

Editorial

Open Issue #04

This issue of *Alternation* is titled Open Issue #04, and is the final Open Issue of 2019. Below, we briefly, again provide brief abstracts from the authors in this issue, as to their respective research contributions, and scholarly focuses and related arguments.



In his ‘Religious Authoritarianism and/ or “Instrumentarian” Technical Surveillance: *The Handmaid’s Tale* (1985) and *1984* (1949)’, **Bert Olivier** employs employs two literary and several theoretical lenses to scrutinise the question of social control – the literary lenses being Margaret Atwood’s dystopian fictional narrative, *The Handmaid’s Tale* (1985), of a theocratic society called the Republic of Gilead, and George Orwell’s *1984* (1949), on a totalitarian state, while the theoretical texts include Henry Giroux’s *Against the New Authoritarianism* (2005), Michel Foucault’s *Discipline and Punish* (1995), Bernard Stiegler’s *Automatic Society I* (2016) and Shoshana Zuboff’s *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism* (2019). This coupling of literary works of art and theoretical texts is not arbitrary, but proceeds according to Jacques Rancière’s principle, that the interpretation of works of art should be carried out in the field where they converge with contemporaneous theory which resonates with them thematically, which is the case here, and to which one may add Rancière’s own aesthetic-philosophical theory. The point of this interpretive exercise can be stated in terms of Hans-Georg Gadamer’s tripartite hermeneutic ‘circle’, namely understanding, interpretation and application, where the first two phases of the ‘hermeneutic experience’ mark those of implicit interpretation (understanding) and explicit interpretation, and the latter the moment of (temporary) ‘completion’ of the process, when the first two are ‘applied’ to the interpreter’s own situation. In this case, the latter amounts to the concrete situation of socio-economic and political domination of people’s lives (including the interpreter’s) by so-called neoliberalism in the rhizomatically structured ‘network society’ (Castells 2010), the latest phase of

which Zuboff theorises as ‘surveillance capitalism’. The interpretive grid which emerges in the course of this exercise enables one to arrive at a literary illumination of two successive (and not unrelated) historical phases of social control – one, exemplified by the United States under George W. Bush as president, which resonates strongly with the fictional society of Gilead, and two, the present global situation under ‘surveillance capitalism’, which resonates strongly with Orwell’s *1984*. This approach – which yields interpretive fruits – juxtaposes these classic literary texts with the theoretical texts in question, illuminating authoritarian social control and its instrumentalitarian counterpart under ‘surveillance capitalism’ as uncovered by Zuboff.

In the context of the current worldwide debate about and drive towards the decoloniality of academia, **Jan Hendrik Kroeze** points out that little research has, however, been done about the Africanisation of software design and development approaches. Information Systems research methodologies have not yet been enriched extensively by African perspectives, either. Although the Information and Communication Technology for Development (ICT4D) community has contributed significantly to the implementation of software in African contexts, the Information Systems discipline (IS) should be enriched – from an African perspective – on deeper, theoretical levels than those that have already been explored and implemented. Kroeze’s ‘A Framework for the Africanisation of the Information Systems Discipline’ aims to fill the need for a framework to guide the Africanisation of the IS discipline. The article follows a conceptual approach. It reflects on the opportunities for theoretical knowledge regarding the indigenisation of IS tuition, research, academic administration, community service, and the staff and students involved. These ideas converge into an integrated, two-dimensional graph. The proposed framework could serve as a starting point to extend the Africanisation process in the IS discipline, as well as to contribute to meta-theoretical discussions about the process itself.

