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## **African Cultural Education and Schooling: towards Bicultural Competence of African Australian Youth**

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### **Abstract**

This article explores the concept of African Cultural Education Program (ACEP) as a relevant tool for gaining bicultural competence among African migrant descendant youth in Australia. The article proposes that acquisition of biculturally informative knowledge may be facilitated by critical exploration of diverse ‘funds of knowledge’ associated with the cultural experience and identities of the African Australian youth. ACEP is a *Third Space* phenomenon through which diverse ‘funds of knowledge’ may be explored, critically, towards a positively self-affirming discourse. The article proposes that formal schooling of African Australians should be complimented by an African Cultural Education Program (ACEP). Such a program involves cultural translators as agents for facilitating dialogue about cultural identity and schooling towards bicultural competence.

### **Introduction**

This article firstly examines the notions of biculturalism and bicultural competence as relevant conceptual contexts for understanding educational needs of African Australian youth. Secondly it explores Barack Obama’s autobiographical narrative as a means of articulating challenges to bicultural socialisation in a racialised society. Thirdly, a discussion of bicultural socialisation and schooling experience of the African migrant descendant youth in Australia, will lead to an examination of the bicultural socialisation of African Australians in the context of the National Curriculum, which the author argues ought to be viewed in the context of cultural difference. Drawing on the notions of *Third Space*<sup>1</sup> and *Critical Literacy*<sup>2</sup> this article explores the concept of an African Cultural Education Program (ACEP) as a complimentary approach to formal schooling of African Australian youth. It is argued that through ACEP *Third Spaces* may be created to facilitate educational experiences that value difference and enhance bicultural competence through diverse

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<sup>1</sup> Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1994).

<sup>2</sup> Paulo Freire and Donaldo Macedo, *Literacy: Reading the Word and the World*, (Westport, Connecticut / London: Bergin and Garvey, 1987).

‘funds of knowledge.’<sup>3</sup> The article concludes by reaffirming the importance of an African Cultural Education Program (ACEP) as the context for facilitating bicultural competence and complimenting schooling experience.

Bicultural socialisation is the process whereby minority individuals learn to function in two cultural environments: their own subordinate, heritage culture and that of the dominant culture.<sup>4</sup> Darder<sup>5</sup> has taken up the challenge of explaining the power politics inherent in the biculturalization experience. She defines biculturalism as follows:

a process wherein individuals learn to function in two distinct social cultural environments: Their primary culture, and that of the dominant mainstream culture of the society in which they live. It represents the process by which bicultural human beings mediate between the dominant discourse of educational institutions and the realities that they must face as members of subordinate cultures.<sup>6</sup>

Successful mediation between the dominant culture and the subordinate culture demands conscious engagement with both cultural environments. Gordon argues that successful mediation between the two cultural environments is a conscious and deliberate process of becoming bicultural. Achieving bicultural competence for Gordon means being competent “not only in terms of my culture of residence but also, and very importantly, my culture of origin.”<sup>7</sup>

### **Barack Obama’s Autobiographical Narrative**

Accordingly, Barack Obama’s autobiographical narrative *Dreams From My Father*, to which I now turn, provides an insightful discourse relating

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<sup>3</sup> Elizabeth Birr Moje, Kathryn McIntosh Ciechanowski, Katherine Kramer, Lindsay Ellis, Rosario Carrillo, and Tehani Collazo, “Working Toward Third Space in Content Area Literacy: An Examination of Everyday Funds of Knowledge and Discourse,” *Reading Research Quarterly*, *International Reading Association*, 39:1 (2004): 38 - 70.

<sup>4</sup> Diane de-Anda, “Bicultural Socialisation: Factors Affecting the Minority Experience,” *Social Work* (1984): 101-107

<sup>5</sup> Antonia Darder, *Culture and Power in the Classroom: A Critical Foundation for Bicultural Education*, (London: Bergin & Garvey, 1991).

<sup>6</sup> Darder, 1991: 84

<sup>7</sup> Gloria Bravette Gordon, “Transforming Lives: Towards Bicultural Competence,” in Peter Reason and Hilary Bradbury (eds), *Handbook of Action Research: Participative Inquiry and Practice*, (London: Sage Publication, 2001): 315.

to bicultural socialisation.<sup>8</sup> Obama's search for the meaning to his own cultural identity resonates with this article's primary objective—that of developing a discourse about bicultural socialisation and competence amongst African Australian youth, and educational experiences that inform it. Obama was born to a black African father, who had gone to study in the United States and a white American mother. As a little boy he struggled with his identity and the absence of his father, who, on completion of his studies, had since returned to Africa<sup>9</sup>. When he was about ten Obama's mother helped him to connect with his Africanness and as he recalls:

Along with news of my father, she begun to stuff me with information about Kenya and its history—it was from a book about Jomo Kenyatta, the first president of Kenya...But nothing my mother told me could relieve my doubts, and I retained little of the information she offered. Only once did she really spark my interest, when she told me that my father's tribe, the Luo, were a Nilotic people who had migrated to Kenya from their original home along the banks of the world's greatest river [the Nile]. This seemed promising....<sup>10</sup>

He later recalls:

One Saturday I went to the public library near our apartment and with the help of a raspy-voiced old librarian, who appreciated my seriousness, I found a book on East Africa. Only there was no mention of pyramids; in fact, the Luos merited only a short paragraph. *Nilote*, it turned out, described a number of nomadic tribes that had originated in the Sudan along the White Nile, far south of the Egyptian empires. The Luo raised cattle and lived in mud huts and ate cornmeal and yams and something called millet. Their traditional costume was leather, a leather thong across the crotch. I left the book open faced on a table and walked out without thanking the librarian.<sup>11</sup>

Obama was disappointed with the library resource because his effort to get useful information about his ancestry was frustrated by its absence in the book. Obama, later on, in his autobiographical narrative, reflects on his identity during his teenage years, and the power relations between

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<sup>8</sup> Barack Obama, *Dreams of My Father: A Story of Race and Inheritance*, (New York: Three Rivers Press, 1995).

<sup>9</sup> Kenya was the home country of Barack Obama's father.

<sup>10</sup> Obama, 1995: 64

<sup>11</sup> Obama, 1995: 64

black and white that influenced his bicultural socialisation. He describes a disappointing outing with two white friends who felt uncomfortable staying longer at a party of black youth, to which Obama had invited them. On being dropped off one of his white colleagues confessed to Obama on how the party experience had revealed to him how hard it must be for Obama and his black mate, Ray, to be the only blacks in the school. It was at this moment that Obama began to see a new map of the world, one that was “frightening in its simplicity, suffocating in its implications”.<sup>12</sup>

We were always playing on the white man’s court, Ray had told me, playing by the white man’s rules....In fact, you couldn’t even be sure that everything you had assumed to be an expression of your black, unfettered self—the humour, the song, the behind—the back pass—had been freely chosen by you.<sup>13</sup>

At best these things were a refuge; at worst a trap. Consequently:

The only thing you could choose as your own was withdraw into a smaller and smaller coil of rage, until being black meant only the knowledge of your own powerlessness, of your own defeat. And the final irony: Should you refuse this defeat and lash out at your captors, they would have a name for that, too, a name that could cage you just as good. Paranoid. Militant. Violent. Nigger.<sup>14</sup>

Obama refused to be caged in a psychology of powerlessness and consequently launched himself into what some scholars refer to as a bibliotherapy<sup>15</sup>. He examined the writings of black thinkers:

Over the next few months, I looked to corroborate this nightmare vision. I gathered up books from the library—Baldwin, Ellison,

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<sup>12</sup> Obama, 1995: 64

<sup>13</sup> Obama, 1995: 85

<sup>14</sup> Obama, 1995: 85

<sup>15</sup> Bibliotherapy generally refers to the use of literature to help people cope with emotional problems, mental illness, or changes in their lives or to produce affective change and promote personality growth and development. By providing literature relevant to their personal situations and developmental needs at appropriate times, bibliotherapy practitioners attempt to help people of all ages to understand themselves and cope with problems such as child abuse, separation. See Mardzia Hayati Abdullah, “What Is Bibliotherapy?” *CYC-ONLINE: Reading for child and youth care people*, 72 (January 2005): 1 - 4; John T. Pardeck, “Using Literature to Help Adolescents Cope with Problems,” *Adolescence*, 114:29 (1994): 421-427. Consequently bibliotherapy may be used for exploring issues relating to migration transition such as racism, bicultural identities and socialisation, intergenerational tensions and minority schooling.

