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This essay explores intellectual history and epistemological transformation, focusing on the middle part of the Twentieth Century – the 1920s to the 1970s -- and particularly on two of the period's principal African thinkers, Kwame Nkrumah and Julius K. Nyerere. It examines important themes in some of the major writings of these two famous leaders of African resistance to colonialism. After prolonged anti-colonial struggle and maneuver, both became leaders of independent countries, Nkrumah of Ghana in 1957, and Nyerere of Tanganyika in 1961.¹ Both were also important scholars, with numerous influential publications. In my research of their thoughts and ideas, several seemingly contradictory themes emerged. While they remain two of the most important African nationalist leaders in history, I argue that both also sought critical and practical perspectives *beyond nationalism*, and beyond subordination within the capitalist world system. Both were quick to realize the limitations of 'independence' for their former colonies cum states, even before this was fully [formally] achieved. They were therefore critical of the specter of neo-colonialism, and espoused versions of Pan-Africanism.

¹ After the union of Zanzibar with Tanganyika, in 1964, the country gained its current name, Tanzania.



Upon further reflection, and with a clearer definition of colonialism, the seeming contradiction appears to be a critical tension within the reproduction of and resistances to structures of coloniality.² Thus, utopian projections and imaginings often stood in stark or mirroring contrast to oppressive historical conditions, yet also seemed to some extent necessarily or unavoidably to reproduce those realities in their conceptualization of struggles which had to project alternatives even if only as provisional objectives. This tension might be thought of as that between existing colonial epistemologies and resistant epistemologies partly embedded within and/or drawing from those they resisted. Audre Lorde said, "The master's house can never be dismantled with the master's tools," knowing that often 'his' were some of the only tools available (1984). This need to build new tools out of the debris and wreckage of existing structures and conceptual categories, called *bricolage* by Levi Strauss, has gained some popularity as an idea. In this context of interpretation, Nkrumah and Nyerere's attempts to formulate nationalist independence, development plans, and so on, seem less in contradiction with the fact that they also sought to move beyond and critique many aspects of the vehicles, particularly nationalism, which they found necessary to use (in the meantime) in their struggles against imperialism and colonial domination. Yet, some have argued, compellingly to my mind, that this dependence on colonial tools of reference ultimately may have doomed both of their historic experiments as leaders of free African nation-states. How this happened remains to be demonstrated, and was never inevitable, even if inescapable.

² My understanding of coloniality was shaped in the activities of the Coloniality Working Group, which I co-founded with Agustin Lao and Sharana Byrum in 1996 when we were students of Kelvin Santiago at Binghamton University; as well as by the works of Anibal Quijano (1992 [with Wallerstein], 1993) who coined the term, Sylvia Wynter (1979, 1998), Edward Said (1978, 1979, 1989, 1993), Partha Chatterjee (1993), V. Y. Mudimbe (1988, 1992), Ella Shohat (1992a, 1992b), Walter Mignolo (1995, 2000), and Enrique Dussel (1995). This understanding sees colonialism as an inseparable set of social relations encompassing a number of overlapping areas – political, economic, institutional, governmental and interpersonal. Coloniality accounts for the ways in which relational and multiple social identities are constituted: race, gender, sexuality, heteronormativity, bourgeois respectability, and their reproduction in historical and changing contexts. As a unifying framework, Wynter speaks of "the bourgeois social mode of being" (1979). Colonialism and *coloniality*, seen thus as the [racial] subjectification of populations – what Chatterjee (1993) calls "the rule of colonial difference" -- combined with sufficient state and/or other institutionalized power such that these discourses of difference carry the weight of power, should not be seen as territorially or temporally circumscribed. Most nation-state level analyses see colonialism only as a juridico-political period commensurate with "formal colonial rule." The concept of coloniality goes well beyond the scope of the formal colonial era, especially in Africa. Notions of self/other hierarchy, racial inferiority and the erasure of the histories of colonized subjects emerge at the beginning of the modern era and have not yet ceased to operate most places in the world (Morrison 1992: 37-38, 48-49). Coloniality refers to historical discourses of identity and interdeterminative social relations, combined with asymmetrical power relations, stretching from the moments of "contact" and "conquest" in the Reconquista and the Conquista (Shohat 1992), until the present time. In this light, the increasingly popular academic designation "post-colonial" seems not only premature, but mislaid, unless the "post-" is used explicitly to refer to the epistemological level, as in "after" colonial logic, i.e. anti-colonial logics and practices (Santiago 1993). I prefer to avoid the term altogether.

One of my points is that Nkrumah and Nyerere are usually read politically and not philosophically, and their epistemological contributions are rarely acknowledged in current Western genealogies of knowledge. This essay seeks to disrupt these conventional dismissals and erasures, by engaging the central epistemological contributions of these thinkers, and relating them to debates then taking place. Further, I make a distinction between colonial and anti-colonial nationalisms, the latter generally being more complex, contingent and potentially forgiving in its application of Western categories of knowledge and meaning, even if often similarly fraught with the limitations and reduction of the system they assail. Finally, I propose a historiographic distinction between *internationalist* and *intranationalist* understandings and phases of neocolonial analysis. I argue that neocolonialism was at first understood, in these and other authors' writings, as *between* the decolonizing entity and the former 'mother countries,' and was only gradually later reconceptualized as something which might occur *within* the new nations as well, along class lines, Fanon being an early exponent of this view in the mid-Sixties.

My aim in exploring these issues through these two great Pan-African leader-scholars is to elucidate aspects of the epistemological context of struggle that framed the Twentieth Century for academics, activists, and social movements, and will continue to do so in the Twenty First Century. In seeing how other activists, scholars and leaders discussed their efforts and tried to learn from their mistakes, we can gain further understanding of the terrains of struggle that their generation has bequeathed to ours. I argue that the development of the themes of African socialism, Pan-Africanism, and neo-colonialism, so central to the writings of Nkrumah and Nyerere, were actually overt and historically grounded attempts to critique and move beyond the nation-state, or yet to negate the state and its significance (even while fighting to gain and consolidate national independence by means of the colonial-cum-'post' colonial state), within specific historical world-systemic contexts. Each of these themes may be traced back beyond the times of the two scholar-activists studied here, but their writings contributed new concepts, syntheses and popularizations of major significance. After reviewing the intellectual climate that produced Nyerere and Nkrumah, I will explore their writings on these three themes in greater detail.

This article is consciously a work of intellectual history, but attempts to situate itself within intellectual history in a particular way. The history of intellectual history, like the history of historiography (particularly as institutionalized in Western university structures) itself, is one in which social asymmetries of many sorts [and usually closely interrelated] were/are not only played out, but also heavily contested. It is for such reasons that the recent re-emergence of intellectual history as a legitimate and popular tool of historiographic analysis is on entirely new ground, with a transformed methodology and different implications. While the popularity of intellectual history in the first half of the twentieth century reflected a "safe" and "necessary" focus on the elite white men of Western history, reinscribing them by reification, naturalization and universalization, the 'popular'-ity of at least some of today's intellectual history has an added dimension.



Today, intellectual history is not only becoming popular once again in the academy, but also reflects a broader relationship with popular consciousness[es], popular social movements, and particularly the extension of fissures and cracks within hegemonic whitemale (narrative) power in the academy, historiography and popular discourses. I am trying to formulate this historical difference in a way which goes beyond an invocation simply of the academy beginning recently to study “the popular” and non-elite, “from below”; to a formulation in which the resistances and limitations imposed by variously positioned agents, most of whom are “subaltern”,³ account for the tensions and ruptures in disciplinary narratives such as historiography. In these senses, intellectual history is no longer necessarily an elite-focused or elite-derived project.

It is in this spirit that I hope to fashion an inquiry into the intellectual historical issues informing and surrounding the works of two great African leaders, which none the less acknowledges the agency of subaltern resistances in the historical processes in which they were embedded, implicated and “leading”. It is in this sense that Nkrumah and Nyerere *represented* history and “their peoples” in multiple senses, being at once representative of specific historical social conditions and discourses of struggle, and at the same time the representatives of their nations and peoples, even representing Africa and sometimes its Diaspora in various world forums.

I concentrate here more on what Nyerere and Nkrumah *said* in their major writings -- to what theories and models they proposed -- than on their actual practice as leaders, or any contradictions that might have existed between their practice and theories; though the latter necessarily forms the backdrop against which such inquiry takes place. The failures [as well as the successes] of these two leaders were fairly spectacular and have been commented on elsewhere.⁴ I am more concerned with the intellectual climate that shaped

³ I am using this term as developed in the context of the Subalterns Studies group of South Asia and its Diasporas, as anthologized in their multi-volume, *Subaltern Studies*, with its rotating editors. Some of the key thinkers in this vein -- all building in different ways on Gramsci and Foucault to critique discursive constructions of nationalism, patriarchy and other institutions of asymmetry within moments of struggle and social reproduction, while asserting the agency of the subaltern by various methodological innovations and ‘reading’ techniques -- are Ranajit Guha (1988), Dipesh Chakrabarty (1988, 1992), Gyan Prakash (1990, 1992, 1995), and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1988a, 1988b, 1990). This thought has been critically extended to analyses of other regions of the world with varied results, particularly in Latin America and Africa, though I would argue with too much skepticism (Cooper 1994), while it is also possible to argue that similar sorts of analyses had already emerged in other discursive and regional contexts, such as the United States, particularly in African American and other anti-colonial critiques (Ducille 1995).

⁴ For early, Pan-African critiques, which were some of the only such positions at that time, see: James 1977 and 1995[1938] [especially the Epilogue written in 1969, and Robin Kelley’s introduction, pp. 23-26] on Nkrumah and Ghana; Rodney 1974 and Shivji 1976 on Tanzania and Nyerere, and the more recent overviews in Marable 1987. James (1995: 129), succinctly pointed out that, “The states which the

these thinkers, how their writings affected this climate, and how they in turn shaped the intellectual and political worlds within which they worked. For Nkrumah, I concentrate on his most famous writings, from his 1957 autobiography to his Class Struggle in Africa (1970), and with Nyerere my focus is on collections of his speeches from 1962 to 1973 (1967, 1968a, 1968b, 1973), the first eleven years of Tanganyika/Tanzania's independence.