The study, ‘Informal Apprenticeship and Gender Dynamics in the Informal Industry: A Case for Mbare-Magaba Informal Industry, Harare’ by **Wonder Muchabaiwa** and **Francis Muchenje**, was conducted in Mbare-Magaba informal industry in Harare in 2016. The aim of the study was to establish the extent to which women have penetrated the traditionally stereotyped masculine technical trades in the informal industry. It adopted a qualitative research approach and utilised a case study research design. In-depth interviews and obtrusive observations were used to collect data. The

sample of the study comprised 12 research participants (eight women and four men) who were sampled using the purposive sampling technique. The findings of the study show that the practice of informal apprenticeship tends to be informed by the principles of African traditional education which emphasised pragmatic skills. However, unlike traditional education, the informal apprenticeship ceases to emphasise the rigid dichotomy between feminine and masculine skills. The study also found out that although the gender divide line remains conspicuous in the informal industry, some women through the informal apprenticeship have demystified the feminine mystique; that women are better-off in the kitchen. Findings from the study also reveal the robust efficacy of the informal apprenticeship in the informal industry in terms of skills transfer to women and producing goods of high quality at a relatively fast rate. The study recommends that the Ministry of Medium to Small Enterprises avails financial and technical support to women in the informal industry. It is also critical that cooperatives in the informal industry form synergies with technical colleges to expedite transfer of skills to women in the informal industry. The Ministry of Women Affairs, Gender and Community Development should conscientise women on the importance of women's participation in economic activities particularly their involvement in technical jobs.

The article by **Mlamuli Nkosingphile Hlatshwayo** and **Kehdinga George Fomunyam**, is titled, 'Theorising First-generation Students' Successes at a Historically White South African University'. It attempts to shift the first-generation literature to not only focus on the marginalised experiences of first-generation students, but to also theorise the successes that these students have experienced in negotiating a historically white higher education institution. To do this, data was generated using semi-structured interviews and participants were sampled using snowball sampling and this ensured that the social networks and connections that these students have with one another. 32 first generation students were recruited, and in-depth interviews averaging one hour were held with each of the participants. The data or findings indicate that the success of first-generation students largely depends on four key forces – the force of diligence, the force of language, the force of personal attributes as well as the force of personal relationships. Bourdieu's field theory, capital (social and cultural) and habitus was employment to further make meaning of the findings. All these forces play a critical role in ensuring that first-generation students not only able to negotiate their marginality in a historically white HE, but that they are successful.

James Garraway together with colleagues, **Anisa Vahed, Roshnee Sunder, Pooven-dhree Reddy, Madhu Maharaj, Matthys Walters, and Naeem Seedat** authored 'Time Travel through the Polytechnic to University Nexus: From Heartfelt Difficulties to New Possibilities'. In their research, they begin with the problems academics experience as they navigate their way towards new ways of working associated with the recently emerged University of Technology sector. Using change laboratories' methodology, academics are taken through successive problem solving and solution developing workshops. These involve them, firstly, to reflect on past and current problematic experiences and issues in their daily lives. These experiences are then mediated through the application of Activity Theory principles so that problems are understood in a more systematic and related manner. In so doing, the academics collaboratively come to understand the contradictions which underpin current problems in working life and attempt to open up possibilities for future changes and improvements in the structure and purpose of the university. In the research, academics reflect on the identified multiple and changing focuses of the emerging University of Technology, amongst other issues, as creating often contradictory pressures on them. The academics then sought to develop the concept of a new, expanded professional graduate as a focus which could potentially resolve these contradictions.

Patrick B.S. Pillay points out that the predominance of religion within the academy and South African society has hindered the opportunity for alternate non-theistic worldviews to establish and flourish. Foregrounded in a critique of this centeredness of religion in public life, his article is titled, 'Affirming Non-religion and Humanism through Critical Conversations with Wole Soyinka and Anthony C. Grayling', and opens up a conversation between leading academics and renowned humanists and secularists, Professor Anthony Grayling and Professor Wole Soyinka. It is argued that this dialogue will allow the worldview of humanism to re-emerge in new scholarship, within a non-religious framing and with a secular outlook. The biographies of the discussants are considered as indicators of how context shapes personal epistemologies and non-religious identities, in this instance revealing how backgrounds as dissimilar as Soyinka's and Graylings find the worldview of humanism as a point of convergence. The Soyinka-Grayling dialogue challenges theocentric orientations to education and highlights the urgency for limitations on the influence of religion in education, to make way for the re-envisioning of the Humanities.

In his ‘Resistance’, **Shane Moran** brings together and sensitively and critically reflects on a number of resonating views of some eminent scholars that in various ways pondered on forms of resistance to colonial discourse, and puts them in dialogue with one another.

