa's resources notoriously termed *Scramble for Africa* (Osabu-Kle, 2000). Perhaps more than any other people, and probably due to the abundance of natural resources on their continent, Africans have been made the licit objects of science, explorations, conquests and other forms of persecution.

In the end, this supposedly blameless positivist approach to the study of Africa was used to immunise the Africanist from the shame and the guilt associated with his or her colonial actions (Allpress *et al.*, 2010). Conclusively, the casting of Africa(ns) in unfavourable terms was possible because of the so-called 'intelligence' gathered by Africanists; most of it in the name of scientific objectivity. Conversely, though, in the Afrocentric paradigm, objectivity is not entirely feasible in the humanities and the social sciences, especially when the study of the one racial group by another is involved. This view, of course, has since spread to engulf even the consciousness of the Africanists themselves. For most scholars today, objectivity is viewed as an 'illusion' (Akbar, 1984). Rather, it is deemed a relic of the past – a representation of the Eurocentric strategy of subjugating 'the other', in this instance, the African (Schiele, 1997).

In addition to its scientific claims, the African Studies enterprise has always been flirting with politics. It played in the hands of politicians, ultimately serving the pursuance of one or the other political agenda. In other words, African Studies, in one form or the other, has been conveniently deployed as a problem-solving mechanism to some political end.

In view of the rise of the African intelligentsia, which became noticeable during negotiations for the liberation of Africa in the 1940s-60s, the general populace of Europe took notice of the ugly face of colonialism. The majority of them, for the first time, became exposed to the intellect and humility of the African nationalist of the era. And this experience painted (for them) a picture much different from the propagandist colonial accounts of the Africanist. Since then, the ordinary European learned not to believe anything written about Africans. And following this maturation or the coming to senses by Europe, the middle class in Britain, and indeed other European countries, began appreciating the idea of freedom for Africa and other colonies. Meanwhile, the British politicians, for selfish reasons such as re-election, became increasingly weary of this 'Black Africa', which was then perceived as the single most difficult of the British political problems.

Accordingly, a solution had to be found from, amongst other places, university programmes, departments and centres housing African Studies (Lonsdale, 2005:378). Specifically, the British politicians needed a solution to the African problem, and the Africanists capitalised on this anxiety to rationalise the relevance of African Studies within universities. As King (2007:1) puts it, "[the] establishment of new Centres or Institutes of African Studies in … the U.K. is a commentary on the urgency of the need to institutionalise our understanding of Africa, given the constantly changing politics, policies and research priorities." King's characterisation is recent, which means African Studies has not moved far from its original image. In the wake of Africa's protestations against colonialism, therefore, the Africanists who staffed the departments of African Studies in the United Kingdom and elsewhere became strategic patronisers of African nationalism, often with the self- or post-colonial atonement as an undeclared benefit (Allpress, Kingdom, & Licata, 2010).

As a way of concluding, we may be excused for perceiving African Studies in the U.K. as the embodiment of the strategies by the coloniser, whose two main goals are to quell the suspicion or even the anger of the colonised, while at the same time legitimising the gathering of 'intelligence' on them through canonised forms of research. Put differently, the European version of African Studies is best understood by appreciation of its historical origin and the ideological blueprint, the legacy of which is the documentation of explorers, missionaries and anthropologists and actions of its agents.

African Studies in this instance is a colonial project, where the gathering of information on Africa(ns) has been a justifiable exercise (Zeleza, 2009). Yet from an African perspective, African Studies could be deemed a failed academic investment as regards the idea of achieving equity and parity amongst the citizenry of the world. As an unintended consequence, it has instead spurred the germination of other versions of the study of Africa, which begin to reorder the knowledge enterprise concerning Africa.

Contours of the American Version of African Studies

The concept of African Studies in the United States has split into two; the traditional African Studies inherited from Europe, and Black Studies. While the European version of African Studies' *modus operandi*, owing to the many years of existence, is more entrenched, it is perhaps in the U.S. where its agenda has incrementally taken the imperialist character (Emielu, 2006), especially during the Cold War (1945-1991), and in the recent spate of 'War-on-Terror'(2011-) (Olukoshi, 2005:9). Meanwhile, the crescendo of its criticism in the U.S. and in Africa has also grown. It is thus not surprising to learn of denunciations from some scholars who view African Studies in the worst of light. Murunga (2008:46), for instance, views African Studies as "an industry in the United States ─ a child of the American empire nurtured by foundations and government grants". Citing the 1970 Africa Research Group report, he further accuses the Africanists of operating "under cover of false neutrality of academic scholarship which permits them to camouflage their ideological biases and the strategic policy implications of their work."