Because even a focus on their intellectual contributions is too broad for this current project, I have chosen to focus on four central and inter-related intellectual themes, and six roughly discernible but overlapping historical periods. The four themes are: 1) racism, colonialism and nationalist struggles for independence in Africa, 2) African socialisms, Marxisms and/or communisms, 3) Pan-Africanism, and 4) neo-colonialism.⁵ These issues are then framed in six time periods: 1) World War I and its aftermath,⁶ 2) the 1930s and early 1940s – the interwar years, 3) World War II, 4) the post-war period of growing anti-colonial independence struggles, 5) the early 'independence' period of 'decolonization,' from 1957 through the 1960s, and 6) the period of neo-colonialism ("the new imperialism"), which also saw the final assaults on formal (Portuguese) colonialism and (Southern African) apartheid in Africa, but which also encompasses the present.⁷

African nationalist leaders inherited were not in any sense African," they were neo-colonies. James backed the "revolt against these Black nationalist regimes," (ibid.), advocated in Fanon (1966).

⁵ These might just as easily be conceptualized as African critiques and adaptations of: 1) the West, its philosophy, categories of difference, and forms of rule, 2) Marxism/ communism, 3) nationalism and 4) imperialism. My point is that African critiques of central western categories of thought necessarily entail epistemological reworkings and reformulations. Too often, African socialism, Pan-Africanism, neocolonial critique and various anti-racist formulations are seen only in the African context instead of relationally against the Western world they contest, so that their implications are only analyzed in Africa rather than also in the Western world where their impact is no less felt.

⁶ Although for purposes of this essay we pick up the story of our main protagonists in the 1930s, it has been pointed out by numerous historians (Kelley 1994: 157-8, von Eschen 1997: 11), as well as several contemporary commentators, notably Du Bois (1919), that the "returning soldiers" of World War One played a major part in stirring up resistance in this period, and thus contributed to the conditions of possibility of the subsequent lives and ideas of figures like Nkrumah and Nyerere.

⁷ Of course, these lists are conceptual and schematic rather than exact. The concepts often overlap with one another in intricate ways, and the time periods are not always the same for different regions, nor fully separable from one another within certain regions.



The Black Atlantic in the Inter-War Years: Resurgent Anti-Colonialism and the Shaping of Nkrumah and Nyerere

Many have pointed out that resistance is at least as old as oppression and subjugation, so a search for the "origins" of the activism and ideas of Nkrumah and Nyerere would be futile, even if one could roughly locate such "origins" within the Black Atlantic⁸ capitalist world system⁹ of the past 500 years, as I attempt to do. The colonialism, racial subjugation and labor exploitation against which Nkrumah and Nyerere joined others in their societies in fighting against were not new. The histories of colonialism, slavery, subjectification and subjugation are intimately bound up with the histories of resistance to these forms, led primarily by those who suffer(ed) from them as a result. Colonialism, while of short *formal* duration in Africa, beginning primarily in the 1880s and 1890s and largely ending between the 1950s and 1970s, is of much greater age throughout the Atlantic and Indian Ocean systems on either side of Africa. It is for these reasons that the works of Nyerere and Nkrumah must be put into a Black Atlantic context of capitalism/imperialism and resistance, particularly when one does so in a broader conceptualization than the much critiqued initial offering of Paul Gilroy's (1993) famous work.

Francis Nwai Kofie (Kwame) Nkrumah was born in 1909, in the Gold Coast, a British Colony. Julius K. Nyerere was born thirteen years later, on the other side of the continent, in the German colony, Tanganyika. Both Nkrumah and Nyerere's immediate families were relatively poor and they had to overcome hardship to attain their educations. While Nyerere eventually received scholarships to attend some of the best schools available -- Tabora Government School, Makerere in Uganda [where he received his BA toward the end of World War I], and then the University of Edinburgh (1949-1952) for his MA, Nkrumah's family could only afford to send him to a Catholic mission school until the 8th grade.

⁸ See: Linebaugh (1982), Thompson (1983), and Gilroy (1993) among others.

⁹ My emerging concept of a Black Atlantic capitalist world system, or systems, emerges in relation to "the modern world system" of Immanuel Wallerstein (1974) and other theorists, to the critics of world systems theory, and in part in relation to the more protracted historical traditions and struggles of various communities and scholarships within the Atlantic world, discussed briefly in note 2. Wallerstein and others conceptualize the capitalist hegemonic systems as having been: sixteenth century Dutch, nineteenth century British, and twentieth century U.S. Braudel, Arrighi and others have done work on the ways in which city-states in Italy preceded these developments, as did Portugal-Spain. Abu-Lughod (1989) shows convincingly how more ancient world systemic shifts preceded these, from multiple and shifting trade centers -- the "archipelago of cities" -- that stretched in three main routes across the divide between Asia and Europe gradually toward the West, through the Mediterranean, and into the Atlantic. Thus, the fall of Baghdad and the shift to Cairo as the major center of world trade, then to Italy and to Spain and Portugal and out into the Atlantic, presumably (in most European historiography) hugging the coast upwards to northwest Europe where hegemony finally rested. Following, however, C. L. R. James' interpretation of Haiti as the global center of modern, industrial production and commerce in the eighteenth century, the transition from a Mediterranean/Arabian-centered world capitalist system into the Atlantic actually moved to the Caribbean, the U.S. south, Brazil, Central America, the coasts of West and southern Africa and eventually East Africa as well, in addition to northwest Europe, so that the modern world system has long been centered on the Black Atlantic rather than simply Europe.

Thereafter he taught at an elementary school and was eventually trained at a Teacher's College. After teaching for a few years again, he traveled to the United States, where he worked and studied for ten formative years, getting degrees at Lincoln and Pennsylvania University (2 there), between and during long stretches of hard work and difficult times. This decade was followed by two and a half more important years in England before his final return to Ghana, still then the Gold Coast.

En route to Lincoln University in the United States, Nkrumah had to travel by boat through Liverpool and writes that on the journey he was at first feeling over-awed by the changes in culture and "being in the West," but that a newspaper headline changed his mind and renewed his resolve:

"But just as I was feeling particularly depressed about the future, I heard an excited newspaper boy shouting something unintelligible as he grabbed a bundle of the latest editions from a motor van, and on the placard I read: '*MUSSOLINI INVADES ETHIOPIA*'. That was all I needed. At that moment it was almost as if the whole of London had suddenly declared war on me personally. For the next few minutes I could do nothing but glare at each impassive face wondering if those people could possibly realize the wickedness of colonialism, and praying that the day might come when I could play my part in bringing about the downfall of such a system. My nationalism surged to the fore; I was ready to go through hell itself, if need be, in order to achieve my object." (1957:27)

As Robin Kelley put it, the invasion of Ethiopia was an "international event that rocked the Pan-African world." (1994: 123) Even before he reached Western shores, Nkrumah was already clearly involved in this Atlantic world; he would be both part and shaper of militant Atlantic and global anticolonial sentiments of that time. Cedric Robinson, discussing Britain in the 1930s, spoke of a disaffection growing among radicals of African descent toward doctrinaire communism, a period in which "most radical Black activists [therefore] generally turned toward Pan-Africanism as the form of their political work while retaining aspects of Marxism for their critique of capitalism and imperialism." (1983: 370)¹⁰ Kelley adds: "The defense of Ethiopia did more than any other event in the 1930s to internationalize the struggles of black people in the United States." (1994: 128)

Nkrumah had a wide variety of experiences in the United States between 1935 and 1945, living and working in Harlem and Philadelphia, traveling widely throughout the country, waiting tables on boats between the Northeastern Atlantic seaboard and Mexico, and

¹⁰ Two of the reasons that Robinson gives for this shift, long before most were ready to critique Stalin, caused many to "seriously question the commitment of European radicals, and particularly European communists, to their cause." The third International disbanded the International Trade Union Committee of Negro Workers in 1933, and the press revealed "the Soviet Union's trade with Italy in war materials during the Italo-Ethiopian War (in contravention of League of Nations sanctions)." (1983: 370) See also Kelley, who discusses the impact of these events in the United States (1994: 128-132), and reframes the agency of traditional historiographies, claiming: "The African American response to the Italian invasion in some ways prefigured the Left's response to Franco's rebellion in Spain," (129).



studying, learning from and working with organizers and social movements while back on land. "Those years in America and England were years of sorrow and loneliness, poverty and hard work. But I never regretted them because the background that they provided has helped me to formulate my philosophy of life and politics." (Nkrumah 1957: vii) As a student, he organized the African Students Association of America and Canada (A.S.A.A.C.) and was president until he left for England. While many members and chapters in the group were openly concerned with national liberation movements throughout the continent of Africa, and some rivalries between different sub-groups emerged, Nkrumah began to advance his first ideas of Pan-African unity (ibid.: 43-44). In addition, he became close friends with C. L. R. James, from whom he "learned how an underground movement works." He was also a member of the Communist Party, the NAACP and the Urban League, while all the time-being very much inspired by Garvey and his movement. Throughout the period, he remained politically engaged, while studying the works of European philosophers and Marxist theorists, so that his practice and theory were closely intertwined.¹¹

Nkrumah completed a rigorous classical training in Western philosophy, history and economics, as well as practical experiences in the political arena and clandestine organization while in the United States. His third book, the one to which many attribute his acclaim in the West, was Conscientism (1964), a philosophical treatise. His Neo-Colonialism: The Highest Stage of Imperialism (1965a), generally regarded as a masterpiece of Marxist analysis, still stands as an important historical register of multinational, corporate and imperial activities in Africa. Nyerere too, used his training, in this case in the field of education, as a lens on politics. His essay, "Education for Self-Reliance", published in Ujamaa (1968), ranked with contemporary radical scholars of pedagogic theory, such as Paulo Freire and Ivan Illych, and had a widespread influence -- together with other aspects of his philosophy -- throughout Africa and the world.