In ‘A Pursuit of Nationalism? Rebranding Nigeria in Hip Hop’s Vibes’, **Niyi Akingbe** and **Paul Ayodele Onanuga** argues that over time, the mobile telephony and the internet have assisted in facilitating a free-flow of routine digitized communication in which everyone engages in Nigeria. Imbued with committed determination to portray the inherent positive qualities embedded in their respective countries, artists often use their songs for a relentless pursuit of implicit nationalism. These songs serve as archival tool for re-evaluation, repudiation and condemnation of the prevailing, inimical trends that tend to compromise cherished communal values of their respective milieux. In the light of the foregoing, they consider the [re]presentation of Computer Mediated Communication in Nigerian hip hop. To this end, six purposively selected songs by six Nigerian hip hop artists are subjected to textual analysis. They note that the cross re-territorialisation of CMC in Hip hop ranges thematically from internet crime, romance to prayer cum religion. Notably, the paper appropriates ‘slangification’ – a means to code online criminal activities as it downplays overt sensationalism of sexual perversion. Findings in the article function as signifiers that counteract the negative identity which well-meaning Nigerians have had to contend with. In conclusion, the article ostensibly tends to repudiate a dismayed labelling of Nigeria as a nation of scammers and internet fraudsters.

Suren Naicker presents two articles, the first is titled, ‘Swami Vivekananda’s Conception of the Universe with Reference to the CREATION IS A FAÇADE/ PROJECTION/ REFLECTION Conceptual Metaphor: A Non-dualistic Cognitive Semantic Study in Light of the *Vedanta*’. It applies conceptual metaphor theory (CMT) to the *Complete Works* of Swami Vivekananda, a well-known and influential Indian saint. Analysed from a cognitive semantic perspective, this study sheds light on an aspect of the *Vedanta* philosophy, one of the six schools of orthodox thought in the Indian system, and demonstrates Vivekananda’s predilection and preference for a non-dualistic interpretation of the tradition, known as *Advaita* (‘non-dual’) *Vedanta*. An in-depth analysis of an underlying conceptual metaphor is expounded upon, and various well-known texts from the non-dualistic tradition are alluded to. A particular version of the theory is used in this study, and

presented in a novel way using a table to illustrate the underlying conceptual mapping that is said to take place in the aggregate of Vivekananda's teachings on matters pertaining to this topic. The article concludes with idea that Vivekananda did indeed see a non-dualistic interpretation of Hindu philosophy, applied here to the concept of CREATION as a metaphysical philosophical exposition in the theme, as the acme of Indian philosophy, and perhaps also as the starting point for praxis within the tradition.

Suren Naicker's second article, 'LIFE IS A VOYAGE: Swami Vivekananda's Mission and Teachings – A Cognitive Linguistic Analysis with Reference to the Theme of HOMECOMING', offers an in-depth analysis of the well-known LIFE AS A JOURNEY conceptual metaphor, in Vivekananda's mission as he saw it, as well as his teachings. Using conceptual metaphor theory as a framework, Vivekananda's Complete Works were manually and electronically mined for examples of how he conceptualized his own mission, which culminated in the formation of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, a world-wide neo-Hindu organization. This was a corpus-based study, which starts with an overview of who Vivekananda was, including a discussion of his influence on other neo-Hindu leaders. This study shows that Vivekananda had a very clear understanding of his life's mission, and saw himself almost in a messianic role, and was glad when his work was done, so he could return to his Cosmic 'Home'. He uses these key metaphors to explain spiritual life in general as well as his own life's work.