This, and other revelations, dispels the notion of objectivity while confirming that African Studies in the U.S. is still predominantly a domain for Africanists. But, in just more than half a century, Black Studies emerged out of the political milieu of the United States. African American students of the 1960s, "convinced by the rhetoric of Malcolm "X" amongst others about American universities teaching what they regarded as 'White Studies', agitated for the institutionalisation of a dialectical opposite, Black Studies (Asante, 2009:17).

Inspired by the scholarly intentions of pioneering scholars such as Carter G. Woodson, W.E.B. Du Bois, Arthur Schomburg, E. Franklin Frazier, Anna Julia Cooper, and John Hope Franklin, the first Black Studies department, headed by Nathan Hare, was established in 1968 at San Francisco State University (Phillips, 2010). According to Phillips, the National Council for Black Studies (NCBS), the first professional body for Black Studies was established in 1975. Several universities have since started teaching Black Studies within their respective departments, and as part of the undergraduate programmes. In 1988 Temple University became the first university to offer a PhD in African American Studies within a department (Asante, 2009; Phillips, 2010).

Accordingly, Black Studies could be seen as part of a continuum of the African American experience informed by a history of the aggregate movement of the people premised on the quest for equal rights and social justice (Mphande, 2006). Understandably, the U.S., with its considerable number of prominent African American scholars, and a history of the Civil Rights Movement, has evolutionarily defined Black Studies in a manner characterised by elements of 'Black' assertion and the desire for cultural regeneration; with a clear purpose of expanding the struggle site from civil contexts, to also encompass academia (Fenderson, 2008). This phenomenon catapulted into what Asante (1986:260) refers to as "an intellectual expression by young black intellectuals committed to a powerful cultural regeneration and academic transformation based on the traditions of systematic nationalism." This historical moment brought about a synergy between the political aspirations of a people and the academic programming designed to serve their respective developmental needs. Unlike African Studies, one would argue, Black Studies is predominantly African American in its racial composition. Black Studies is thus African American in its genesis, and pro-Africa in its attitude. Thus, it is about "the black world and black America" (Olaniyan, 2006). And unlike the Africanist's version of African Studies, Black Studies is more than the study of black people; it is a political programme that seeks to service the aspiration of black people.

Furthermore, the concept of Black Studies comprises several connotations, such as *African American Studies*, *Africana Studies*, *Afro-American Studies* and *Africology* (Conyers, 2004) and many more as listed by Mazama (2010) in her article titled *Naming and Defining: A Critical Link*.

These 'nuances' of Black Studies are often used interchangeably, even though they may differ programmatically from institution to institution. It is perhaps in the following definitions that the agenda of Black Studies is made explicit: African American Studies is defined as the study of black people and others from the Afrocentric perspective. It is markedly different from African Studies, and as such, a new discipline (Asante, 1987). With the benefit of history, this view signalled a rather radical tangent to the norm.

The other concept used for Black Studies is *Africana Studies,* which Pellerin (2009:47) defines as, "an instrument whereby knowledge, consciousness and liberation of the global Africana community can transform and decolonise the African and liberate the community." Here Pellerin sees Africana Studies as a tool for decolonisation and the liberation of the African. The focus of this definition is on the intensions of the discipline that speaks politically to the vitality of the African as a thinking human being with rights to exist and participate in humanly activities. Hine (1990:8), on the other hand, defines Africana Studies as a discipline encompassing "a broader geographical, if not disciplinary reach spanning North and South America, the Caribbean, and the African continent ─ in short, the African Diaspora." Hine's definition is concerned more with the denotation and/or the demarcations of the discipline that still focuses on relieving African people of colonial and other forms of oppression. Perhaps the emphasis on the scope in terms of geography reflects a greater appreciation of the deep impact that European canonisation has had on Africa(ns). But the order in how the geographical scope is outlaid, with the African continent at the end of the chain, is illuminating. Next, Carroll (2008:6) aggregates *Africana Studies* to "the critical analysis of the Africana experience, people and culture, through the usage of the African worldview, with the ultimate goal of changing the life chances of African descended peoples." This definition is similar to Hine's in that it foregrounds the need to improve the life chances of black people. Interestingly though, this definition introduces the question of an 'African worldview', the acquisition of which seems largely restricted to desktop explorations and other forms of media. At least from the Southern tip of the African continent, I may content that the physical interaction or contact between Africa and the African American is weaker compared to that of the Africanist. It is almost unheard of to come across an African American visiting villagers in South Africa, for instance.

Surely, the story could be different in West Africa, with the burial of WEB Dubois in Accra providing the unequivocal example. While acknowledging the noble thrust of the African worldview idea in the African America Studies discourse, it is perhaps critical to acknowledge the disjuncture between the idea and that, which is currently obtaining within African villages. What is often presented as the African worldview is, in fact, a historical reconstruction of "Africa perceived as a geographical and cultural starting base in the study of peoples of African descent" (Keto, 1989:1); little reference is made to modern-day Africa. The symbolic relationship alluded to by Aldridge and Young in *Out of the Revolution: The Development of Africana Studies* (cited in Kebaya, 2010:3) between Africana Studies and African communities on the continent is notable though. Africans have drawn inspiration from the African American and *vice versa*.