Hughes, Wright, and Dubois. At night I would close the door to my room, telling my grandparents I had homework to do, and there I would sit and wrestle with words, locked in suddenly desperate argument, trying to reconcile the world as I'd found it with the terms of my birth...I kept finding the same anguish, the same doubt; self-contempt that neither irony nor intellect seemed to deflect.<sup>16</sup>

Most of these thinkers did not seem to provide answers to Obama's identity challenges.

Even Dubois's learning and Baldwin's love and Langston's humour eventually succumbed to its corrosive force, each man finally forced to doubt art's redemptive power ....<sup>17</sup>

Eventually he met with someone who gave him some direction out of the 'maddening logic'<sup>18</sup> of being entrapped in oppressive race relations. He states:

Only Malcolm X's autobiography seemed to offer something different. His repeated acts of self-creation spoke to me; the blunt poetry of his words, his unadorned insistence on respect, promised a new and uncompromising order, martial in its discipline, forged through sheer force of will. All the other stuff, the talk of blue-eyed devils was incidental to that program...<sup>19</sup>

### **Bicultural Socialisation and Schooling**

Obama's story provides an insightful lead in to the psycho-social challenges faced by African Australian youth living in a predominantly Eurocentric white Australia,<sup>20</sup> and also informs the form of cultural education program that may be designed for their successful bicultural socialisation.<sup>21</sup> Beyond the material privilege of living in a relatively safer environment and having access to comparatively well resourced institutions, for most black African migrant youth, their visibility presents ongoing psycho-social challenges both at school and in the broader

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<sup>16</sup> Obama, 1995, 86

<sup>17</sup> Obama, 1995, 86

<sup>18</sup> Obama, 1995, 85

<sup>19</sup> Obama, 1995, 86

<sup>20</sup> Kirk Zwangobani, "From Diaspora to Multiculture: In Search of a Youthful Pan-African Identity," *The Australasian Review of African Studies*, 29: 1 & 2 (2008): 51-65.

<sup>21</sup> de-Anda, 1984; Gordon, 2001; Gloria Gordon, *Towards Bicultural Competence: Beyond Black and White*, (London: Trentham Books, 2007).

community,<sup>22</sup> which cannot be ignored when contemplating a psycho-socially empowering cultural education program. A psycho-socially empowering education, for the African migrant descendant youth should take cognisance of their bicultural identities, the challenges contingent to it, and consequently inform processes of bicultural socialisation that lead to bicultural competence.<sup>23</sup> The encounter with racism on a regular basis; the reconciliation of heritage /ancestral culture with dominant culture and adaptation to alienating schooling experiences, are some of the challenges faced by the African Australian youth.<sup>24</sup>

Research in education and school experience of the African migrant descendant youth in Australia suggests that African Australian youth are experiencing difficulties in their schooling,<sup>25</sup> and for some of them who have graduated from tertiary institutions they are finding it difficult to secure employment.<sup>26</sup> This is confirmed by Lindsay Tanner, the Federal Minister for Finance and Deregulation, when he observed, that:

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<sup>22</sup> Joel Windle, "The Racialisation of African Youth in Australia." *Social Identities* 14:5 (2008):553-566; Peter Mbago Wakholi, "African Cultural Education: A Dialogue with African Migrant Youth in Western Australia," Masters of Education Thesis, Murdoch University, 2005; Peter Mbago Wakholi, "Experience of Racism by Youth of African Migrant Descent," in *National Conference on Racism in a Global Context*, Centre for Social and Community Research, Murdoch University, 2007, <http://ncrgc.murdoch.edu.au/presentations.html> (accessed 20 February 2010); Peter Mbago Wakholi, "African Cultural Education and the African Youth in Western Australia: Experimenting with the Ujamaa Circle," in *African Studies Association of Australasia and the Pacific 31st Conference, "Building a Common Future - Africa and Australasia,"* AFSAAP, 2008, <http://www.afsaap.org.au/Conferences/2008/Monash/2008.htm> (accessed 20 February 2010); Jo Flanagan, "Dropped from the Moon: The Settlement Experiences of Refugee Communities from in Tasmania." Social Action and Research Centre Anglicare Tasmania, 2007; Jill Brown, Jenny Miller, and Jane Mitchell, "Interrupted Schooling and the Acquisition of Literacy: Experiences of Sudanese Refugees in Victoria Secondary Schools," *Australian Journal of Language and Literacy*, 29:2 (2006): 150 – 62; Elizabeth Cassity and Greg Gow, "Making up for Lost Time: The Experiences of Southern Sudanese Young Refugees in High Schools," *Youth Studies Australia* (September, 2005):1-33; Lawrence. T. Udo-Ekpo, *The Africans in Australia: Expectations and Shattered Dreams*, (Seaview Press, Adelaide: 1999).

<sup>23</sup> Gordon, 2001; Gordon, 2007; de-Anda, 1984.

<sup>24</sup> Cassity and Gow, 2005.

<sup>25</sup> Brown, Miller and Mitchell, 2006; Cassity and Gow, 2005.

<sup>26</sup> Lindsay Tanner while delivering the 2008 Redmond Barry Lecture at the State Library of Victoria noted that many non-African Australians were helping African refugees to settle and find opportunities. Yet big challenges remained "African-Australians still endure prejudice and discrimination in their daily lives," he said. Furthermore some young Australia-educated African-Australians spent years trying to



I am now encountering African-Australians with high-level qualifications from Australian universities who can't find jobs ... Their degrees are from Melbourne, not Mogadishu, but they're finding it just as hard to find employment.<sup>27</sup>

Tanner attributes the unemployment of well trained African Australians to racism that pervades many private and public institutions. Employment is an important pathway to social inclusion of African migrants as it enables them to develop local social networks and cultural skills for integration, as well as a standard of living which will support successful settlement.<sup>28</sup> Therefore addressing these challenges requires a critical literacy that informs coping and resilience strategies towards integration, into dominant culture. Critical literacy challenges the status quo, through informed attitudes, in an effort to discover alternative paths for self and social development.<sup>29</sup>

Schooling as a socialising experience, for African migrant descendant youth, presents challenges to successful bicultural socialisation. Racism and alienating attitudes from non-African students and teachers; ethnocentric perceptions by teachers and school administrators towards career ambitions of young African Australians create barriers to successful schooling.<sup>30</sup> In a study<sup>31</sup> among African Australian students in Sydney High Schools the students were unequivocal about racist practises at their schools. They portrayed their non-African peers (and some

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get jobs in their chosen professions, despite big staff shortages (Reported by Brendan Nicholson, "Africans Face Racism: Tanner," *The Age*, 4 August 2008.