Like Nkrumah, Nyerere started his first political organization in College, the Tanganyika African Welfare Association (T.A.W.A.). Both men were forged in the crucible of anti-colonial organizing and struggle, the nitty-gritty political processes that led to decolonization. Nkrumah was perhaps more a product of Afro-Diasporic social movements and experiences than Nyerere, but the latter's experiences at Makerere in Uganda and then in Scotland, as well as at teaching college and in the classrooms as an instructor, also exposed him to social and political diversity, other activists and political thinkers. Both men were their country's first heads of state. Nkrumah's 1957 autobiography, like Nyerere's famous speech "Ujaama" on African socialism, was published in the year in which Ghana achieved full independence from Britain, the second sub-Saharan colony to do

¹¹ Nkrumah mentions that even though the works of most major European philosophers occupied his time, and Marx and Lenin particularly addressed his need for theories of organizing and the critique of capitalism, it was Garvey who most captured his imagination. It is interesting that what Nkrumah chose to recount in his autobiography, out of all of the aspects of Garvey's legacy, was the irony of "white Americans in the South support[ing] Garvey," in his back to Africa movement. (1957: 45)

so,¹² and popularly ushering in the era of African independence which proliferated in the following years. Furthermore, both thinkers pushed beyond the nationalist anti-colonial struggles which they helped engineer and which bore them to power, addressing struggles the new African nations would face in the period of US hegemonic imperialism.

Around 1950, during his three years as a student in Edinburgh, Nyerere wrote a pamphlet (1966: 23-29), which at the time remained unpublished, that reveals the development of his ideas at an early stage. It begins with the statement: "...A world seething with hatred is an intolerable place to live," and illustrates the racist colonial context with the story of a European settler who recently said at a public meeting in Tanzania that "he would sooner dine with swine than with an African." After critiquing white settler colonialism for a few more lines, Nyerere mentions that the hatred is not unidirectional, but flows both ways, citing an African friend of his who once "referred to the Europeans in East Africa as *Mbwa Hawa* -- 'These Dogs'." This important formulation of colonialism around the juncture of race is followed by this reflection:

"Personally I welcome these outbursts; they show us the seriousness of the disease, they are like bubbles that fly off a boiling pot. What I regret is the disease; the way in which we have lived together in the past to make such hatred grow up. We cannot amend matters by sheer hypocrisy... Many schemes have been put forward for the solution of the racial problem in Africa... But I must say from the outset that any scheme which leaves unimpaired the European's monopoly of political control will not solve the problem of racial strife." (1966: 23-24)¹³

Rejecting the principle of "equal representation" because of its assumption that "50,000 Europeans, because they happen to be Europeans, are equal to 17,000,000 [...] Africans," Nyerere goes on to question the underlying issues of citizenship and personhood, which would anchor his later conceptualizations of nationalism and African socialism:

"Our problem in East and South Africa is a problem of a White minority which sincerely believes that democracy's cardinal foundation is the will of the people, but

¹² Although Ghana is often cited as the first African country 'south of the Sahara' to gain its independence, David Levering Lewis reminds us in a passing brackets that: "... (even seasoned Africa watchers routinely forgot that the leader of the Sudan had assumed his duties in January 1956, more than a year before Nkrumah),..." (1993: 4). This error speaks perhaps to the contradictory if not racist assignment of African countries in Western discourses between Arab and African, Black (sub-Saharan) and North African (Middle Eastern) categorizations and geographies.

¹³ Another important point emerging from this early writing of Nyerere, but not explored in the text above, is the fact that at this point he still simply desired independence from "Europe[...]'s monopoly of political control," a goal which was very common before World War Two, but which later was critiqued by Nyerere and others like him as woefully inadequate, as the realities of neocolonialism became clear.



which refuses to let the term 'the people' include non-Europeans. Our whole quarrel boils down to the simple question, 'Who are the people of East Africa?'"

Such questioning of and resistance to colonial status, racial subjectification, labor and other exploitation, and the true meaning of democracy was on the increase throughout the world at this time. It has often been noted that the periods after both World Wars, in particular, spawned an increase in organizing, activism, and resistance (Du Bois 1919, James et al. 1980, Robinson 1983). Returning soldiers, having moved through imperial systems fighting for European interests, seeing the fragility and multiplicity of the colonial and imperial apparatus, meeting other colonial peoples and hearing of their resistances, were rarely comfortable settling back into "their positions" in the societies from which they had come.¹⁴ In some cases, international links of resistance had been forged; in others, local and national organizing began soon after the return home. It is also clear that the wars did not instigate such activities, but merely exacerbated and stimulated conditions and networks already in existence. Labor resistance and strikes were increasing before the First World War and were simply resumed more fully after it, while a major proliferation of political parties and mobilizations were clearly discernible in many parts of the world during the second half of the Forties.

Nkrumah and Nyerere were soon two of the most important leaders and thinkers on issues of Pan-Africanism and African socialism. In the course of their careers they were involved in Pan-Africanist conferences, the forging of regional and continental Pan-African organizations, including the Organization of African Unity, and in pressing -- through the Frontline States organization -- against the remaining colonial and apartheid regimes of southern Africa, South Africa, Rhodesia, and the Portuguese colonies. Many of their views intersected and overlapped; rarely did they diverge greatly in politics or theory. Their works however, were unique and specific to their national locations and struggles, and thus require close study beyond the generalizations offered above, even as they are best understood when situated within the historical conditions briefly outlined.

Connected Threads in the Writings of Nkrumah and Nyerere: African Socialism, Pan-Africanism, and Critiques of Neo-Colonialism

African Socialism

Nyerere developed his ideas concerning African socialism and, in particular, Tanzanian socialism, throughout most of his career. In many ways, all of his writings and life work were in pursuit of the living redefinition and creation of a specific African socialism: Tanzanian and East African socialism,

¹⁴ As Maghan Keita pointed out to me, this is precisely a post-colonial moment in the epistemological and cultural sense discussed in note 2 above (personal conversation, 1999).

“The real truth is that the principles of socialism are relevant to all human society at all stages of technology and social organization. But their application has *constantly to be worked out afresh according to the objective conditions prevailing in the time or place.*” (1968: 19; italics my own)

Working within the Western scientific idea of an evolutionary grid of progressive development, Nyerere makes the radical statement that any society should be able to move directly to socialism, without the completion of any other stages first. Even while he operates within generally evolutionist discursive parameters, his concept destabilizes the hierarchical continuum and its linearity with the statement of radical socialist equality across both time and space. But, he continues, socialism must “constantly be worked out afresh according to the objective conditions prevailing...” This constituted a partial epistemological break, not unlike that of other people at that time working through types of African socialism.¹⁵

One of the most compelling aspects of Nyerere’s theory of African socialism is its specificity, its attention to history and traditions, locality and particularity. The introduction to his second major collection of essays, written from 1965 to 1968 and focusing on “Freedom and Socialism” (Nyerere 1968b), develops his theory of the specificity of socialist social organization in detail. Yet, while spelling out his formulation of Tanzanian socialism, he delicately balances the need for specificity with the universal nature of the socialism he advocates through a complex theorization of social organization.

Nyerere defines a socialism in which production is aimed at the needs of the society as a whole, and in particular where wealth is generally nationalized. For him socialism is secular, or non-denominational, but does not infringe on personal religious practices or beliefs, and neither does socialism subscribe to a Marxist theology. “There is no model for us to copy,” says Nyerere, so socialism in Tanzania must be built from the ground up. “Socialism is about people, and people are the products of their history, education and environment.” (1968: 20) In Tanzania, that meant contending with the “problems of building socialism in an ex-colonial country,” but at an even deeper level, it also meant dealing with the dialectical tension of “universality” and “diversity,” a formulation with continuing significance, particularly in contemporary writing and debates about difference and multiculturalism.¹⁶ Put succinctly, Nyerere states: “The universality of socialism only

¹⁵ Maghan Keita suggested that this break, within Marxist thought, started with Mao and then passed to Nyerere et. al., arguably via Cuba, with “the notion that 1) people of color in 2) non-industrial spaces, might achieve socialism” (personal correspondence, 2001). Ironically, in the realm of political practice, Nyerere’s greatest shortcoming (like Mao and others) may have been in his dependence upon evolutionist notions of progress for his forced Ujamaa village movement, as best critiqued by Shivji (1976). The non-industrial world was still seen through the industrial lens, as necessarily industrializing, even in terms of industrial *agriculture*. Again, however, this essay focuses more on the theories of these thinkers than their practices, which have been adequately covered elsewhere.

¹⁶ Audre Lorde (1984), Hazel Carby (1982), or Duberman (1999), for example.



exists if it can take account of men's (sic) differences, and be equally valid for all of them" (1968: 3), and then in more detail:

"...because men are different, and because different communities and societies have had different histories, live in different geographical conditions, and have developed different customs and systems of belief, [] the road to socialism and the institutions through which socialism is ultimately expressed will be different." (1968: 23)

While Nyerere critiqued universals that could not incorporate diversity and specificity, Nkrumah too assailed this epistemologically foundational European/Western concept in the beginning of his *Consciencism* (1964a), when he insisted: "philosophical systems are facts of history." Ignoring the specificities of the "concrete reality of their people and their struggle... the fundamental social fact [of being] a colonial subject," Nkrumah argued that some trained colonial intellectuals used universalism as a method of abstraction and of distancing themselves from social issues, gaining a "liberal outlook", and thus appeasing their colonial and neo-colonial patrons and bosses.¹⁷

The struggle against colonial rule in Tanzania involved violent, as well as non-violent organizing, and this Nyerere argues was important for the society built in the colonial aftermath. His interesting discussion of anti-colonial violence rightly belongs next to other famous discussions of violence in revolutionary contexts, such as Frantz Fanon or Amílcar Cabral, who were similarly involved in anti-colonial struggles for independence and African socialism in other African countries. In particular, and much like Fanon whom it is clear had influenced him, Nyerere demonstrated how violence could create a disjuncture between the creation of socialist institutions and socialist attitudes, violence being necessary to the former and inhibiting the latter.