But how does the African American Studies escape the accusation of being just an attempt by people in the diaspora to reconnect with or differently exploit the imagined Africa? As an indictment to the plausibility of Marcus Garvey's 'Return to Africa' ideology (Shepperson, 1960), most African American Studies advocates seems less likely to inhibit Africa. At some point, for the rhetoric about the African worldview to gain more currency, its exponents may, of necessity, 'come home' to Africa, particularly to an African rural village, in order to learn and experience the African way of life. By this I am not suggesting the ethnological fetishism of fieldwork, but genuine reconnection that is typified by African concepts, such as *a re tsebaneng*−a Northern Sotho concept translating to 'let us know each other better as a family'.

Nonetheless, Asante (1986) puts Black Studies − whether in the form of African American Studies or Africana Studies − within an Afrocentric genesis, thereby distinguishing it from other studies that concern Africa(ns). In his view, Black Studies has arrived at its final destination of becoming a *bona fide* discipline. Thus, Africology is fashioned as "the Afrocentric study of phenomena, events, ideas, and personalities related to Africa," (Asante cited in Mazama, 2010:251). And according to Mazama (2010), "Africology is unidisciplinary by virtue of being informed by a unique set of metaphysical assumptions."

Contour of African Studies in Africa

Africa is credited for having established some of the earliest universities in history. These are, the University of Al-Karaouine at Fez, Morocco founded in CE 859, the Al-Azhar University, Egypt founded in 970, and the University of Sankore in Timbuktu, Mali founded in 1327 (Adams, King, & Hook, 2010; Falola, 2002; Mazonde n.d; Mudimbe, 1988 and Zulu, 2006).

Much later, Africa, post-independence boasted growing numbers of universities aimed at the developmental convictions encapsulated in the nationalists' ideals (Sawyerr, 2004). This, coupled with the swelling numbers of Africans with postgraduate qualifications, represented what Zeleza (2009) refers to as the *golden era* of African scholarship. African universities, post-World War II, were thus predicated on the nationalist ideology.

The implications of the concept of African Studies, particularly when it comes to African universities, is both interesting and revealing. Moreover, it defies logic since "an African university cannot help but study Africa in the normal course of its [university] function" (Biobaku 1963:1). With this understanding, it could be taken for granted that all African universities are by nature big organisations of African Studies. Therefore, to think of a single, tiny component designated as a Centre for African Studies within an African university is absurd; yet such absurdities are realities in Africa, and particularly in South Africa where institutions of higher learning have yet to realise a complete transformation.

African Studies within South African Universities

Whereas African universities post-independence were aimed at driving the developmental agenda of the continent, in pre-1994 South Africa, universities were geared to serve a rather narrow ideological interest (Visser, 2004). Within the tradition of the historically white institutions (HWIs), there existed the British-modelled universities, such as the University of Cape Town (UCT), the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) and the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits), whose values and norms were essentially Eurocentric.

These universities, in essence, recreated the European environment (in Africa) for the comfort of the Europeans who found permanent residence in South Africa. With the National Party coming into power in 1948, its social engineering efforts established a second category of HWIs. In this category were Afrikaner universities such as the universities of Pretoria, Potchefstroom, Stellenbosch and Orange Free State, whose main aim it was to develop and entrench the Afrikaner culture distinct from the British-style universities, but still alien to Africa. For Africans, three historically black institutions (HBIs), namely the Universities of Fort Hare, the University of Zululand and the University of the North were established.

These three universities became the seeds for the establishment of other smaller black universities scattered throughout the homelands. Much as there existed two version of the HWI's, two categories of the HBIs existed; the ones operating within the Republic of South Africa, and the others operating within their respective homelands. Amongst these HBIs there was a difference in the perception of the mandate of the university over and above research and teaching. Whereas the HBIs within the homeland system were geared at validating and fortifying homeland governments, the HBIs operating within the Republic of South Africa became, as an unintended consequence, bastions of black politics.

Fast forward into the so-called 'new' South Africa post-1994; the homeland system is abolished; universities that held dialectically opposed ideologies have, with the exception of a few, merged. But the making of an African university in South Africa is still a pipe dream. Today universities in South Africa, by and large, still feature the traditional European-modelled concept of African Studies.

Centre for African Studies

Given the above context, the notion of African Studies in the HWIs is bound to manifest itself in different shades. The British-styled universities would, for instance, exhibit affinity with the European model, making them carbon copies of their European counterparts (Irele, 1991; Olukoshi, 2006). Such universities rightfully stand accused of "privileging Western symbols, rituals and behaviours imposed as a result of epistemecide" (Lebakeng et al., 2006:70).