<sup>27</sup> Lindsay Tanner, "New Paths to an Open Australia," 2008 Redmond Barry Lecture - speech delivered at the Victorian State Library on 30 July 2008, <http://www.slv.vic.gov.au/programs/tf/lectures/rbl/2008/> (accessed 29 March 2010).

<sup>28</sup> Farida Tilbury and Val Colic-Peisker, "Skilled Refugees, Employment and Social Inclusion: A Perth Case Study of Three Communities," in Val Colic-Peisker and Farida Tilbury (eds), *Settling in Australia: The Social Inclusion of Refugees*, (Perth: Centre for Social and Community Research, Murdoch University, 2007).

<sup>29</sup> Ira Shor, "What Is Critical Literacy?" *Journal of Pedagogy, Pluralism and Practice*, (1997), <http://www.lesley.edu/journals/jppp/4/shor.html>; Freire and Macedo, 1987.

<sup>30</sup> Jaya Earnest, Tambri Housen, and Sue Gillieatt. "Adolescent and Young Refugee Perspectives on Psychosocial Well-Being," (Perth, Centre for International Health: Curtin University of Technology, 2007b): 1-52; Jaya Earnest, Tambri Housen, and Sue Gillieatt, "A New Cohort of Refugee Students in Perth: Challenges for Students and Educators," Paper presented at the Student Engagement. Proceedings of the 16th Annual Teaching Learning Forum, 30-31 January 2007, (The University of Western Australia. Perth 2007a); Cassity and Gow, 2005.

<sup>31</sup> Cassity and Gow, 2005.

teachers) as lacking cultural understanding and ‘respect’ for African people. It was also reported in this study that the African students did not want to make a commotion about ‘racism’ in their schools. “Evidently, compared with their harsh pre—arrival experiences in Cairo, Kampala, Kakuma and the like, they considered racist behaviour at school a nuisance they could live with.”<sup>32</sup> Viewing racism as a tolerable ‘nuisance’, by African Australian students, is saddening and unacceptable. Racism has many forms, everyday minor incidents and the perception that society is discriminatory may have a greater impact on the individual’s health.<sup>33</sup> Therefore tolerance of racism in schools by African Australian students is unacceptable as it may lead to long term effects on their health.<sup>34</sup>

Schooling of African migrant youth is also influenced by the expectations of the African students, their parents and teachers. Some Australian studies suggest that despite a positive attitude towards schooling African Australian students are not succeeding. Part of the problem seems to be the ethnocentric perceptions the teachers and administrators hold towards African Australian students.<sup>35</sup> In one of the studies<sup>36</sup> it was observed that there were a number of different strategies to meet the needs of the African Australian youth which included homework classes, an African girls group, lunch time activities and parent orientation sessions. Despite such efforts the situation remained bleak for the African Australian students involved in the study. Moreover, despite the optimism towards success through schooling some teachers and administrators believed that African students and their parents had unrealistic educational and career expectations.<sup>37</sup> For example a teacher at an Intensive English Centre (IEC) argued against the positive attitude of African parents and students towards schooling and career as follows:

I think the expectations of the family are that we have made it to Australia, we have made it to this safe country, you’re our future. The parents are thinking, ‘You’re at school now, you’ll be fine. Then you’ll go to University. ‘They’re not seeing that they are coming to a new system, to a school system that they’ve never

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<sup>32</sup> Cassity and Gow, (2005): 20

<sup>33</sup> Apu Chakraborty and Kwame McKenzie, “Does Racial Discrimination Cause Mental Illness?” *British Journal of Psychiatry*, 180 (2002): 475 - 477.

<sup>34</sup> Chakraborty and McKenzie, 2002.

<sup>35</sup> Earnest, Housen and Gillieatt, 2007a; Earnest, Housen and Gillieatt 2007b; Brown, Miller and Mitchell, 2006; Cassity and Gow, 2005.

<sup>36</sup> Brown, Miller and Mitchell, 2006.

<sup>37</sup> Earnest, Housen and Gillieatt, 2007b.

been in, and they don't see that they are falling way behind the normal progression. They think that their kids can get here and cope, and go to high school, go to uni and get a great job.<sup>38</sup>

This kind of ethnocentric pessimism from an educator is both unprofessional and inappropriate; moreover it reveals two important issues relating to bicultural socialisation of the African youth. The first issue is that it legitimates failure by 'killing' career ambition and enthusiasm towards schooling by African Australian students. This may lead to alienation and school drop out of African Australian youth.<sup>39</sup> The second issue is the urgency it demands of the African parents, to actively get involved in school and curriculum issues so as to contribute effectively towards the successful schooling of their children. African parents' involvement with the schools will facilitate development of ideas that counter ethnocentric views of teachers. Schools transmit dominant culture, and teachers who have the responsibility of inculcating this culture usually assume that the students have a body of knowledge which prepares them for school and is sequential with the learning that the school provides.<sup>40</sup> Therefore students coming from African backgrounds are likely to be alienated from such classroom contexts which are predominantly Eurocentric and consequently do not, necessarily, accommodate difference.

Overcoming the contradiction of schooling in an alienating cultural environment requires the support of 'cultural translators'. Cultural translators are able to draw the attention of educators to relevant curriculum ideas that may facilitate bicultural socialisation of their children.<sup>41</sup> Cultural translators are informed bicultural people who have themselves undergone successful bicultural socialisation. They contribute positively towards the schooling of African Australian youth through sharing experience and supporting their psycho-social wellbeing.

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<sup>38</sup> Cassity and Gow, (2005): 37.

<sup>39</sup> Henry M. Codjoe, "Africa(ns) in the Canadian Educational System: An Analysis of Positionality and Knowledge Construction," in Wisdom J. Tettey and Korbla P. Pupilampu (eds), *The African Diaspora in Canada: Negotiating Identity and Belonging*, (Calgary, Alberta, Canada: University of Calgary Press 2005): 63 - 92; George J. Sefa Dei, Josephine Mazzuca, Elizabeth McIsaac, and Jasmine Zine, *Reconstructing 'Drop-out': A Critical Ethnography of the Dynamics of Black Students' Disengagement from School*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press Inc, 1997).

<sup>40</sup> Gary Partington and Vince McCudden, *Ethnicity and Education*. Wentworth Falls: Social Sciences Press, 1992.

<sup>41</sup> de-Anda, 1984.

It is therefore proposed, in this article, that any consideration for an innovative African Cultural Education Program (ACEP) towards successful bicultural socialisation, of the African Australian youth, has to take cognizance of the bicultural nature of the African migrant descendant youth and the psycho-social issues and challenges associated with it.<sup>42</sup> The African youth construct/reconstruct their identities by mediating between their subordinate/heritage culture and the dominant Eurocentric culture. This process entails the selective adoption of new behaviours from the dominant culture, and retention of valued features of one's heritage/ancestral culture.<sup>43</sup> These choices however are made between contradictory tensions of the dominant and subordinate culture with marginalisation or successful integration as possible outcomes.<sup>44</sup> Marginalisation, for African migrant youth, is associated with heritage loss; psychological oppression due to racism and social exclusion, leading to low self esteem and poor self concept.<sup>45</sup> The visibility of black African migrant descendant youth makes them easy targets of prejudice and racism. And as Fanon has pointed out black encounter with white racism usually leads to negative consequences:

In the white world the man of colour encounters difficulties in the development of his body schema. Consciousness of the body is solely a negating activity. It is a third—person consciousness. The body is surrounded by an atmosphere of certain uncertainty.<sup>46</sup>

Being surrounded by an atmosphere of 'certain uncertainty' creates psycho-social challenges for the African Australian youth which affect

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<sup>42</sup> Darder, 1991; Makungu Akinyela, "Black Families, Cultural Democracy and Self-Determination: An African Centred Pedagogy," (Emory University, 1996).