At the same time, Nyerere's writings also belong next to those of other writers, such as Nkrumah, who argued for a strong state in the "post"-colonial phase and then, in some cases, used this to justify autocracy and dictatorship.¹⁸ In the context of his discussion of the need for specificity, Nyerere also briefly described the specific need in Tanganyika, in its early and fledgling years, for a one-party state, a move common throughout Africa at this time. Unfortunately, in most such cases, what was soon seen beneath the rhetoric was a dictatorial style of government in many ways similar in its hierarchical nature to that of colonial rule -- a new and only slightly revised form of domination and administration. While Nyerere may have fallen in to some pitfalls of colonial thought, he also sharply criticized such developments in his comments on neo-colonialism, discussed briefly below.

Like Nyerere's *Ujamaa*, Nkrumah's conceptualization of African socialism, perhaps most succinctly stated in his *Consciencism* (1964), was also based on "traditional African village life". He attempted "to show how the principles which inform capitalism are in conflict with the socialist egalitarianism of the traditional African society... Our philosophy must

¹⁷ see note 36, below, on Ali A. Mazrui.

¹⁸ see note 22, below.

find its weapons in the environment and living conditions of the African people, [requiring] ...the restitution of the egalitarianism of human society, and second, the logistic mobilization of all our resources towards the attainment of that restitution,” (pp. 78). In the context of the West African and Francophone Negritude movement, Nkrumah posited his conception of a ‘traditional egalitarian African society’ within a conceptualization of an ‘African personality’: “The African personality is itself defined by the cluster of humanist principles which underlie the traditional African society,” (pp. 79). Many were quick to critique this classless notion of African personality at the base of so many African socialisms, and it should be observed that it was not altogether incidental that such formulations were generally being written by elite Africans who had much to expose in a rigorous class analysis.

By 1970 if not earlier, Nkrumah had broadened his call to that of Pan-African African socialism, while still embracing global communism, concluding his short book Class Struggle in Africa, with this paragraph:

“The total liberation and the unification of Africa under an All-African socialist government must be the primary objective of all Black revolutionaries throughout the world... an objective which, when achieved, will bring about the fulfillment of the aspirations of Africans and people of African descent everywhere. It will at the same time advance the triumph of the international socialist revolution, and the onward progress towards world communism, under which, every society is ordered on the principle of -- from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs.” (1970: 88)

With Nkrumah, we therefore see an African socialism based first upon the amorphous concept of an African personality, which was then rigorously and widely critiqued by fellow scholars and activists, leaving the base of his formulation weakened. As a result, he later reverted to the rigid class dialectics of a more dogmatic Marxism, again anchoring his formulations on the very epistemological foundation of Western thought from which he had earlier sought to distance himself. This sort of Marxism clearly came directly out of Europe, with its entire attendant epistemological apparatus, while the critique of Negritude, perhaps nowhere better than in Fanon’s early work (1967b[1952]), showed that this was just a dialectical inversion of European racism and its hierarchical dichotomies that left little room for transcendence of the prevailing epistemology.

Above all else, both authors were *anti-universalist* in their understandings of African socialism, and in their anti-European and anti-Western stances (Nkrumah 1964: 3, and Nyerere in his “varied paths to socialism essay...,” 1966), and this was one of the most important and revolutionary aspects of their thinking. Their arguments against European universalisms were like those of other thinkers of the period, especially those in the Negritude Movement. We see this also, in broadest strokes, in Aime Cesaire’s famous critique of Nazism as an integral rather than aberrant part of the West, in his Discourse on



Colonialism (1972[1955]); or in Zora Neale Hurston's earlier and less well known arguments along similar lines in 1941.¹⁹

Neo-Colonialism

Although neo-colonialism, broadly understood and in its numerous possible forms and manifestations, has been identified, critiqued and discussed at length since the turn of the century and before, discussions of neo-colonialism(s) have proliferated in particular parts of the world at particular moments in time, with parts of Africa and the African Diaspora during the Sixties and Seventies being some of the most discernible focal points of such critique. Nkrumah and Nyerere's different but related and reinforcing discussions of neo-colonialism were part of broader, global and particularly Black Atlantic discourses, with other writers in this vein including C. L. R. James, Du Bois, and Fanon before them, and Cabral, Walter Rodney and others after.

Some might argue that the infamous "Washington Machine" of patronage and power distribution, working within the confines of white supremacist power structures, built up by Booker T. Washington at the turn of the century was a manifestation of neo-colonialism, and that the critiques of this establishment, most notably by Du Bois, were in fact critiques of neo-colonialism.²⁰ Certainly, at the moment of abolition throughout the Atlantic world,

¹⁹ This can be seen in her essay entitled, "Seeing the World As It Is," which was dated July 5, 1941, but rejected by her publisher for inclusion in her autobiographical Dust Tracks On a Road (Hurston 1995: 982-984). In this essay, which ranges far and wide over issues of global and domestic racial and imperial US politics, she stated:

"All around me, bitter tears are being shed over the fate of Holland, Belgium, France, and England. I must confess to being a little dry around the eyes. I hear people shaking with shudders at the thought of Germany collecting taxes in Holland. I have not heard a word against Holland collecting one twelfth of poor people's wages in Asia. That makes the ruling families in Holland very rich, as they should be. What happens to the poor Javanese or Balinese is unimportant; Hitler's crime is that he is actually doing a thing like that to his own kind. That is international cannibalism and should be stopped. He is a bandit. That is true, but that is not what is held against him. He is muscling in on well-established mobs. Give him credit. He cased some joints away off in Africa and Asia, but the big mobs already had them paying protection money and warned him to stay away. The only way he can climb out of the punk class is to high-jack the load and that is exactly what he is doing." (Ibid: 792)

This was written before the Nazi extermination camps were well known, but already she, like so many in the Pan-African and colonized world, was viewing events in their global, colonial context. This applied to both scholars and everyday people as well (C. L. R. James et. al. 1980). Hurston's essay is extremely important, and by itself reveals her to be an intellectual and social critic of equal standing to any of her better-known male contemporaries.

²⁰ It is not surprising that there is little discussion of processes and forms of 'neo-colonialism' in the United States, given the lack of attention to colonialism and coloniality generally in the U.S., a glaring lack that some have explained in relation to the hegemonic location of the USA in global discursive,

militants of all sorts and particularly communists were already talking of the new form of slavery -- wage slavery. Colonialism, and 'coloniality' broadly, were the framework within which slavery operated, so discussion of the 'new' forms of colonialism in post-bellum regions was probably widespread.

It would be interesting to comparatively analyze the structural and discursive elements of the debates around the end of slavery with those accompanying the 'end' of colonialism. In both instances there is a highly charged contestation between metropolitan and colonial discourses, and between white settlers and colonized subjects, on these topics. In many areas of the world, the language of colonialism was not discarded at independence, and its conscious use speaks to a broad-based awareness and critique of neo-colonialism. The "Williams Debate," which has recently been passionately rekindled from numerous "sides," stemmed from Eric Williams' challenging masterpiece, *Capitalism and Slavery* (1944). Williams argued against the hegemonic white historiographic position that abolition was the result of British liberal values and intervention, demonstrating the calculation of imperial benefit that actually underwrote this transition, as a tool in part to further the British advantage over its key European rivals in 'free market' global capitalist competition.²¹

At the Bandung Conference in 1955, most former colonies in Asia had already gained their independence, and one of the prevailing themes and sub-texts of the Afro-Asian gathering was already that of what would soon be called neo-colonialism. An Indonesian participant remarked to Richard Wright concerning his own country:

"We made a revolution and the common people fought and died to drive out the Dutch. Now the common people are not getting benefits from that revolution. That's why today we are threatened with another revolution.... Why should one part of our population get rich and the rest get poorer. We drove out the Dutch to build a good society, now we have a class of Indonesians who are acting more or less like the Dutch." (Wright 1956:104)

political, and economic hierarchies. This does not in any way diminish the significance of these analytical omissions, but rather, it is hoped, participates in opening the way for greater comparative investigation of such issues. Brief discussion of the US as a colonial context did emerge around the Black Power movement of the late Sixties, and in the briefly politicized field of sociology, but largely faded as COINTELPRO shut the movement down, or forced it underground.

²¹ Both van Zwanenberg (1976) and Cooper (1980) applied Williams-inspired materialist analyses of imperial ideologies surrounding the abolition of the slave trade and eventually of slavery itself. In Kenyan historiography, similar arguments have been made, also predominantly within Marxian schools of analysis, for the reasons behind decolonization in the wake of Mau Mau, for example in the works of Brett 1973, van Zwanenberg 1972, 1974, 1975, and Cooper 1980, 1996. Elsewhere in the continent, there are the examples of Fanon 1967a, Walter Rodney 1972, 1990, Cabral 1969, 1973, and M'Buyinga 1982[1975], among many others. It should also be noted that Williams' line of argument had been concretely broached by his predecessors/contemporaries, C. L. R. James and W. E. B. Du Bois, long before his famous work was written.



And so it was that country after country, soon after achieving independence or even in some cases before, had to take up the question of neo-colonialism, the emergence and solidification of an indigenous bourgeoisie, the 'comprador classes' of international imperialism.

There is no question that these themes gradually emerged in the writings of Nkrumah and Nyerere, but that they also at first placed an inordinate amount of responsibility in the hands of the indigenous elite, the educated class, of which they were a part, and more particularly on a vanguardist leadership seen as necessary to independent state formation. Therefore, the discussions in Nyerere and Nkrumah are often complicated by seeming contradictions, as when they propose fighting colonialism and neo-colonialism through the one-party state,²² led by specific branches of the intelligentsia, all the while still advocating for a classless socialist society.²³ However, it must be acknowledged that Nkrumah (1962, 1963a, 1964a, 1965a, 1967, 1970) and Nyerere (1965, 1967, 1968b, 1973) were among the first major African leaders and scholars to warn vociferously of the threats of neo-colonialism, which became such a preoccupying factor, almost a defining element, of progressive forces in the Sixties and Seventies.

Neo-colonialism was a major concern -- together with complete continent-wide decolonization, and the building of Pan-African unity -- of the first All-African Peoples' Conferences (A.A.P.C.) which led to the formation of the Organization of African Unity in 1963. As a member/observer of the Algerian delegation to the first All-African Peoples' Conference in Accra, Ghana, Fanon (1967: 153-7) soon after wrote, among other things, of "the snares of neo-colonialism," which, he observed, were occurring at the same time as re-colonizations and expansions by South Africa and the 'developing of police regimes' in the Portuguese colonies.

