Editorial: *Alter*Nation *Open Issue #01*

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Following the opening of *Alter*nation on the UKZN platform of the Online Journal Editing System (OJS), in late 2018, we have decided to both continue publishing theme-specific issues of *Alter*nation, as well as open issues. Calls for papers for upcoming theme-specific issues will be published, on the Calls for Papers button, on our regular site, at, http://alternation.ukzn.ac.za/calls-for-papers.aspx. Starting with this issue of *Alter*nation, we shall also publish open issues, and number them consecutively, as from this, the first issue, *Alter*Nation *Open Issue #01*. As usual, we provide a brief overview of the abstracts of the papers in the issue.

Following on the publications based on J.A. Smit's 2017 International Open Access lecture (cf. Smit & Chetty 2018a; and 2018b), **Johannes A. Smit** and **Denzil Chetty** capture some aspects from his 2018 lecture. This is done in terms of what he termed, Africa's *ascendant history into openness, as a free continent*, according to our *affirmative genealogy, or genealogies, of freedom.*

Sokfa F. John focuses his research on social media platforms. Against the background of ethnoreligious conflicts and social tensions in Nigeria, digital media platforms have emerged as important socio-cultural sites that enable the engagement of historical and contemporary contestations around religion and identity. The post-election violence of 2011 and subsequent mass killings of mostly Christians in rural Southern Kaduna saw the emergence of several online groups and practices contesting these, and other forms of oppression and violence (real or imagined) in Southern Kaduna. This article details a study that applied a postcolonial perspective to analyse the content of one such online forum.

Also raising the question of identity, **Janet Jarvis** and **Ncamisile P. Mthiyane** raises questions concerning the human right – gender – education

nexus. They argue that it is essential to explore conversations at the intersection between personal religious identity and Human Rights issues in an attempt to bridge the gap between policy and practice. To facilitate this exploration, an empathetic-reflective-dialogical approach was adopted to engage with pre-service teachers in a South African Higher Education Institution. Selected pre-service Religion Education teachers were encouraged to engage in self-dialogue and to write their self-narratives. Participating in Communities in Conversation, Communities in Dialogue and Communities for Transformation provided the opportunity for empathetic-reflective-dialogical restorying to take place. They argue that restorying has the potential to address the possible disconnect between the individual's personal and professional identities when considering Human Rights issue.

To overcome the effects of socioeconomic barriers on education, many independent schools offer financial aid in the way of scholarships and bursaries. This financial aid is intended to offer access to quality education for underprivileged youth; however, positive school experiences rely on more than just physical access. In their study, **Jean Fourie**, **Mabatho Sedibe** and **Fallon Thompson** explored the psychosocial experiences of underprivileged adolescent girls attending an independent affluent school. By using Erikson's psychosocial theory of development, Bronfenbrenner's Ecosystemic Model, gender differences in development, as well as the Students Multiple Worlds Model, an understanding is created of how moving between worlds of affluence and poverty may influence the identity formation of the female adolescent learner. This phenomenological study was conducted using the qualitative, interpretative method of interpretative phenomenological analysis. Using a series of unstructured interviews with each participant, information was gathered that provided insight into the psychosocial experiences of each of these girls. Findings were focused on areas of cultural identity, value formation, feelings of belonging, social comparison and perceptions of support. These findings contribute to the improved functioning of bursary programmes in independent schools and will enhance the well-being of adolescent girls in navigating between the worlds of affluence and poverty.

Stating that online violence and hate speech in cyberspace have become a major concern among previously disadvantaged groups and human rights activists in South Africa (Cuyler 2011; Ndou 2015), **Bright Nkrumah** avers that the remarkable expansion of the Internet as a platform for communication has been outdone by hate-based activity in cyberspace and extremist

websites. In his article, Nkrumah argues that the mobility and anonymity that the Internet provides has made expressions of hate and harassment easy on an abstract platform, which is often outside the remit of conventional security agencies (Lange 2007). By using technological, legal and political frameworks, his article examines the conundrums involved in regulating hate speech on the Internet. It assesses the complexities inherent in South Africa's bilateral and/ or multilateral partnerships, and challenges of unilateral domestic content legislation to regulate cyberspace. Whereas the state seeks to find common ground upon which to harmonise its approach to regulation, the articles examines how technological innovations can limit the harm triggered by hate speech. The article recommends that there is a need for a broader mobilisation of citizens in order to reduce the harm often triggered by hate speakers in South Africa.