<sup>43</sup> John Berry, "Acculturation: Living Successfully in Two Cultures," *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 29 (2005): 697 – 712; Gordon, 2001; Gordon, 2007.

<sup>44</sup> Renae Willsmore, "Ethnicity, Youth and Violence: Young African Refugees' Experiences in South Australia." Paper presented at *Africa in a Restructuring World, 32nd African Studies Association of Australasia and the Pacific Annual Conference (AFSAAP)*, Brisbane 1-2 October 2009; Ndungu Mungai, "Young Sudanese Men: Experiences of Racism in Melbourne," paper presented at "*Building a Common Future – Africa and Australasia*," *African Studies Association of Australasia and the Pacific 31st Annual Conference (AFSAAP)*, Melbourne, November 2008 <http://www.afsaap.org.au/Conferences/2008/Monash/2008.htm> (accessed 20 February 2010); Windle, 2008; Flanagan, 2007; Darder, 1991.

<sup>45</sup> Berry, 2005; Hussein Abdilahi Bulhan, *Frantz and the Psychology of Oppression*, (New York and London: Plenum Press, 1985); Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin White Masks*, (New York: Grove Press, 1967).

<sup>46</sup> Fanon, 1967.

their confidence; self esteem and the process of bicultural socialisation. Yet becoming biculturally competent implies a sense of belonging to Australia and the accommodation of aspects of the ancestral / heritage culture.<sup>47</sup> But as Matekere observes the dominant perspective of Australianness is one shaped by Australia's national foundations and its allegiances to the British Empire.<sup>48</sup> Australian dominant culture is centred on Eurocentric values which in turn influence educational policies and the 'hidden curriculum.'<sup>49</sup> The hidden curriculum, in the context of African Australians' schooling, may imply ethnocentric attitudes teachers hold about Africa and Africans. Therefore, as a cultural system, Australian education involves not only learning of basic life skills but also systems of meaning, aspirations and purpose through which notions of personal and social identity are articulated.<sup>50</sup> Accordingly the hidden curriculum compels an unthinking, non-reflective acceptance of what is presented as a social destiny, even if it is a destiny of failure, deprivation and powerlessness.<sup>51</sup> For the African Australian students and parents successful schooling is contingent to the appreciation of the hidden curriculum and its contradictory relation to bicultural socialisation.

### **Bicultural Socialisation and the National Curriculum**

In a recent report by the Office of Multicultural Interests (OMI),<sup>52</sup> African migrants in Western Australia identified strategies for educators to support cultural needs of African Australian students in schools. They included the following:

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<sup>47</sup> Aniko Hatoss and Terry Shelly, "Language Maintenance and Identity among Sudanese-Australian Refugee-Background Youth," *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 30:2 (2009): 127-144.

<sup>48</sup> Kudzai Matekere "'Embracing the Aussie Identity': Theoretical Reflections on Challenges and Prospects for African-Australian Youths," *The Australasian Review of African Studies* 30:1 (June, 2009): 129-143.

<sup>49</sup> The hidden curriculum refers to the outcomes of education and/or processes leading to those outcomes, which are not explicitly intended by educators. See Terri Seddon, "The Hidden Curriculum: An Overview," *Curriculum Perspectives*, 3:1 (1983): 1-6.

<sup>50</sup> Fazal Rivzi, "Series Introduction," in Fazal Rivzi (ed). *Multiculturalism as an Educational Policy*, (Deakin: Deakin University, Victoria, 1985).

<sup>51</sup> Maxine Greene, "Introduction," in Henry Giroux and David Purpel (eds), *The Hidden Curriculum and Moral Education*, (Berkely, California: McCutchan Publishing Corporation, 1983).

<sup>52</sup> Western Australian Office of Multicultural Interests (OMI), "Omi Submission to Ahrc Report: African Australians: A Report on Human Rights and Social Inclusion Issues. In, Office of Multicultural Interests, 2009, [http://www.omi.wa.gov.au/publications/submissions/AHRC\\_Report.pdf](http://www.omi.wa.gov.au/publications/submissions/AHRC_Report.pdf). (accessed 1 March 2010).

- Provide cross-cultural education for students involving an exchange of information about the home cultures of students and Australian ‘mainstream’ culture and promote cultural diversity in school programs, including promoting African background students’ home cultures and languages in the curriculum.
- Include different family structures as part of the school curriculum to acknowledge social and cultural differences relating to child rearing practices, gender roles and diversity within African cultures.
- Include ‘African’ culture in art and music programs.
- Encourage parents to maintain home language and culture.
- Provide bilingual aides

The foregoing strategies imply an inclusive education that acknowledges cultural difference. These strategies are relevant to bicultural socialisation of the African Australian students in Australian schools. The idea of an inclusive multicultural education is not a new phenomenon in the politics of Australian education and policy.<sup>53</sup> As far back as 1984 the Kim Beazley Report into Education in Western Australia<sup>54</sup> noted that “although multicultural education was not within the stated terms of reference, it was apparent to the committee that the needs of children from non-English-speaking backgrounds were related to the broader issues of multicultural education.”<sup>55</sup> Therefore the committee recommended that schools should:

fully utilise community resources and expertise in programmes for children from non English speaking backgrounds....familiarise newly appointed teachers with the cultural and ethnic backgrounds of the school community and with strategies and resources available to deal with its needs...needs which go beyond the importance of acquiring the English language (1984,p.336).

In a more recent document, the ‘Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians’<sup>56</sup> put together by the Australian Ministers

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<sup>53</sup> Partington and McCudden, 1992; Fazal Rivzi, (ed). *Multiculturalism as an Educational Policy*, (Deakin: Deakin University, Victoria, 1985).

<sup>54</sup> Kim Beazley, “Report of the Committee of Inquiry into Education in Western Australia,” (Perth, Western Australia: Department of Education and Training, 1984).

<sup>55</sup> Beazley, (1984): 336

<sup>56</sup> Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs – Federal (MCEECDYA), “Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for

of Education, two goals for education of young Australians were identified as follows -

**Goal 1:** Australian schooling promotes equity and excellence;

**Goal 2:** All young Australians become successful learners, confident individuals, active and informed citizens.

The document proposes that achieving these goals is the collective responsibility of governments, school sectors and individual schools as well as parents and carers, young Australians, families, other education and training providers, business and the broader community. The 'Melbourne Declaration' provided the background for the National Curriculum document which is in the process of being implemented by all states. The National Curriculum document states that:

Education plays an important part in forming the young people who will take responsibility for Australia in the future. If it is to play this part effectively, education must address the intellectual, personal and social development of young Australians, and it must do so at a time when ideas about the goals of education are changing, and will continue to change.<sup>57</sup>

Accordingly:

A curriculum for the 21st century will reflect an understanding and acknowledgment of the changing nature of young people as learners and the challenges and demands that will continue to shape their learning in the future. Young people will need a wide and adaptive set of skills to meet the changing expectations of society and to contribute to the creation of a more productive, sustainable and just society.