"The Congress members unreservedly condemn the Africans who, in order to maintain themselves, have not feared to mobilize the police for purposes of rigging the elections in the last referendum and to commit their territories to an association with France which excludes the way of independence for many years. The few delegates who came to represent these puppet governments of French Africa found themselves more or less expelled from the commissions" (1967a: 155).

²² Nkrumah (1963a: 69-70) quoted Nyerere on this subject: "The Nationalist movement which fights for and achieves independence inevitably forms the government of the new state. It would surely be ridiculous to expect that a country should voluntarily divide itself for the sake of conforming to a particular expression of democracy, and to do so during a struggle that calls for the complete unity of its people. No one should jump to the conclusion that such a country is not democratic or does not intend to be democratic," and went on to state that, "...to level against us,... the criticism of authoritarianism, as has been done, would seem to suggest a contradiction in the Western concept of democracy..."

²³ Most Marxists have solved this contradiction (of leadership and classlessness) by means of evolutionism, the evolution of the communist nation, which at first needs a vanguard but at a later stage becomes classless [which has never happened]. Neither Nkrumah nor Nyerere significantly refused or evaded the stage-ist and progressivist logics of capitalist or communist evolutionism.

Written in 1958, Fanon's comments show the beginnings of explicit African discourses of neo-colonialism. They reveal also how such early conceptualizations were made primarily at an international level -- between and amongst nations and colonies -- more than internally -- within these nations -- as would soon be addressed on a broad basis, and later in Fanon's landmark, The Wretched of the Earth.

The Third All-African Peoples' Conference, held in Cairo, March 23-31, 1961, went further than the first two, and drew up a significant document entitled, the "Resolution on Neo-Colonialism," (reprinted in: Wallerstein 1967: 260-263), but this document too, remained firmly within an internationalist view of neo-colonialism. The conference took a strong and impressive stance against neo-colonialism, stating:

"Neo-Colonialism, which is the survival of the colonial system in spite of formal recognition of political independence in emerging countries which become the victims of an indirect and subtle form of domination by political, economic, social, military or technical [forces], is the greatest threat to African countries that have newly won their independence or those approaching this status." (Wallerstein 1967: 260)

As may be seen, the conference was still weak in 1961 on the important aspect of *internal* or *intranational* neo-colonialism, the ways in which internal forces conspired with those external, to build (or really extend) a new transnational form of colonialism. The idea of neo-colonialism being a concern *within* the nation, primarily between contending class forces, seems to have become its major meaning only in the Seventies, while in the Sixties neo-colonialism was still generally less fully specified, and used primarily to refer to the falseness of "Independence," through imperialism "by other means."

The failure to adequately identify internal forces of neo-colonialism in the independence period of the late-1950s and early 1960s reflects the lacunae of anti-colonial nationalisms, which underlay most struggles for independence from colonial rule. The fact that the resolution on neo-colonialism recognized that these forces were already at work even in countries not yet independent, makes this failure all the more significant. For it was through such processes that the transition to independence was negotiated, between "the masses" and their movements, and the colonial administrative powers. Specifically, as formal independence became inevitable throughout European empires, colonial discourses turned to finding and managing suitable (neo-colonial) heirs to power, and in many cases this meant overt cultivation (Kenyatta), and/or assassination (Lumumba).²⁴

²⁴ In Ghana, Cooper (1996: 248-60) traced the transformation in colonialist discourses which first saw Nkrumah as a radical threat to colonial stability, and then, after his arrest and imprisonment, had to accept the inevitability of his party and his power, and so shifted to its "next ideological task,... to reconstruct the Apostle of Disorder as the Man of Moderation and Modernity. By June, the Colonial Office was writing about the need 'to keep on good terms with the more responsible political leaders such as Mr. Nkrumah.'" (1996: 260) In Ghana, the colonial government had been forced to reconcile itself with a leader previously deemed too militant, while in Kenya and elsewhere, its cultivated compradors also sailed



Nkrumah's earliest writings on neo-colonialism, in his *Towards Colonial Freedom* (1962), and *Africa must Unite* (1963a), operated within the prevailing view of neo-colonialism as an external, imperial threat that portended the continuation of colonialism by new means. In a chapter in the latter work devoted to neo-colonialism, Nkrumah follows the logic of the 'Resolution on Neo-Colonialism' of the Cairo A.A.P.C., which, of course, he helped to create. His focus was on the machinations of the Imperial powers, the "mother-countries," who worked overtly and covertly toward the balkanization of independent African nations, the "backing of moderates against 'extremists',"²⁵ and the creation of dependence through credit, "aid"²⁶ and institutional affiliations (such as the European Common Market, NATO, the Commonwealth, the French Community).

Yet, he was at this point already intimately aware of the desire of the Imperial nations to reformulate colonialism through the veil of independence. In responding to the British colonial policy shifts represented in Ernest Bevin's statement that self-government was to be a policy of "give... and keep," Nkrumah stated:

"It seems he meant that by voluntary withdrawal at a suitable time the British would retain the goodwill of the African, strengthen the Commonwealth, earn the praise of the rest of the world, and at the same time keep maximum political and economic advantages. The British, though liking to pose as dreamy idealists who, through absence of mind, achieved an empire, are in my experience the most hard-headed realists. They know that Africa must inevitably be ruled by Africans, and they want to come out of the business in the best possible way." (1963a: 16)

In this appropriately cynical and Williams-esque reading of British colonial policy, Nkrumah is on the money at a time when such questions were barely being asked, but it is ironic that it was several more years before he began to scrutinize the implications of these

smoothly to power. In so many concrete cases, colonial cooptation was the goal, simply approached in different manners according to particular political possibilities. Certainly, one can read here the agency of African activists and social movements, as they clearly forced changes in and even violence against colonial policy. Unfortunately, African agency was met with European colonial agency in a colossal power struggle, with mixed results on both sides, and only a limited independence of most African states that emerged from this period.

²⁵ This was nothing new; the practice had been developed as a tactic of colonial rule and decolonization strategy in both British and French Africa. See the previous note. Clearly, Nkrumah was aware of the colonial discourses Cooper and others later excavated.

²⁶ "Multilateral "aid" similarly serves mainly to improve the economic position of the donor countries. ...Credits are granted to countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America, so that they can be equipped with the infra-structure necessary for their future exploitation by private monopolists." (Nkrumah 1970: 72) Incidentally, it should be noted that the significance of such formulations and others like it, by Nkrumah, Nyerere and others of their group, to the development of African and global theories of dependency -- which prevailed from the 1950s to the 1980s as the dependency school, and were almost always linked, with good reason, to Latin America -- tends most of the time to be overlooked and is a problem in intellectual genealogy which needs to be addressed.

views more rigorously by investigating the mechanisms and manifestations of such internal neo-colonialism.²⁷

It was only later, in his masterwork on neo-colonialism, Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism, (1965a), and then in his, Class Struggle in Africa (1970), after personal and intimate experience of Ghana's reactionary bourgeois classes,²⁸ that his conception began to focus simultaneously on external *and* internal agents and elements of neo-colonialism, giving rise to corresponding changes in the methodology necessary to formulating processes of decolonization. In the introduction to Neo-Colonialism (1965a: xx), Nkrumah continues his focus on external causes of neo-colonialism, stating that the 'less developed countries' will only be able to develop "through a struggle against the *external forces* which have a vested interest in keeping it undeveloped," (italics added). In fact, throughout the work there is a tension between a conceptualization of neo-colonialism as externally rooted and admissions of the fact that it manifests itself internally and must also be combated at this level then as well.

Nkrumah indirectly addressed the internal nature of neo-colonialism when he spoke of the lack of accountability [to the African people] in new African-controlled states and the new mechanisms of maneuver this necessitated: "In the days of old-fashioned colonialism, the imperial power had at least to explain and justify at home the actions it was taking abroad. In the colony those who served the ruling imperial power could at least look to its protection against any violent move by their opponents. With neo-colonialism neither is the case." (1965a: xi) Not only were local elites less protected by the mother country, the masses exploited by these surrogate rulers/elites had no external arena for redress or the appeal to liberal sentiments regarding the limits of acceptable repression. In fact, and by design, we instead see European/Western industrial powers speaking of "Black-on-Black violence," and pretending to be totally removed from any responsibility.²⁹ Stating that,

²⁷ Nkrumah gave agency in his work to mass movements, the non-elite majorities, to some extent the 'subalterns' of contemporary discourse, although not in entirely unproblematic ways. Today, questions of hidden resistance and agency from below are being more deeply fleshed out, internal contradictions and hierarchies centered. Thirty years ago, Nkrumah wrote: "In spite of the moralizing of British colonialists who argue that reform is granted as and when the colony is ready for it, change has, in fact, come mostly as *a result of pressure from below*. ...I know of no case where self-government has been handed to a colonial and oppressed people on a silver platter. The dynamic has had to come from the people themselves. It is a standing joke in Africa that when the British start arresting, independence is just around the corner." (1963a: 17-18)

²⁸ While there may have been "progressive" elements within the bourgeois classes, and thus a struggle between these forces, one might just as easily identify similar forces in the peasant and working classes as well.

²⁹ Famous cases include the extremes of the recent Rwandan genocide, so infrequently analyzed in terms of colonial invention and imposition (Mamdani 2001), or the scandalous case of the ANC/Inkatha battles, which the world later learned were funded, in the case of Inkatha, by the white supremacist government. Parallel may be seen, for example, in the notion of Palestinian-on-



“Neo-colonialism, like colonialism, is an attempt to export the social conflicts of the capitalist countries,” (1965a: xii) Nkrumah addresses the constriction of internal domination which frees the hands of distant imperialist agents who have a vested interest in the power and impunity of national dictators with whom they can collude.

