

【Keynote Address】

African Potentials: creating for an interrogative and comparative discourse beyond conflict resolution - Indigeneity Revisited

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We raise the question of “*what is or is there something* inherently African that permeates the socio-cultural, politico-economic domains” and can be a basis for interrogating and indeed comparing more post-modernistic and neo-liberal discourses that have otherwise informed African development debates and indeed interventions. How do we mainstream them in scholarly discourse and perhaps more importantly in practice, especially in the political and globalized arena, development a critique of African potentials as a harmonising opportunity rather than necessarily an alternative approach/discourse.

I propose a two-fold conversation: a conversation that on the one hand that is ensconced in a historic-anthropological tradition of systematic documentation or encounter with a cultural interpretative, and a conversation that focuses on the present and the future to forge ahead in charting pathways for co-existence, conflict resolution and beyond.

I argue for a reflection on the concept of indigeneity and how therefore this may play out in the context of the contemporary world. I invite a reflection on, exploring and indeed interrogation of how indigeneity is expressed and understood in our complex globalizing world. We need to interrogate and compare almost alternative discourses of/on what indigeneity has come to mean in particular places and at key moments; what kind of cultural, political, ethical and indeed aesthetic issues are negotiated within its canvass. I propose three levels of the interrogative and comparative discourse from the perspective of indigeneity that have the potential of taking African Potentials beyond conflict resolution.

First: how the concept of indigeneity is used to negotiate with social, philosophical, cultural, and environmental issues. Considering how deeply embedded indigeneity is in the constitution of modern subjectivity and sovereignty and in modern conceptions and practices of politics and in the economic sphere. In this way African Potentials as an embodiment of indigeneity provide (potentially) rich insight into the practices, processes, limitations and possibilities of modern politics as well as the contemporary social and political conditions.

Second: the concept lending itself to negotiating trans-local systems of power and knowledge. Negotiating the popular image of conflict resolution is that of the tireless, resourceful mediator who somehow persuades the warring parties to see sense and averts or halts the worst of human tragedy.

Third: the argument that identity and self-representation are vital elements of the political platform that a conversation on indigeneity must embrace. Arguing that African Potentials are a vital window through which we launch in the political exigencies of the African societies.

The above three levels of interpretation to indigeneity act as a sufficiently robust platform for beginning to deal with the nexus of world view and the African Potentials, *creating for an interrogative and comparative discourse beyond conflict resolution*. Can we argue (therefore) that in the contemporary world, where imposed displacements and diasporas, volatile borders, and coerced exiles confuse and obliterate human perspectives, "indigeneity" holds the promise of illuminating and reframing questions of place, space, movement, and belonging. Bringing indigeneity to the fore as a vehicle for interrogating African Potentials and allow for new intellectual relationships in the humanities and social sciences.