Indeed education as hooks suggests "is about healing and wholeness. It is about empowerment, liberation transcendence, about renewing the vitality of life. It is about finding and claiming ourselves and our place in the world."<sup>58</sup> Education viewed from this perspective enables educators to develop curriculum approaches that embrace difference and

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Young Australians," December, 2008, [http://www.mceecdya.edu.au/mceecdya/melbourne\\_declaration,25979.html](http://www.mceecdya.edu.au/mceecdya/melbourne_declaration,25979.html) (accessed 1 February 2010).

<sup>57</sup> Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), "Curriculum Design," 2009, [http://www.acara.edu.au/verve/resources/Curriculum\\_Design\\_Paper.pdf](http://www.acara.edu.au/verve/resources/Curriculum_Design_Paper.pdf) (accessed 1 February 2010).

<sup>58</sup> bell hooks, *Teaching Community a Pedagogy of Hope*, (New York and London: Routledge, 2003): 31

accommodate alternative knowledge contexts and epistemologies. This conceptual view of education is relevant, to an African Cultural Education Program (ACEP), because it informs an approach that counters universalistic curriculum approaches which do not value cultural difference.

According to Seddon<sup>59</sup> the history of modernist education indicates that state- provided education, structured by a public curriculum and realised by a teaching workforce trained in appropriate principles of teaching, was a key instrument for managing populations within national jurisdictions. However, with globalisation, multicultural pluralism and transnational belonging, the idea of a 'National Curriculum' is increasingly unconvincing in the same way that the simple idea of a national space or a national identity seems questionable.<sup>60</sup> Curriculum, according to Seddon, is being shaped both by supra-national and sub-national social forces creating curriculum marked by diversity and dissent.<sup>61</sup> Globalisation, transnationalism, multiculturalism and the politics of cultural difference are among the ideological and social constructs influencing curriculum philosophies of the postmodern and postcolonial states. Seddon, for example, argues that the history of Australian colonisation and colonialism is fundamental to any consideration of a national curriculum. Australia was purportedly empty land into which the British introduced their culture, institutions and practices unimpeded. This history meant that indigenous cultures and languages were not recognised in the curriculum until the, 1970s.<sup>62</sup> Moreover the exclusionist immigration policies by the colonial state affected Africans as well. For example the New South Wales Coloured Races Restriction Bill of 1896 excluded all persons belonging to any coloured race inhabiting the Continent of Asia or the Continent of Africa, of any island adjacent thereto, or any island in the Pacific or Indian Oceans.<sup>63</sup> Such historical events highlight the significance of understanding Australian history and how it relates to African Australians, especially in the context of migration policy and race relations. Therefore development of an African Cultural Education Program (ACEP), which in turn informs a national

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<sup>59</sup> Terri Seddon "National Curriculum in Australia? A Matter of Politics, Powerful Knowledge and the Regulation of Learning." *Pedagogy, Culture and Society*, 9:3 (2001): 307-331.

<sup>60</sup> Seddon, 2001.

<sup>61</sup> Seddon, 2001.

<sup>62</sup> Seddon, 2001.

<sup>63</sup> Andrew Markus, *Australian Race Relations*, (St Leonard, NSW: Allen and Unwin, 1994).



curriculum, requires vigilant awareness of the work that must continually be done to undermine all the socialisation that leads to behave in ways that perpetuate domination.<sup>64</sup> Such an approach entails critical exploration of ideas from diverse ‘funds of knowledge’ in *third spaces*.

### **Bicultural Socialisation and the Third Space**

Bhabha used the term *third space* in his critique of modern notions of culture, and his argument is that *third space* is produced in and through language as people come together and particularly as people resist cultural authority, bringing different experiences to bear on the same linguistic signs or cultural symbols. In the *third space* self affirming knowledge is articulated in order to counter exclusive cultural narratives emanating from dominant culture. In the context of the African Australian youth *third space* merges the *first space*— the African Australian’s home, community, and peer networks with the *second space* of the Discourses they encounter in more formalised institutions such as work, school, church, and media.<sup>65</sup> African Australian youth display an interesting mix of optimism, pessimism, anxiety and fear, which reveals a duality in their formation and actualisation of their agency.<sup>66</sup> Through their ambivalent duality the African Australian youth are searching for and defining an African Australian essence and for most of them this occurs in a liminal space, the *third space*.

For example, working from a *third space* some African youth in Canberra have formed an arts group called ‘Kulture Break’ which relies extensively on the appropriation of American hip-hop and popular culture to create an identity that goes beyond the negative stereotype associated with difference in Australia.<sup>67</sup> In the process of creating their own identities the African Australian youth embrace an Australian identity and reevaluate their relationship with the African heritage. As they perform their cultural identities they offer resistance to what dominant culture considers as the ‘norm’.<sup>68</sup> This resistance is articulated performatively through their identities and artistic activities. In the *third space* they seek their identities by relying on iconic figures such as Malcolm X, Bob Marley,

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<sup>64</sup> hooks, 2003.

<sup>65</sup> Moje, McIntosh Ciechanowski, Kramer, Ellis, Carrillo and Collazo. 2004; the first and third spaces are arbitrary as they may be swapped, the first space being the dominant culture and the second space being that associated with subordinate culture.

<sup>66</sup> Kudzai Matekere, 2009; Windle, Joel. “The Racialisation of African Youth in Australia.” *Social Identities* 14, no. 5 (2008): 553-66.

<sup>67</sup> Zwangobani, 2008.

<sup>68</sup> Matekere, 2009.

and Martin Luther King. These icons are a means by which to articulate their struggle and forge black African Australian identity.<sup>69</sup> This is significant in the context of identity politics because African Australian youth experience negative attitudes relating to Africa and black people in general, on a regular basis. Therefore a bicultural socialisation approach that draws on iconic figures who have experienced and resisted racism through different approaches—public speaking, music, sport and preaching—are useful processes/tools towards bicultural competence.

Gordon has demonstrated the importance of role modelling black communities into dealing with racism through self-knowledge. Gordon suggests that despite the motivation behind racism and racial discrimination—being used as a strategy to undermine the human dignity of African people, African people do not have to open themselves to it. Instead black people should choose to transform the experience by transforming their own perspectives on what was actually happening beyond the illusion of race by making themselves knowledgeable.<sup>70</sup> Indeed African Australian communities need to be knowledgeable about the challenges to integration into dominant culture but further to be aware of the political nature of issues relating to cultural identity and practice. Matekere cautions us when he suggests that the exclusive conception of Australian identity ought to be deconstructed in emancipatory terms. This implies that the Australian identity is conceptualised as an experience and subjective formation that evades the racial essentialism which masquerades as the Australian identity.<sup>71</sup> Performative articulation of African Australian identities is a positive contribution to the definition of the Australian identities.

Through African Cultural Education Program (ACEP) it is possible to explore diverse ‘funds of knowledge’ which inform bicultural socialisation and competence and in turn strengthen schooling of the African Australian youth. Evidence from social psychology and immigration psychology suggest that a strong and secure ethnic identity makes a positive contribution to psychological well-being. Therefore maintenance of a strong ethnic identity is generally related to

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<sup>69</sup> Zwangobani, 2008.

<sup>70</sup> Gloria Gordon, “Transforming Thinking Amongst British African Caribbeans as an Academically Based Community Service Contribution,” *Journal of Transformative Education*, 4:3 (2006): 226-242.