Towards the end of his monumental work, which follows and builds on the legacy of Lenin's Imperialism by cataloguing countless multinational corporations, mining interests, and banking networks in detail generally unmatched until this day, Nkrumah importantly formulates neo-colonialism as operating at more than just the economic level, “but also in the political, religious, ideological, and cultural spheres.” (1965a: 239) While his work does focus on the economic and political levels to the detriment of the latter three, it remains suggestive of levels of neo-colonialism that would soon be richly explored. A few pages later, Nkrumah briefly mentions some cultural elements of neo-colonialism and other “methods used by neo-colonialists to slip past our guard,” and examines the alienating and colonizing impact of Hollywood movies. (1965a: 246) It is possible therefore to see this work in particular, and Nkrumah's writing in general, as a pivot or bridge between the old analysis of neo-colonialism which focused on the external, and the new, less popular 1970s critiques of neo-colonialism, epitomized by Walter Rodney and others. In these later renditions, neocolonialism is conceived of as also, if not primarily, an internal set of problems,³⁰ which are inherently epistemological as well as infrastructural. Some of this shift is also contemporaneous with the reworking of Marxian determinism that tended earlier to depend upon concepts of infrastructural determination that saw superstructural issues as epiphenomenal at best, but later reconsidered this causal directionality.³¹

By the writing of his succinct Class Struggle in Africa in 1970, Nkrumah had developed an even richer Marxist conception of culture, with a more sophisticated analysis of the

Palestinian violence [Fatah versus Hamas], or when the *Intifada* seeks to root out Israeli spies and agents – in both cases accused of being as bad or worse than Israeli repression itself.

³⁰ For an example of such work at a later time, attentive to the cultural elements of neo-colonialism, see Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Decolonizing the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature, 1981, who had this to say: "The Mobutus, the Moises and the Eyademas of the neo-colonial world are not being forced to capitulate to imperialism at the point of an American maxim gun. They themselves are of the same mind: they are actually begging for a recolonization of their own countries with themselves as the neo-colonial governors living in modern fortresses. They are happier as the neo-slave drivers of their own peoples; happier as the neo-overseers of the U.S.-led economic hemorrhage of their own countries." (1981: 80) Colonization and decolonization also take place within and on the bodies of individuals, as well as within discursive structures.

³¹ So many scholarly debates of the Seventies and Eighties -- for example, in anthropology between the 'idealism' of Clifford Geertz and the 'materialism' of Marvin Harris; or in Sociology one might cite the works of Maurice Godelier, Raymond Williams and Stuart Hall, which worked over these intellectual issues with Marxian teleology -- failed to connect themselves to the intellectual and political struggles on the ground which had just occurred in the preceding years and were still everywhere playing out. Certainly Foucault, like them, and in contrast to Fanon, Said and perhaps Mudimbe, did not anchor his insights in the anti-colonial struggles that shaped his epoch and made so many of his ideas possible.

intersections of race and class. Sticking mostly to a rigorous class analysis of African nations and focusing on tensions within the society, between the bourgeoisie and proletarians and peasants, he offers a brief Du Boisian analysis of class and race. Speaking of the “double exploitation -- both on the ground of color and of class,”³² experienced by Africans, he enlarges this to encompass more or less the whole Pan-African world, noting that, “similar conditions [to those experienced by Africans] exist in the USA, the Caribbean, in Latin America, and in other parts of the world where the nature of the development of productive forces has resulted in a *racist class structure*.” He concludes, “[i]n the era of neo-colonialism,” which in Nkrumah’s formulation we would still be in today, “*‘under-development’ is still attributed not to exploitation but to inferiority*, and racial undertones remain closely interwoven with the class struggle.” (1970: 27, italics my own)

With this conceptualization of race, Nkrumah further defined the methods of neo-colonialism as:

“...economic control, in the form of “aid”, “loans”, trade and banking; the stranglehold of indigenous economies through vast international interlocking corporations; political direction through puppet governments; social penetration through the cultivation of an indigenous bourgeoisie, the imposition of “defence” agreements, and the setting up of military and air bases; ideological expansion through the mass communications media of press, radio and television; ...and [] collective imperialism - notably the politico-economic and military co-operation of Rhodesia, South Africa and Portugal.” (1970: 70-71)

While open to cultural interpretations of internal neo-colonialism -- interpretations which might account for ‘decolonizing the mind’ and problems of identity formations at the intersections of race, class [gender and sexuality] -- it is also clear that Nkrumah was bound to some extent within the parameters of a nationalist epistemology. His language, with words like “stranglehold,” “penetration,” “imposition,” and “expansion,” imply a geography that is made up of neatly discrete political units (nation-states) which then have a, largely unidirectional, one-to-one relationship of causality. This misses not only the complex ways in which metropole and colony were mutually constitutive of each other,³³ but also the ways in which asymmetry, reciprocity and power operate *within* the social body, and the political body (the national unit), not to mention individual bodies.

The new focus on neo-colonialism as also, and perhaps particularly, an internal problem, emerged predominantly in the late 1960s, building consciously on the legacies of Nkrumah and Nyerere. This perspective was concerned with internal class divisions that went beyond manichean racialisms (i.e.: black/white, colonizer/colonized) to the study of internal national differentiation and conflict, particularly by means of alliances between national

³² Gender and sexuality are both problematically absent in this formulation.

³³ A central argument of Cooper and Stoler (1997).



bourgeoisies³⁴ and international imperial interests (both private and governmental). This work, pioneered by Nkrumah and Fanon, is further illustrated in the writings of Walter Rodney. Formulating himself as a 'neo-colonial' rather than a 'colonial' subject, because "the issue was no longer just Guyanese against the British, It was one set of Guyanese against another set of Guyanese," Rodney had this to say:

"...already my consciousness of West Indian society was not that we needed to fight the British but that we needed to fight the British, the Americans, *and their indigenous lackeys*. That I see as an *anti-neo-colonial consciousness as distinct from a purely anti-colonial consciousness*. ...I was aware of neo-colonialism. Neo-colonialism has already overthrown Nkrumah. It was not sufficient for me, or for anybody else, therefore, merely to say that one is interested in Africa, one is interested in things black, although that was certainly high on the agenda, because our society had not yet come to terms with the question of being black, or the question of being African. But that was not sufficient. *Because there were black men in our society who were clearly the rulers to be, who were clearly being groomed to be rulers.*" (1990: 33-34, italics my own)³⁵

Nyerere's focus on the specificities of African and Tanzanian socialism led him to both explore and suppress the existence of internal class differentiation within his society, and this partial denial of class differentiation was to play a crucial role in the difficulties of implementing his philosophy (Shivji 1976). Likewise, describing Ghana after the initial period of the Nkrumah government, Rodney (1990: 53) summarized: "The mass movement gets hijacked. The petite bourgeoisie takes control. ...Then, at a certain point... the petite bourgeoisie decides that they want to seize power because the national leader is too committed to ideas about possibilities of change in the interest of the mass and in the interest of Africa. So, even though they wielded effective power, it was necessary to put the final blow on the Nkrumah regime by getting rid of Nkrumah himself." It was after this experience that Nkrumah's class analysis sharpened, looking at struggles internal to the nation (racial and class-based), and in their relation to global competition. It was with an eye to Nkrumah's and Nyerere's struggles, and others like them throughout the continent

³⁴ Important questions are raised here, especially by my challenging interlocutor Maghan Keita, which cannot be adequately considered within the confines of this piece. Are the fissures within national bourgeoisies actually separate bourgeoisies? Are there progressive forces within bourgeoisies, even class-suicidal forces (Cabral, Huey Newton), or are these contradictions in terms? How far can critiques of the bourgeoisie be carried by members of the bourgeoisie, such as the leaders under consideration here? What possibilities are there for including "the masses" or the "underclasses" in leadership, and to what extent can the line between classes thus be dissolved?

³⁵ Rodney continued in the passage to say: "Therefore, one had to find a way of analyzing West Indian society to explain why those fellows were so foolish as to destroy the West Indian Federation; to explain why Eric Williams has said he would expel the Americans from Chauguramas and didn't; to explain why it was that [Forbes] Burnham was more accessible to the British and the Americans; and to explain why the CIA penetrated into Guyana." (op cit.) On neo-colonialism in the U.S. context in the 1960s, see, for example, George Jackson, *Blood in My Eye*, 1972.

and the world, that numerous scholars and activists later developed more complex understandings of neo-colonialism, the resilience and intricacies of colonialism, and processes of inequality.³⁶

Pan-Africanism

Writing in the week that Ghana gained its independence, W. E. B. Du Bois (1965: 294-7) published an article in the *National Guardian* that included a letter of congratulations and advice to Nkrumah. In it, he spelled out his own views on Pan-Africanism and the role he thought Nkrumah and Ghana should play. Ghana “must no longer be merely a part of the British Commonwealth... [but] must on the contrary be the representative of Africa... of Black Africa below the Sahara desert” (op. cit.: 295). “Ghana should lead a movement of black men for Pan-Africanism... a new series of Pan-African Congresses should be held...” (op. cit.: 296). “The consequent Pan-Africa, working together through its independent units, should seek to develop a new African economy and cultural center standing between Europe and Asia, taking from and contributing to both... ...and should try to build a socialism founded on old African communal life” (Ibid.).

Du Bois’ idea for a new series of Pan-African Congresses would be taken up, almost in turn, by Nkrumah and Nyerere, in Accra and then other major capitals across the continent in the years after 1958. His mention of independent units within a larger Pan-African whole presages debates and divergences of opinion that were to come, and his conceptualization of “Pan-African socialism,” “founded on old African communal life,” was consonant with the thinking of numerous national liberation thinkers of the period such as Senghor, Nkrumah, and Nyerere. The letter is concluded with an explicit passing of the mantle of Pan-Africanist leadership, from the Diaspora (with its Caribbean, US and European trajectories) back to the African continent:

“I hereby put into your hands, Mr. Prime Minister, my empty but still significant title of ‘President of the Pan-African Congress,’ to be bestowed on my duly elected successor who will preside over a Pan-African Congress due, I trust, to meet soon and for the first time on African soil, at the call of the independent state of Ghana.” (op. cit.: 297)

Du Bois later traveled to Ghana to live out the last years of his life, and David Levering Lewis, in recounting the details of Du Bois’ funeral procession and rites, puts the ceremony in the context of this passing of the symbolic mantles of Pan-African and Black Atlantic

³⁶ An interesting comparison highlighting the nature of neo-colonialism was made by Taban Lo Liyong (1969: 10-17), between Nkrumah, whom he saw as no saint and perhaps even tainted with neo-colonialisms of his own, and Ali Mazrui, next to whom he appears as much more revolutionary. One of the measures of the latter’s intellectual neo-colonialism is his choice of topics for study, always avoiding home political issues: “On Swahili and Uganda he has written, on Tanzania versus East Africa he has written, on the fall of Nkrumah he has written; on Kenyatta-Mboya-Odinga he has not yet written, on the poor in Kenya he keeps quiet.”(12)



leadership. Du Bois died on August 28, 1963, and the magisterial state funeral the next day, saying 'good-bye' to the "Pan-African Moses," was "...intended to advertise abroad and to enhance at home, with solemnity and pageantry, the reality of an African nationhood still being consolidated" (Lewis 1993: 7).