The article by **Aderinsola Eunice Kayode** and **Abigail Olubukola Irele** is titled 'Impediments to Quality Education in Nigerian Tertiary Institutions'. Education is an important transformative agent in any society. It impacts positively on the citizens in terms of economic, social and political development if the quality of education is high. In recent years, there has been outcry by stakeholders in Nigeria that the quality of education has deteriorated and this has affected the products that are being produced in the tertiary education system in Nigeria. It has been noticed that most of the graduates in all the disciplines are unemployable because they lack skills that can make them to be competent in the labour market. This is due to the fact that tertiary educational system in Nigeria is in shambles because the high standard of quality that was known about the system in the earlier days is no more maintained. This is as a result of certain impediments which have affected the educational system in Nigeria. This paper discusses what quality is, and the impediments confronting tertiary education in Nigeria in recent times. It

proffers solution as on how to overcome these impediments and hence attain a higher quality educational system in the tertiary institutions which will propel the country to have developments in this competitive globalized system. Key words: Quality, standard, graduates, disciplines, development, unemployable, labour market.

The article by **Aden Dejene Tolla** and **Shanta Balgobind Singh**, is titled, '21st Century Slavery: Contributing Push Factors for Child Trafficking in Ethiopia, East Africa'. Human trafficking, referring to illegal activities across the globe, is still a common practice in many counties, usually rearing its ugly head in the worst and most horrific manner. Ethiopia and human trafficking have often been linked together due to different circumstances and push factors. Ethiopia noted that human trafficking, specifically child trafficking is one of its main social problems associated with social problems, push factors for human trafficking, and their multiple effects. Moreover, there is a cause and effect relationship in human trafficking in Ethiopia. It is also noted that children in Ethiopia have their own reasons for trafficking. This study interpreted quantitative findings to provide a comprehensive understanding of the associated push factors for the child to be trafficked in Ethiopia. The article uses a quantitative research approach, while applying cross-sectional exploratory and descriptive research design, which is used to address the associated push factors on child trafficking. A total of 636 household respondents were selected by Systematic Random sampling in order to fulfil the adopted quantitative survey. It was found that economic poverty can be one factor for child trafficking in Ethiopia but is not the only push factor, because child trafficking is very complicated and caused by different multidirectional factors like culture, belief, child care culture, limited social services, gender inequality (gender based violence), relationships with others inside community, and instability. The macro or social situation (current political situation) is also a substantial contributing factor for child trafficking.

Open Issue #04, closes with two contributions by **Johannes A. Smit**. In the first, titled, "'Knowledge-Power" beyond Foucault' Smit, focuses on Michel Foucault's very limited use of this notion, if compared to his use of the notion of 'power-knowledge'. This difference needs to be understood in terms of his continuously developing progressive thoughtful discursive and methodological *oeuvre*, in that his primary aim throughout around thirty years of his research, was to study how the human sciences have been created to produce the Western subject and Western subjectivities in the Western Human

Sciences. Western as well as non-Western subjectivities were ‘subjugated’ to these knowledges. As such, it was the generation of certain forms of knowledge about the human being, which was accompanied by certain power effects, that could be said that constituted combined forms of cause, that produced Western subjectivities, and non-Western subjugated subjectivities in the service of Western knowledge-power formations in Europe’s colonies. Smit first traces a few samples of Foucault’s actual use of the notion of ‘knowledge-power’, and how this notion percolates through his work. He then puts some points forward as to how we should put Foucault on his feet again – i.e. if, in the post-colony, we look at knowledge-power as a task of an internationally competitive and courageous African subjectivity formation.

In his second article, titled, ‘Framing Biopolitics/ Biopower’, **Johannes A. Smit** shows how Michel Foucault moved from his analyses related to disciplinary power, to biopolitics, biopower, governmentality, and political economy. The article seeks to firstly contextualise the study in Foucault’s own methodological and discursive *oeuvre* with regard to his move from ‘disciplinary power’ to ‘biopolitics’ and ‘biopower’. This is followed by his very brief and concise description of what the study of biopolitics and biopower entail. Secondly, the focus is on Governmentality/ Governmental Reason, with five sub-topics, viz., political economy, regimes of veridiction, the limiting of the exercise of power by public authorities and ‘utility’, the birth of governmental rationality extended to a world scale (colonisation and imperialism), and the birth of civil society. The study concludes with some remarks related to the distinction between ideal critique real transformation, and a few perspectives on what real transformation would entail in the postcolony, as it relates to the role of ‘thought’, reason in governance, and also in economics, in the wake of the launching of the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) in 2019.

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