<sup>71</sup> Matekere, (2009): 140

psychological well being among members of acculturating groups.<sup>72</sup> Accordingly integration that involves simultaneous ethnic retention and adaptation to the new society is the most adaptive mode of acculturation and the most conducive to immigrants' well-being.<sup>73</sup> Similar assertions have been made by other scholars.<sup>74</sup> These findings are important in the context of an African Cultural Education Program (ACEP) and the African Australian youth because they imply the relevance of a pedagogy that supports the process of bicultural socialisation that draws on heritage culture towards bicultural competence. Moreover Australia's relatively recent departure from the white Australian policy means that there are still strong attitudes, in the wider community, towards assimilation and exclusionist practices.<sup>75</sup> A paper published by Professor Andrew Fraser, 'Rethinking White Australian Policy', clearly articulates these exclusionist attitudes when he argues that the immigration policies which allow Africans to settle in Australia will lead to the creation of an under class and crime.<sup>76</sup> He explains it as follows:

...tensions are already appearing between white Australians and the growing numbers of black, sub-Saharan Africans settled here by the transnational refugee industry. One can safely predict that, no matter how large this particular Third World colony becomes, black Africans will never become a "market-dominant minority" in Australia. On the contrary, experience "practically everywhere in the world tells us that an expanding black population is a sure-fire recipe for increases in crime, violence and a wide range of other social problems."<sup>77</sup>

African Cultural Education Program (ACEP) is a dialogical approach to creation of a knowledge base that informs the bicultural socialisation process of the African Australian youth. This in turn creates deconstructive epistemologies that challenge exclusionist attitudes

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<sup>72</sup> Jean S. Phinney, Gabriel Horenczyk, Karmela Liebkind, and Paul Vedder, "Ethnic Identity, Immigration and Well-Being: An Interactional Perspective," *Journal of Social Sciences*, 57:3 (2001): 493-510.

<sup>73</sup> Phiney, Horenczyk, Liebkind, and Vedder, 2001.

<sup>74</sup> de-Anda, 1984; Berry, 2005; Gordon, 2001; Gordon, 2007.

<sup>75</sup> Fraser, Andrew. Undated. Rethinking the White Australian Policy. In, *Academic Underground*,

[http://www.downundernewslinks.com/article/Rethinking\\_the\\_White\\_Australia\\_Policy.html](http://www.downundernewslinks.com/article/Rethinking_the_White_Australia_Policy.html). (accessed 1 February 2010); Flanagan, 2007; Stephen Castle, Mary Kalantzis, Bill Cope, and Michael Morrissey, *Mistaken Identity: Multiculturalism and the Demise of Nationalism in Australia*, (Leichhardt: Pluto Press, 1990).

<sup>76</sup> Fraser, 2007.

<sup>77</sup> Fraser, (2007): 6.

prevalent in dominant culture. This is important because studies exploring the role of ethnic identity in the educational adaptations of immigrants suggest that a bicultural orientation is conducive to better school performance.<sup>78</sup> For example studies among Hispanic immigrant students in South Florida (USA), fluent bilingualism was associated with higher educational achievement and more ambitious plans for the future.<sup>79</sup> The significance of bilingualism, among African Australians, is confirmed by a study conducted in Queensland, amongst Sudanese migrants, which concluded that the majority of Sudanese refugee-background Australian youth, (in the selected locality of the study) were closely attached to their mother tongue and therefore their ancestral language was an important tool for expressing their identity and for maintaining their social networks in the local community as well as, transnationally, in Africa.<sup>80</sup> Such dualities as portrayed by the Sudanese youth suggest that *third spaces* offer possibilities for exploring diverse 'knowledge funds' which may benefit bicultural identities of African Australian youth. This will in turn inform and compliment their schooling experience.

## **Conclusion**

The construction of cultural identities by African Australian youth is influenced by their experiences and mediation between two, significant, cultures, namely; the heritage/ ancestral culture and the dominant Eurocentric culture. The process of mediation between the two cultures is known as bicultural socialisation. Bicultural socialisation is a conscious process entailing negotiation and appropriation of cultural symbols within and between, sometimes, contradictory social relations. Achieving bicultural competence entails crossing diverse cultural boundaries and being well adjusted, psychologically and socially to deal and function within diverse cultural settings. Therefore achieving bicultural competence among African Australians requires appropriate educational experiences which draw on diverse 'funds of knowledge'. Evidence from cultural identity politics theory,<sup>81</sup> African black diaspora identification theory<sup>82</sup> and critical bicultural education theory<sup>83</sup> imply that schooling

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<sup>78</sup> Phiney, Horenczyk, Liebkind, and Vedder, 2001.

<sup>79</sup> Alejandro Portes and Richard Shauffler, "Language and the Second Generation: Bilingualism Yesterday and Today," *International Migration Review*, 28:4 (Winter, 1994): 640-661.

<sup>80</sup> Hatoss and Shelly, 2009.

<sup>81</sup> Jonathan Rutherford (ed), *Identity: Community, Culture and Difference*, (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1990).

<sup>82</sup> Edmund T. Gordon and Mark Anderson. "The African Diaspora: Toward an Ethnography of Diasporic Identification." *The Journal of American Folklore* 112, no. 445 (1999): 282-96; Joyce Elaine King, "Diaspora Literacy and Consciousness in the

experience of the African Australian youth needs to be sensitive to bicultural socialisation processes and consequently provide an educational experience that enriches it. Bicultural socialisation of the African Australian youth through schooling has to be complemented by informed participation of African parents. Informed participation implies contribution of ideas that inform the school curriculum and hence promote bicultural education. Education for the African Australian youth has to strengthen the inner spiritual identity. Spiritual identity arises in and of itself from identification with experience rather than submission to a particular set of concepts or beliefs.<sup>84</sup> In community settings parents as cultural translators need to open up *third spaces* through which African Cultural Education Programs (ACEP) are developed as contexts for dialogue about bicultural socialisation. As hooks has observed, the dominator culture has tried to keep us all afraid, to make us choose safety instead of risk, sameness instead of diversity. Moving through that fear, finding out what connects us, revelling in our differences is the process that brings us closer, that gives us a world of shared values, of meaningful community.<sup>85</sup>

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Struggle against Miseducation in the Black Community.” *Journal of Negro Education* 61, no. 3 (1992): 317.

<sup>83</sup> Antonia Darder, 1991

<sup>84</sup> bell hooks, 2003.

<sup>85</sup> bell hooks, 2003, p.179.