Their clamouring for everything their European counterparts do explains the irrational introduction of the departments or centres of African Studies in their programmatic mix. Falling into this category are the universities of Cape Town and the Witwatersrand, two of the institutions that did not merge with any other, thus keeping their European complexion intact. Yet, when called upon to transform, these universities seem to have resorted to a tactic of inserting the word 'African' in their vision and mission statements; thereby giving an impression that transformation is taking place (Lebakeng et al., 2006). In these universities, the reform imperatives are delayed through fanciful diversions. For instance, UCT lately fancies itself as an 'Afropolitan' university committed to a trilingual language policy that, in addition to English, recognises isiXhosa and Afrikaans as official languages.

As Nodoba (2010:22) points out, "English remains the normative language" at UCT despite the pronouncements of the new language policy. Here, the reluctance to implement their transformation policy is indicative of the university's lack of commitment to meaningful change.

Centre for Afrocentric Studies

Post-1994 still, after the merger of the Universities of Durban Westville and Natal, the newly formed UKZN flirted with the idea of Afrocentric Studies (Mekoa, 2006). Unlike UCT or other HWIs that did not merge, UKZN had at least three attempts at transformation. First, with the incumbent Vice Chancellor and Principal being a considerably strong advocate for change and having spent some time working in the U.S., it was anticipated that, unlike the usual lip service enshrined in the vision and mission statements of many a South African universities, UKZN was destined to succeed in becoming the envisioned 'premier university of African scholarship'.

Second, because of its historically split origins – the University of Durban Westville having been predominantly Indian in its racial composition and University of Natal, European – the university could not be held ransom by any particular old tradition because it had emerged out of a merger of two universities with different ethos. As such, the merging process automatically negated the carryover of a particular tradition from either one of the original universities.

Lastly, the wind beneath the wings of the merger and thus transformation was still beguiling shortly after 1994. If anything, this university could have proven that the idea of an African university in South Africa was feasible. As a disappointed Mekoa (2006:255) remarks, "there has not been any significant debate about the establishment of a Centre for Afrocentric Studies as a vehicle to promote African culture and values." The university curriculum remained as Eurocentric, and the concept of African scholarship, as encapsulated in the vision, was never debated, (Mekoa, 2006). Therefore, the notion of an Afrocentric university remains still-born

Departments of African Languages

The Afrikaner community has a history of seeing themselves in isolation. Accordingly, the general philosophy of Afrikaner universities sought to serve narrow ideological interests such as apartheid (Visser, 2004).

In the mind of the Afrikaners of the time, it would have been unthinkable to think of African Studies within their universities. Such an act would go against their ideology of apartheid. Nonetheless, in the new dispensation other formerly Afrikaner universities have merged with others. These universities, in line with other HWIs, employed black Vice Chancellors. Understandably, the concept of a Centre or a Department of African Studies in these universities is weaker since they do not necessarily model themselves on European universities. Rather, they feature strong departments of African languages. The University of Free State is the only previously Afrikaner institution to introduce African Studies on its campus.

For the three major HBIs – the University of Fort Hare, the University of Zululand and the University of Limpopo (formerly the University of the North) – the question of African Studies was undermined by the vibrancy of departments of African languages and the volatility of the political environment in which they found themselves. The government of the day would not permit an environment where people gather to speak about African issues. Given this paranoia, speaking about African problems would have been construed as a political treasonous act. The homeland-based HBIs, on the other hand, have largely taken cue from the central government by constricting space for African dialogue.

Not wanting to upset the master (the central government), these universities were rendered incapable of thinking African even when they wanted to. As such, the idea of African Studies was very remote in their programming, except for thriving departments of African languages.

In sum, the inward looking universities such as the older HBIs and the Afrikaner HWIs propagate the concept of African languages as opposed to the establishment of centres or departments dealing specifically with the study of Africa as it pertains in Europe and other parts of the world. Whereas a few British-styled HWIs have some semblance of centres or departments of African Studies, UKZN opted for the American conception of a Centre for Afrocentric Studies, even though the achievements are insignificant.

Conclusion

Despite the many versions of African Studies in existence, I have set out to point out that such inventions are un-African in their conception, and as such serve interests other than Africa's. Whereas the European version of African Studies is colonial, the American version is imperialistic. The African American version, namely Africana Studies could be credited for putting Africa at the centre of academic discourse. Arguably, we may attest to the theoretical contribution of Africology to the study of Africa. But, what did Africa contribute? South African universities are still mimicking their counterparts in the West. However, through engagement with governments, there is still hope that instead of African universities falling over themselves trying to copy their European and American counterparts, they should rather, in totality, become big organisations studying Africa for the benefit of the development of Africa.

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