Pan-Africanism, like many other "pan-" movements, was a form of pan-nationalism, a form of nationalism on the one hand, and a transcendence and critique of nationalism on the other. The basic vehicle of Pan-Africanism throughout the first half of the Twentieth Century was nationalism -- nationalist mobilization of Black peoples throughout the Atlantic. Pan-Africanism was essentially an altering of the scope of nationalist assertion, beyond the arbitrarily bounded units of colonial nation-states, to encompass a larger, politically more powerful "nation," the "Black nation," whether biblically inscribed ("the children of Ham"), or secularly understood (Black power, Black consciousness, Negritude, etc.). Pan-Africanism was also a response to the pan-whiteness of the largely unspoken and hegemonic whiteness of capitalist, European "superiority" and power in the global system.

Dorothy Nelkin illustrates the historical relationship between nationalism and Pan-Africanism in her essay, "Socialist Sources of Pan-African Ideology," published in 1964. After tracing changes in Du Bois' political philosophy, from "conservativism" to radicalism, from skepticism toward communism and Marxism to tentatively embracing these ideologies, and from ideas of united white and black workers to a unity instead of black workers and black capital, Nelkin discusses the Fifth Pan-Africanist Conference, in 1945, as a turning point. Positioned on the eve of the post-War world, this conference saw a greatly increased African involvement, with a strong representation from African regions, strong representation of nationalist African aspirations for independence from colonial rule, and emerging formulations of a new Pan-African agenda.

Quoting Padmore's Pan-Africanism or Communism, Nelkin (1964: 68-69) captures this moment of nationalist fusion with Pan-African, racially conscious, transnationalism. In the wake of the 1937 invasion of Ethiopia by Italy, Padmore had helped create the International African Service Bureau (IASB), with Ras Makonnen, C. L. R. James and Jomo Kenyatta all in participation. "It [the IASB] oriented itself to Pan-Africanism as an independent political expression of Negro aspirations for complete national independence from white domination -- capitalist or communist." The Fifth Pan-African Congress included the above activists, and Nnamdi Azikiwe, J. S. Annan, and Kwame Nkrumah, among others, who, as Padmore put it, "built upon the pioneering work of Du Bois [to] formulate a program of dynamic nationalism which combined African traditional forms of organization with Western political party methods."

The Congress had an uneasy relationship with Soviet communism, due to historical tensions between the commintern and various thinkers of African descent, many (most) of whom broke with the party at different historical junctures. Instead, the congress embraced nationalism, political democracy and socialism, with Padmore standing "firm for a nationalist ideology as opposed to the international ideology of Marxism," (Nelkin 1964:

70). Nkrumah organized the West African delegates into the West African National Secretariat, while in East Africa, the corollary regional Pan-African organization, PAFMESCA was passing into the leadership of Nyerere. Nkrumah saw African nationalism as the central feature of the Congress, “a revolt against colonialism, racialism, and imperialism in Africa” (quoted in Nelkin 1964: *ibid.*). According to Nelkin, Pan-Africanism in fact took a temporary backseat to nationalism, and the achievement of nationalist independence for former African colonies, from the mid-Forties to the mid-Fifties, only reassuming foremost importance after Ghanaian independence in 1957.

Potekhin, the Soviet Africanist, while towing party lines from Moscow, had accurately been among those who warned of the reactionary bourgeoisie in African nationalist struggles, stating that they “would support the anti-colonial movement only until it was successful, and would then seize power for itself and enslave the masses” (quoted in Nelkin 1964: 71). Nkrumah and Nyerere would soon be leaders of some of the first independent African nations and would be among the initiators of critiques of the limits of national independence and the need for broader solutions to imperial domination and (neo) colonial subordination, both invoking Pan-Africanism as the optimal path.

In 1963, a year after his country’s independence, Nyerere was already openly concerned about broader regional relations, and the global articulation of power relations: “Unity is the stone bridge which would enable us to walk in safety over this whirlpool of power politics, and enable us to carry more easily the economic and social loads which now threaten to overwhelm us” (1966: 188). In his famous essay, “The Second Scramble,” he went on: “African Nationalism is meaningless, is *anachronistic*, and is *dangerous*, if it is not at the same time Pan-Africanism” (italics my own). In this essay, Nyerere sees neo-colonialism as manifesting itself in the form of discrete and even antagonistic nationalisms *within Africa*, and proposed that the answer therefore to both the limitations of nationalism and the problems of neo-colonialism in Africa was Pan-Africanism. Only through greater unity would divisions engineered from outside be staved off, and would Pan-Africa, as an economic, political and cultural bloc, be able to contend with other regional global powers and avoid total marginalization/subordination.

In the end, although Nyerere and Nkrumah advanced important and radical new theories for understanding neo-colonialism and Pan-Africanism, and the limitations of their understandings of each informed the other. As neo-colonialism was conceptualized as too externally located, or too much in terms of internal/external dichotomy, so too the conceptualization of Pan-Africanism as a revolutionary answer to the contradictions and obstacles of neo-colonialism was also limited by a binary perception of power, both spatially/territorially and with an over-emphasis on the nation as a unit of analysis. Neither Nyerere nor Nkrumah seems to have anticipated the neo-colonial trajectory of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) as one of bourgeois co-optation and internal divisions rendering it inefficient and even counter-revolutionary. Yet, by the Seventies, the organization was already in such a state of affairs (M’buyinga 1982[1975]). More broadly,



as Césaire (1972[1955]: 57) emphatically and succinctly put it many years earlier, before the great moment of 'African independence': "the nation is a bourgeois phenomenon."

To cope with the more recent context, Pan-Africanism, together with other critiques of the nation and nationalism, must move to more penetrating analysis of its discursive opponent(s) and to new strategies of opposition to that which we are embedded in as we resist and reformulate it. Deeper understandings of colonialism and neo-colonialism, particularly of internal contradictions, internal to social movements of resistance, the minds of the colonized, the discourses contested over and around, the histories of contested memories, will all lead to reformulations of Pan-Africanism, Afro-Diasporic consciousness and resistance, as well as of the integrally related and implicated West, and its corollary identities. Ideally, an even deeper exploration of the themes and trajectories of Pan-Africanism and its relationships with corollary discourses might yield greater results.

Assessment: The Continuing Necessity of Unthinkable Social Transformations

C.L.R. James, one of the most eloquent and consistent advocates of the agency of peoples of African descent, not only in "their own" cultures, but in Western and global capitalist cultures, identified the tensions of attempting to move beyond prevailing notions in and through revolutionary activity, when he praised what he took to be the thesis of Du Bois' Black Reconstruction, "...that the Negroes *in particular* had tried to carry out ideas that went beyond the prevailing conceptions of bourgeois democracy." (1949: 189) Just as the Black reconstruction of the US south transcended bourgeois (white) notions of democracy, and the "Black Jacobins" in Santo Domingo were primary articulators of the modern notions of 'liberty, fraternity and equality' usually attributed to the French Revolution (James 1938b), so too the ideas of Nkrumah and Nyerere, representing, leading, and deriving from anticolonial struggles in Africa [and the Diaspora], attempted in many ways to critique and move beyond the prevailing forms of nationalism.

In the late Forties, after the Second World War, Pan-Africanism resounded primarily through the vehicle of anti-colonial nationalism. Before that, Pan-Africanism had rarely been accompanied by calls for national independence, although Du Bois, for example, had argued for comprehensive inclusion within existing governments of peoples of African descent (1927: 672). By the 1950s, Pan-Asiatic, Pan-Arab, Pan-Islamic, Pan-African and other pan-organizations³⁷ multiplied, for example, in the Bandung Conference. Critiques of neo-colonialism, as another aspect of the limits of nationalism, were emerging (Wright 1956: 104), and would proliferate in the Sixties and Seventies. Throughout these decades, both Nkrumah and Nyerere worked for nationalist independence, became the first leaders of their newly "free" nations, and subsequently increased their work toward transcendence of

³⁷ The proliferation of 'Pan-' movements is mentioned briefly in the introduction to Pieterse and Bhikhu (eds.), The Decolonization of Imagination: Culture, Knowledge and Power, 1995, which also places this proliferation in general at the turn of the century, suggesting to the reader so inclined that the idea of pan-national organization might be as old as the concept of 'the nation' itself.

the nation-state itself, to confront the global capitalist system through broad-based Pan-Africanism, and the transcendence of other social forms inherited from the colonial experience.

We have seen how variants of African and Pan-African socialism derived from specific 'standpoint' critiques of capitalism/imperialism, arising particularly from Black Atlantic critiques of and engagements with global conditions that often confronted the limitations of European and Eurocentered interpretations, formulas and/or organizational dictates. As global capitalist hegemony shifted between the world wars, from Great Britain to the United States, and as decolonization occurred in Asia and Africa, decolonization meant some partial economic and other losses for some European nations, while for the United States the period corresponds to its moment of ascension to power, massive expansion and "growth," played out on a global scale, including most corners of the African continent. The US actually benefited from, even while increasingly manipulating [or being manipulated by] and attempting to control, decolonization processes.

Asian countries and former colonies in the late Forties and early Fifties swept to nominal political independence, while African nations followed from the late Fifties to the mid-Seventies, corresponding to the period of US global hegemony by virtue of its displacement of formerly dominant European nations to second, third and fourth positions in the global hierarchy. Already at the Bandung Conference the emergent global social "order" of the Cold War and Superpower *détente* played out in multiple "Third World" settings was clearly emerging (Wright 1956). This periodization is particularly salient for contemporary analysis because we write and read at or near the terminus of this period, of US hegemony perhaps, and certainly of Cold War *détente*.