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## **MEMBER PROFILE**

**Peter Mbago Wakholi- Secretary of AFSAAP**, is married with four daughters. Originally from Uganda, Peter migrated to Australia with his family in 1991. Before coming to Australia, he worked as a high school teacher in Uganda, Kenya and Zambia following his graduation from Makerere University in Uganda (1984). Peter currently works with the Education Department in Western Australia as a high school teacher and is pursuing a PhD through the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at Murdoch University on “Negotiating Cultural Identity through the Arts.” Peter holds an M.Ed Research from Murdoch University. His master’s research project centred on ‘African Cultural Education: A dialogue with the African Migrant Youth in Western Australia.’ He also holds a Graduate Certificate in Professional Learning and a B.Ed from Edith Cowan University; and a BSc from Makerere University in Uganda. Peter is the author of *African Cultural Education and the African Youth in Western Australia: Experimenting with the Ujamaa Circle* (Saarbrücken: VDM Verlag, 2008), as well as several refereed and magazine articles in the area of African cultural education, including “African Cultural Education and the African Youth in Western Australia: Experimenting with the Ujamaa Circle”, (<http://www.afsaap.org.au/Conferences/2008/Monash/2008.htm>); and “African cultural education and the social inclusion of refugees,” in Colic-Peisker and Tilbury (eds.), *Settling in Australia: The social inclusion of refugees* (Murdoch University, 2007). His research interests include migration and cultural identity – in particular the role of African cultural knowledge – and the use of arts-based approaches in strengthening the cultural identities of African youth. In addition, he is also a practising artist and a cultural education facilitator. Peter has also played a strong role in community leadership, serving in a variety of leadership and membership roles with organisations including the Metropolitan Migrant Resource Centre Management Board in Perth; the Management Committee of the One World Centre, an NGO based in Bayswater and dedicated to Global Education; the Reference Group for the Cultural and Linguistic Diversity in Apprenticeships and Traineeships Project Training Australia (GTA) WA INC; and the Community Refugee Support Scheme. In 2007, Peter convened the African Cultural Memory Youth Festival at Murdoch University. In 2009 he facilitated, along with his wife, Sarah, a two day Seminar on African Cultural Education at Victoria University, Melbourne.



used were also weak at times, many being quite dated and with many projections rather than actual figures.

Pereira has made an ambitious attempt to address what is inevitably a massive subject, and not always with clarity. This study would have benefited from a sharing of the workload so that some aspects were more adequately and evenly addressed. It is notable that the other titles in the series, all of which focussed on much more limited subjects, had multiple authors. Pereira was over-viewing a history of some sixty years and covering over forty institutions. Her expertise in the area of gender is obvious but weaknesses appear when discussing aspects of the university system. However, despite the weaknesses, the author has answered the four research questions and the study has played a useful role in highlighting the type of influences which have shaped the university system, many of which have undoubtedly institutionalized and reinforced gender inequities. The book's strengths lie in the way gender analysis has been applied to reveal hidden discrepancies and to identify the relevant contextual and systemic issues. Its weaknesses lie in the one researcher trying to tackle the subject in such a comprehensive manner when a more focussed approach (or more authors) might have accomplished the same ends in a more convincing manner.

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## **The Cultural Heritage of Africa**

**Kenji Yoshida and John Mack (eds.), *Preserving the Cultural Heritage of Africa: Crisis or Renaissance?* Woodbridge/Suffolk and James Currey / UNISA, 2008.**

This timely publication is an outcome of contributions by scholars and curators working in the area of African cultural heritage. It is contextualised in a paradigm that challenges 'primitivism' and 'savagery' approaches to the exhibition of African heritage. Africa's cultural heritage is rich and diverse and has been the subject of foreign curiosity and collection, hence the massive collections in both private and public museums in Europe, the United States of America and Australasia. With globalisation and paradigm shifts in post-colonial states there is a definite move to ensure that the agenda for African institutions is to build museums for the purpose of preserving and presenting cultural heritage

on site. This book examines the changing nature of Africa's museums and the roles they are beginning to play in reconstituting both the tangible and intangible contexts of Africa's cultural heritage.

In reference to African museums, and to collections of African objects held elsewhere in the world, John Mack, in - "Museum and Objects as Memory-Sites," argues that objects can be conceived as memory-sites, and that, whether in situ or in a museum context, they form part of an ongoing dynamic. Heritage sites are not simply a part of the so-called 'tangible' heritage; they are simultaneously a subject of the 'intangible', a site of use, speculation, and oral accounting — a combination which is implicit in the phrase 'memory-sites'. Consequently the challenge of museums in Africa (as elsewhere) is to achieve in the setting of a different kind of institution a reconciliation between the objects as museum specimens and as catalysts of narrative, between the museum as bank vault and as contemporary memory-site. This challenge, according to the author, has been taken up in various parts of sub-Saharan Africa. In the process the whole concept of what a museum 'is' has quite properly come under review.

Umino explains in - "A Backyard (Hi)story: Doing geskiedenis among Griqua people in South Africa," how cultural memory has been sustained by way of 'doing geskiedenis (history)' among Griqua people in South Africa. This important contribution articulates ways in which communities remember and renew their cultural heritage. It highlights the importance of human agency in reconstructing and renewing cultural memory. Artefacts as 'memory-objects' and their embedded performative potential implies that Africa's material culture should be used to redefine African cultural identities and memory; thus African cultural artefacts may be given a new life and meaning relevant to contemporary social-cultural realities.

Under a broad theme of 'Preserving Heritage,' Mahachi's chapter - "Great Zimbabwe and the National Identity of Zimbabwe," is centred on the archaeological site of Great Zimbabwe, the largest and best known of several hundred other stone-walled prehistoric settlements found in Southern Africa. Mahachi explains that Great Zimbabwe is a historical site which was built and shared by the ancestors of the Shona people, and in recent times has acquired political and spiritual significance. He discusses the politicisation of Great Zimbabwe during the colonial regime and illustrates the interconnection between history, politics and material culture. Togala's chapter - "The Plight of Mali's Past," examines the

trend of illicit trade in archaeological resources and antiquities from Mali's archaeological sites and attempts, by government and international agencies, to prevent the plundering and illicit export of Mali's cultural resources. The author argues that the spread of Islam since the eleventh century added to the devaluation and relevance of ritual objects (especially the sculptures) as part of African cultural heritage. In recent times, the increasing secularisation of art in Western Countries, which makes the context in which the art pieces were originally used irrelevant, has added to the commodification of African art. This is an insightful discourse about the challenges of preserving cultural heritage in Mali where the plunder of the resources has an international dimension, implying that the cooperation of the international community and agencies is needed, complemented by education which sensitises the people about the implications of plundering the nation's wealth.

Mudenda's chapter – "On the Road to Cultural Preservation: Emerging Trends in Zambia," provides a brief background to museums in Zambia and recent developments in cultural preservation, with special reference to the emergence of local festivals, the establishment of community museums, the community-based activities undertaken by Zambian museums and the museums' network, national and international. The chapter highlights a new emerging paradigm—a shift from tangible to intangible aspects of the heritage, from an exclusive focus on the storage of objects to a forum where Zambian communities and professionals meet together to plan methods of preservation of their cultural heritage. Mudenda demonstrates the changing role of museums in relation to African cultural heritage. Establishing community museum projects is a positive development which will facilitate conscious revaluation of cultural heritage and in turn strengthen relationships between museums, communities, institutions and individuals. Chalcraft's chapter – "The Habitus of Heritage: The Making of an African World Heritage Site," discusses the world heritage site in the making, the painted rock shelters of Kondoa-Irangi, in central Tanzania. The chapter explains what this change in status means for the 'heritage' itself — rock art in this case — and for the locals. Chalcraft suggests that heritage is qualitatively different from history and suggests ways through which heritage revises the past.

Aikawa-Faure's chapter – "Safeguarding of the African Intangible Cultural Heritage," explores the notion of intangible heritage in the context of African cultural heritage. He argues that African cultural heritage is less recognised because most African heritage is expressed in

living and oral forms. It is intangible cultural heritage, closely related to the spiritual life, value systems, visions of cosmology and social practices of peoples and communities, and embodies their cultural identity. Expressed in the form of oral traditions, performing arts, rituals, festive events, traditional knowledge and craftsmanship, this heritage demonstrates most accurately people's cultural distinctiveness and diversity. Raising awareness of the value and significance of intangible cultural heritage at the local, national and international levels nurtures a sense of pride not only among the custodian's community but also throughout the whole nation. This is an important chapter because it defines an approach or model which may be effective in documenting and translating oral culture into an accessible resource for future generations. And as the author observes it is necessary that African museums incorporate a new dimension of activities specific to the intangible heritage, namely, documentation, archiving and interpretation, training, dissemination and production of cultural goods. By developing these activities, African museums will become key institutions in the domain of the intangible cultural heritage.