The primary purpose of the study by **Theresa van Oordt** and **Lorena Brits** was to determine whether well-designed instructional material based on motivational theory and blended learning theory has the intended impact on the learning motivation of adult learners in a distance education environment. They used Voice-over-PowerPoint™ technology as a medium to deliver subject specific instruction based on motivational theory as supplementary content to the course curriculum. This empirical study was conducted over a period of approximately two months on a sample of 57 adult learners who were enrolled for a distance education course for non-degree purposes at a tertiary education institution. Quantitative research methods were applied and data was collected using two motivation-measuring surveys: (1) The Course Interest Survey; and (2) The Instructional Materials Motivation Survey, which were both developed by Keller. Motivational strategies were designed for the chosen educational technology, Voice-over-PowerPoint™ (VoP) videos, using Keller's Attention, Relevance, Confidence and Satisfaction (ARCS) model of motivation. These strategies were then delivered via the learner management system for learners to use at their convenience.

Doras Sibanda and **Tabitha Grace Mukeredzi** designed their study to gain insights into physical science teacher-students' pedagogical knowledge, understanding of science concepts and the nature of support that they received during an in-service developmental programme. Understanding the experiences and learning gained during the programme can inform the design of future courses. The study is located within an interpretive paradigm that employs a qualitative approach to data collection and analysis. Participants (n = 156) were selected by convenience sampling from teachers on an in-

service Advanced Certificate in Education programme. Data were collected towards the end of the proramme through a questionnaire administered to 211 in-service teachers and eight teachers were interviewed. The study identified three critical aspects gained during the programme: content knowledge, teaching strategies and confidence. The findings also reinforce the need for institutions of higher learning to design programmes that provide the appropriate level of support: material, emotional, or both, for all teachers on in-service programmes.

Siseko H. Kumalo's study raises the question of whether there is a need, and whether it is possible to identify and African vocabulary that may be put into practice in Higher Education. He firstly references Lewis Nkosi's (1989) review of J.M. Coetzee's *White Writing* (1988) and Gordimer's *Essential Gesture* (1988), which highlights fundamental deficits in South African literature. Owing to inadequate resources and statutory racial divides – instituted by apartheid – Nkosi (1989) responds to these deficits through what Kumalo interprets as a series of provocations, that posit an African Vocabulary.

In their study, **Bekithemba Dube** and **Milton Nkoane** seek to problematise religious figures and politicians who use religious discourses, narratives and functions to justify oppressive hegemonic systems and structures. They show how various religious figures have amalgamated or joined together with oppressive political figures to maintain the status quo in Zimbabwe, paving the way for what they term the 'consecration' and 'enthronement' of political figures. They also show how religious figures who failed the ZANU PF's political part of their ideology, were dislodged from enthronement due to their different understanding of democracy. To problematise oppressive religious discourses used in the politics of an oppressive status quo, they position their article within critical emancipatory research (CER) discourse, by paying attention to its tenets, such as social justice, elimination of false consciousness, and emancipation.

Martin Mujinga's 'Religion as a Riding Horse of Politics?' points out that religion and politics in Zimbabwe have always been trading together. The country won the liberation struggle because of the role played by religion. African Indigenous Religion (AIR) and Christianity, both contributed significantly to the liberation of Zimbabwe, even though from opposite angles of the religious continuum. In the transitional processes of the post-independent Zimbabwe, religion and politics continued their relations through what we may describe as a 'marriage of convenience'. Some politicians took

it upon themselves to use, abuse, and misuse religion. Religion in Zimbabwe currently functions as a political platform, with AIR still dominating the political arena while the church denominations struggle between political puppets and opponents. This has resulted in the Zimbabwean church disintegrating. It has been argued that some politicians have turned African Independent Churches and some mega churches into their own havens, while pushing mainline churches to the periphery of politics as anti-progressive. Against this background, the article seeks to evaluate the extent to which the Zimbabwean church has become a 'riding horse' for politics in its socioeconomic and political transformation.