While the United States was at first mildly supportive of African nationalist movements, Wallerstein (1967: 245) marked 1957 as the point of change by the US into an attitude hostile to such movements, the year Ghana was the first African country 'south of the Sahara' to achieve political independence.³⁸ It is precisely 1957 that is the turning point because this was the moment of (the beginning of) the realization of national independence, and thus also the point of the beginning of the foregrounding of Pan-African unity as the next necessary step towards "real" independence. Where a rhetoric of cold war *détente* had prevailed from 1953-1960 among most African nationalists, who saw themselves as benefiting from superpower competition, the Congo Crisis in 1960 already signaled the beginning of the end of this period, which was more formally terminated after a long crisis with the 1992 fall of the Berlin Wall and the so-called "death of communism" (i.e.: the break-up of the Soviet Union).

From the point of the Congo Crisis on, with the withdrawal of Soviet support for Lumumbist forces, "US priorities shifted toward preventing the consolidation of a revolutionary movement on the African continent which might seriously affect the balance

³⁸ See note 12 above.



of forces in the world” (op. cit.). National independence, which had displaced Europe and created openings for US influence and power, was now being followed by state socialism and/or replaced by Pan-Africanism, which were perceived as potentially serious threats to US global hegemony and therefore systematically undermined and confronted, exacerbating already extant lacunae and contradictions within the disparate social movements and terrains of struggle.

Intellectual changes coupled with implications for social movements have been intertwined with political and economic transformations at a geo-political level in the past few decades. The passing of the period of nationalist independence struggles has been accompanied by a change in the conceptions and terrains of struggle; significant critiques of nationalism and its relation to other axes of power such as gender, respectability, race, sexuality, and patriarchy are changing the terrains of struggle, while critiques of neo-colonialism are increasingly resonant in most parts of the world. As Manthia Diawara articulated it:

“Many revolutions have failed, and the concept of the hero has died. We are left with ambivalent readings of Nkrumah, Sekou Toure, Nyerere, Nasser, Sankara, Amin Dada, and others. The urgent issues are no longer political independence for the African nations. We must deal with the repression of Africans by Africans in the same way that we fight Western racism, imperialism, and (neo)colonialism. The most urgent debates in African studies today concern feminism and the need for an economic base which reflects the social and cultural conditions in Africa.”
(interview in Mudimbe (ed.) 1992: 387)

The question is no longer [just] nationalism; yet the questions that spawned the deployments of nationalism during the Fifties and Sixties have not gone away, and continue to become, if anything, more serious. The ideals of Pan-Africanism espoused by Nkrumah and Nyerere at the different stages of their careers are not without relevance today. Since the Sixties and Seventies, when half the countries in Africa were non-aligned,³⁹ now every country in Africa is ensnared by debt and trapped into operating economies and governments within I.M.F. parameters.

Much in the contemporary period, often designated “post-colonial” because it is “after” the formal period of European colonialism in Africa, appears to be highly continuous from previous historical periods, particularly in the realm of economics, society and the colonial. It is therefore not surprising to find that the ideas of Nkrumah and Nyerere are still of relevance today, particularly in their efforts to chart paths out of current socio-political conditions. Both perceived clearly and early on, that nationalism in itself could not be sufficient in addressing economic and social relations within the ‘independent’ nations bequeathed by colonialism because of their links within a global imperial web of nations in which African nations have historically been accorded the most inferior positions. Without

³⁹ This is essentially a euphemism meaning they had opted out of the U.S. dominated capitalist world system, instituted/administered through the I.M.F and W.B.R.D., and generally traded with and/or received aid from Russia, China, Cuba and other non-aligned nations.

creating a large enough geo-political bloc to contest the current arrangements -- even basic things like terms of trade, rates of currency exchange, etc. -- colonial social relations [inequalities, subjectification(s)] were largely inescapable within the nation-state formation. Historically, one could argue that (nineteenth century) nationalism was used by the powerful/hegemonic to (re)codify hierarch(ies) within the world system which dated back to at least the fifteenth/sixteenth centuries, as well as to eleventh, thirteenth and other centuries in which “world” systems ran through “archipelagos” centered across today’s Asia, Africa, and the Indian Ocean rim (Abu-Lughod 1989, Arrighi 1994).⁴⁰ For both Nkrumah and Nyerere, the bloc with which to confront nineteenth century nationalism and its related [“family” of] organizations -- imperialism and shifting global hegemonic centers -- was Pan-Africanism, and this Pan-Africanism was conceived at regional, continental, and Afro-Diasporic levels.

As the world moved toward a new and as yet undefined balance of powers at the global level, some argued for a more militant Organization of African Unity and a reconstitution of Pan-Africanism (M’buyinga 1982). It remains to be seen whether the recent reconstitution of the OAU this past year will yield any new results. Forms of regionalism, federation and federalism are resurgent. In some places, social actors and political groups still search for broader answers to their problems, reaching beyond the nation state. Elsewhere nation states are collapsing. Multinational and transnational corporations work in a complex dialectic with and against core capitalist states, while the histories of numerous global Diasporas and cultural regions link broad, often overlapping parts of the world. Many of the greatest ideas and ideals of nationalism, modern subjectivity, and modernity itself emerged from the Pan-African worlds of intensive anti-colonial resistance, and it seems likely that current efforts to move beyond the nation-state may continue to benefit by drawing from the traditions of African (and Diasporic) socialism(s), Pan-Africanism, and critiques of neo-colonialism. In other words, as slaves in C. L. R. James’ reading of Caribbean history worked to formulate nationalisms on the basis of freedom and equality, more or less simultaneously a bourgeois notion of nationalism was emerging in revolutionary France. The tensions between colonial and anticolonial nationalisms as vehicles of, at one extreme, hierarchy and domination, and at the other extreme, liberation, are similarly as old as the concept of nationalism itself. I suggest that this internal tension is still at play in attempts made in our own era to move beyond the limitations of nationalism.

In considering these themes through the work and thought of these two great scholar-statesmen, it becomes clear that efforts to break away from the colonial epistemology of modernity will be limited by their frames of reference, which are already tinged by this very same world view and mode of discourse. While we can learn from the shortfalls of such

⁴⁰ Obviously, as the title of this essay suggests, there is a much different purpose behind the use of nationalism by its African and African-American exponents in the twentieth century, and the question throughout has been the tension between this liberatory purpose and the snare of the colonial foundation of the nation-state structure and global configuration.



predecessors, and can see that there were moments where they did rupture the prevailing thought structures and build exciting and unprecedented new paths in the colonial wilderness, it remains much more difficult to see our own ensnarements in the present. One of my points here has been that Nkrumah and Nyerere are usually read politically and not philosophically, and their epistemological contributions are rarely acknowledged in current Western genealogies of knowledge. One rare example of scholarship that does make this connection, grounded in African history and its power politics, is D. A. Masolo's work, African Philosophy in Search of Identity (1994). In discussing Mudimbe's seminal writings, and their attempt to decolonize Western epistemology, he formulates the following demand, and historical observation:

“How can basic African epistemological principles be integrated into already alienated modes of thinking? This demand will place Mudimbe in a position similar to that once occupied by Kwame Nkrumah and Julius Nyerere in regard to their proposals for a new political and economic order in postcolonial Africa. What Mudimbe does with *gnosis*, that is, with the creation of a new order of knowledge, cannot be fully isolated from the ideology of empowerment on which Africa has focused over the past three decades.” (189)

Masolo constructs an alternative genealogy of knowledge that emerges from anticolonial struggles and the epistemological issues these necessarily entail.

In this essay, I sought to excavate some of these issues in relation to the works of Nkrumah and Nyerere, with the understanding that they have numerous implications for the present, where our epistemological entanglements remain a central concern. We could have just as easily seen these tensions between the dominant colonial epistemology and its resisters in the works of a host of their contemporaries, such as the writer Richard Wright. St. Clair Drake and Horace Cayton indirectly pointed this out in commenting on Wright's 1945 introduction to their masterwork (1993[1945]: xlv).⁴¹ So too did Paul Gilroy (1993: 192), when he commented on Wright's Black Power (1954), where in an open letter to Nkrumah he beseeched the colonized world to make an epistemological break so they not commit the same mistakes as the West in their emergence out of tradition into modernity. Nkrumah

⁴¹ Pertinent to the relational nature of nationalism we have discussed here, they cite one of Wright's many brilliant passages:

“But the American Negro, child of the culture that crushes him, wants to be free in a way that white men are free; for him to wish otherwise would be unnatural, unthinkable. Negroes, with but minor exceptions, still believe in the hope of economic rewards; they believe in justice, liberty, integrity of the individual. In the heart of industrial America is a surviving remnant, perchance a saving remnant of a passion for freedom, a passion fanned by their national humiliation” (1945: xxv).

Out of this “national humiliation” sprung the relational and resistant Black nationalism(s) of the next three decades.

and Nyerere, in wrestling with colonial and anti-colonial nationalisms, were part of a long tradition of such engagements within Pan-African communities. Du Bois had engaged some of these issues in the US context with his discussions of “A Negro Nation Within the Nation,” (Lewis ed., 1995); as had Harry Haywood, in his *Black Bolshevik* (1978: 104n12, 109, 137, 639-640). Fanon went even further with his brilliant exposition of the hidden nature of dominant or hegemonic nationalisms, such as colonialism, and thus the radical incommensurability of anti-colonial nationalisms, so often derisively critiqued and dismissed as mere ‘primitive’ or ‘tribal’ discourse (1966: 169). My discussion of Nkrumah and Nyerere is intended to illustrate some of the deeper epistemological trends at play in the historical period they lived through. It is intended to provoke similar explorations of the period, further re-readings of Nkrumah and Nyerere, and above all else, renewed thought about how the struggles of the present are beset with similar problems. The difficulty of identifying our own epistemological limitations, let alone transcending them, remains the necessary task of scholars and revolutionaries working to end the social injustices that constitute our world today.

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