Under a broad theme of 'Creating Heritage,' Nettleton's chapter – "Creating Heritage, Manipulating Tradition: Art and Material Culture in South Africa's Rainbow Nation," observes that South Africa, with its British colonial and apartheid legacies of racial and ethnic separation of peoples, has used language for at least the past 100 years to encourage particularistic, separate identities, and separate imagined communities, which not even the protracted liberation struggle managed to eliminate. So the tactics of the post-apartheid government have been to celebrate various, interacting cultures, and to embrace the 'Rainbow' nation concept. But, as the author observes, we cannot conceive of a culture that would have no relation to other cultures, and accordingly identity arises from awareness of difference. Hence, Nettleton proposes that South Africa, and probably Africa in general, must move away from ideas of heritage grounded in the ancient and the antique, from differentiations on narrow ethnic bounds, to look for commonalities, to move forward, taking the past with us, interpreting it at various points along our journey into the global future. We need to guard our objects, but we must understand that their real value lies in their specific contextual valences, which include both aesthetics and performance. This is a reconciliatory paper which encourages forging a common destiny without necessarily abandoning our differences but nevertheless conscious of the need to identify common grounds. Okediji's chapter – "The Gender of Museum Collections: Women Muralists of Ile Ife," explores the notion of 'gender

blindness' in African Art. This refers to a lack of awareness of the gender identity and its implication or lack thereof in any African artwork. The anonymous display of African art objects has prevented us from realising the gender implications in the production, consumption and acquisition of art objects from Africa, Okediji argues. Because collectors and scholars have not been referring to the names of individual African artists, they have failed to realise that art museums have been displaying the works of African men, to the neglect of works of Africa women. The author observes that occasionally museums mount exhibitions of African textiles and ceramics, which is mainly the work of African women, but such exhibitions are not frequent, nor are they the main focus in permanent gallery installations. Using two examples from Senegal, Kawaguchi's chapter – "Covering Heritages, Erasing Locals: Passing on History to the Next Generation," discusses how cultural heritage is articulated in post colonial Africa and assesses the importance of this articulation. The chapter is an important contribution to understanding the cultural dynamics of renewing and sustaining cultural heritage: what is crucial for cultural heritage are the local values and memories which are shared among people and their willingness to hand them on to future generations. Unfortunately, as he observes, there are many cases where local values and memories, which are deeply rooted in their native contexts, are ignored by institutions such as national governments and museums despite the rhetoric and official recognition of the importance of cultural heritage. Kamei's chapter - "Ndebele Decorative Cultures & Their Ethnic Identity," shows how the Ndebele people have used their decorative culture to evoke their ethnic identity. Displacement of the Ndebele may have contributed to a decline in their artistic material culture; nevertheless the chapter implies that there is a possibility of exploring these traditions both as a research and educational activity.

The first of four chapters under a broad theme of 'Representing Heritage' explores the changing nature of museum exhibition in relation to 'Other' cultures. According to the Yoshida, ethnographic museums throughout the world used to focus on cultures other than their own. Recently, however, the peoples who have been the subject of ethnographic exhibitions have become more aware of their own cultural heritage and histories, and have begun to protest against this one-sided approach to exhibitions of ethnic cultures. Under the circumstances, a variety of new approaches are now being tried by museum curators. This chapter sketches movements which are underway in the field of ethnographic exhibitions and is an important contribution towards new approaches in ethnographic exhibition in museums, going beyond 'exoticism' and the



curious gaze of the 'Other'. Roberts' chapter – "Exhibiting Episteme: African Art Exhibitions as Objects of Knowledge," asserts that African cultural heritage is an intellectual heritage in addition to a material and spiritual one. As a curator mounting exhibitions about Africa for diverse audiences, Roberts is concerned with the political and ethical implications of exhibiting African intellectual heritage and with the dilemmas involved in 'translating' African epistemological frameworks into exhibition formats. Important to these processes is the recognition that exhibiting is always in some measure the construction of a cultural imaginary and never a direct reflection of lived experience. Yet, how that imaginary is constituted, the sensibilities and sensitivities involved, and the exhibition's ultimate goals, are issues of great concern to the future of African cultural heritage. Takezawa's chapter – "Ethnological Museums and the (Un)Making of History," observes that most African cultural heritages, including archaeological materials and historical documents, were taken under colonial rule to the metropolitan cities. As a result, African historians are obliged to leave their own countries in order to rewrite African history which has been written by Western scholars. In recent years many of these ethnological museums that hold these materials have been engaged in the total renewal of the exhibits. But as Takezawa notes no concern has been manifested about the historical value of the objects displayed in ethnological museums. His paper presents a valuable critique of ethnographic exhibitionism perpetuated by some museums in Europe when it comes to displaying African heritage. Colonial ideology is still prevalent in some of these museums and the paper is a useful contribution towards revealing conservative ethnographic exhibitionism. Lagat's chapter, the last in the book – "Traditions, Trade and Transitions in East Africa: A Collaboration Exhibition Project between the National Museums of Kenya and the British Museum," observes that museums are assuming a new role that is sensitive to the dynamic nature of culture. His is an appropriate conclusion because it demonstrates the implementation of new approaches to museum management and practice in Africa. The collaborative spirit with other organisations and agencies is a positive outcome. Moreover targeting local communities as beneficiaries of museum experience and education is a valuable development in museum practice.

This is a timely publication. The contributors have located their work in a progressive context, taking into account contemporary debates and paradigms that critique the colonial project of cultural appropriation and 'primitivistic' exhibition of the 'Other.' They cover both theoretical and

practical approaches to museum practice that promote respect and multilayered interpretations of cultural heritage. The changing nature of museums and their role in local communities is clearly articulated. It is a book which will be useful in many disciplines including but not limited to Archaeology, Cultural Studies, Museum Studies, History, and Education. It is also accessible to a general reader because academic jargon is kept to a minimum. The editors and contributors are commended for putting together such an important work.

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### **The Rwandan Genocide**

**Linda Melvern, *A People Betrayed: The Role of the West in Rwanda's Genocide*, Zed books, London, second ed., ISBN 978-1-84813-244-3 (hb), 978-1-84813-245-0 (pb).**

In 1994, I was living in Saudi Arabia and planned to make my first trip to Rwanda. Although Saudi Arabia censors all news, we did hear there was civil unrest in Rwanda, and I was advised not to travel there. I cancelled my trip. Since then I had always planned to go there, and finally did that in 2009. While there we visited the Genocide Memorial in Kigali, which was both fascinating and disturbing, and I was keen to read Linda Melvern's book to learn more about the reasons for the atrocities that occurred in 1994.

This is the second edition of Melvern's book, and includes newly released documents and fresh interviews. She has condensed a vast amount of research into a relatively small book of 356 pages. It has seven collections from the Rwandan National Archives, files from the UN Department of Peace Keeping Operations, maps, a detailed chronology of events and the text of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (1948). The book gives a devastating account of how the genocide unfolded and the outcomes so far of the investigation into the genocide. The book also generates a sense of anger at the West for not acting on a situation that it had so much control over - particularly when politicians were democratically elected and did not act with the humanitarian capacity that would have been expected by the people who put them in such positions of power.