Kgothatso B. Shai follows an Afrocentric approach, in his study, in analysing the dynamics between constitutional democracy and traditional mechanisms of authority in rural communities. He uses the Maruleng sub-district of Limpopo province as a test case to analyse and critique the intersection(s) between constitutional institutions of authority and traditional mechanisms of governance in South Africa. Methodologically, he has relied on a broad-based critical discourse approach. The article's main argument is that the co-existence of traditional leadership and municipal councils is inherently problematic.

Auweis Rafudeen's 'Resisting the Statist Reduction of the Self' focuses on the recently published writings of Shaykh Yusuf in English, especially, the topic of his supposed 'anti-politics', and the 'effects' of these anti-politics. Shaykh Yusuf al Maqassari (1626-1699) is noted for both resisting Dutch expansion in the East Indies as well as his role in building the Cape Muslim community. But rather than politics, his writings focus on mysticism, in particular, the principles of the Sufi path and Sufi metaphysics. When there is a reference to politics, it is 'anti-politics' in that he advises the spiritual aspirant to withdraw participation in matters of the state. Rafudeen's article explores the effects of Shaykh Yusuf's 'anti-politics'. It argues that in the context of the post-Westphalian state, Shaykh Yusuf's 'anti-politics' was a way of resisting being inscribed by the economic logic of that state and its reduced notion of the self; that his mysticism offered alternative ways of being and acting in the world; and that these alternative ways helped the Cape Muslim community maintain its durability in the face of a number of historical pressures.

Isaiah A. Negedu and **Solomon O. Ojomah** titled their article, 'Deconstructing African History from Western Historicism'. They say that if a people were to write their own history to be solely accepted as an ideal, it

would not be abnormal for them to do so in their favour. The history of the African race as documented by Western literatures, mostly comprises the exaltation of European culture through various stereotypical labellings of African history and culture. In the same vein, most Africans would be tempted to rewrite African history in favour of the cultures/ traditions of the African people themselves. Western historicism, however, has gradually denied the African an identity, primarily by eulogising its vindictive colonial presence in Africa, with the purpose of creating a cultural superstructure for the West. Through critical analysis and the conversational method, they submit that a balanced reordering of history in a sane manner is quickened when informed African scholars in their various disciplines take up the task of historiography to create their own peculiar narrative that will provide both the scholarly agenda and its related content, to set the African people on a course of wholesome prosperity.

In their 'Academic Freedom and the Problems of Patriotism and Social Responsibility in Post-colonial Africa', **Munyaradzi Felix Murove** and **Ezra Chitando** raise the matter of the nexus between patriotism and social responsibility, for African academics. In principle, the article interrogates the meaning of academic freedom in African universities after the attainment of political independence. It explores the nuances of the concept of academic freedom and traces its appropriation in African contexts. The article contends that African scholars operate in challenging political environments due to the quest by political leaders to dabble in philosophy. African 'philosopher kings' have sought to articulate grand visions and narratives of development and they brook no dissent in this 'sacred quest'. As a result, African academics are generally expected to toe the line and endorse the grandiose philosophies articulated by the ambitious presidents. We argue that this is dangerous and results in a loss of academic freedom. They conclude, emphasising that African intellecttuals can make more effective contributions to the African nations by refusing to be co-opted, and remaining faithful to the tenets of academic freedom.

In their article, 'A Holistic Approach towards Personal Transformation of Youth not in Employment, Education or Training', **Lucille Meyer** and **Rajendra Chetty** explore how young people experienced a holistic approach to personal transformation by participating in a three month residential programme for youth not in employment, education or training. The study deployed an ecological perspective that served to illuminate the influence of relationships and contexts on the development of youth. A phenomenological approach was used to understand young peoples' perceptions and experiences

of a holistic approach. The methodological framework leaned on narrative enquiry to explore the views of five youth respondents. The data was analysed using thematic content analysis. The findings illustrated that a holistic approach as one particular philosophical and developmental approach to personal transformation, has the potential to enhance the psychological capital of young people, facilitate connection with self and family and provide the impetus for them to remain on a positive developmental trajectory. As 7.5 million youth in South Africa are not in employment, education or training, a status with the propensity to foster disengagement and disconnection from self, family and social, economic, political and cultural activities, the findings offer hope that credible and innovative strategies do exist to disrupt the current 'not in employment, education or training', or NEET crisis.

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