Politics of the mind and body: gender and institutional culture in African universities[1]

Teresa Barnes

The national university is a unique institution in post-colonial Africa. Regardless of the standard or volume of its output, the African university is the premier, deeply subversive symbol of the colonial-era "hewers of wood and drawers of water" actually writing, thinking and theorising for themselves.

There is an increasing literature on African higher education, matched of late by increasing international and comparative interest. This builds on a small but durable body of work from Africans and others who have examined higher education on the continent since the ending of colonial rule. As feminists looking at these works, we ask, "Who has hewn the wood, drawn the water – and who is now being paid to think? Where are the lines of power and exclusion?"

This article seeks to situate the study of gender and culture in the context of the African university. The areas of convergence in the literature on gender, organisational culture, organisational management, post-colonial political history and educational theory have, largely, been neither described or theorised. The subject of gender and institutional culture in African higher education remains largely unmapped – and a fruitful target of enquiry.

Colonialism transmitted the traditional European distinctions between labour of the mind and labour of the body directly to Africa. The identification of men and masculinity with the labour of the mind and of women and femininity with that of the body, was also transmitted to Africa, along with the senates, the vice-chancellors, the graduation robes, the funny flat hats and the rituals of examination. To Africa was transmitted the idea that learning is a combative and aggressive process; that the worthy candidate is one who survives attackers and bests his foes, and that the experience of intellectual combat is intrinsic to intellectual life and production. Full professors are expected to make seminal contributions, and in return generally expect to be approached on bended knee. Universities are transnational institutions, and a

professor from Cape Town can find a familiar home at Oxford or Melbourne or Tubingen or Delhi or Utrecht or Michigan State.

Politics of the mind: Four decades of higher education in Africa

African universities have faced distinct sets of challenges over the decades since the late 1950s. Initially, the preoccupations concerned the quality of the relationship with the metropolitan/colonial universities, which had often played a role in setting up satellite campuses in the colonies. Then, African universities began to consider the issues of Africanisation/indigenisation, and the turning of their lenses away from needs and preoccupations of the metropole – in terms of staffing and curriculum – and towards those of their own societies (Cooper, 2002). As Yesufu observed in 1972:

> Apart from Fourah Bay College, which was founded in 1827, and the University of Cairo (1910), the development of universities in Africa has essentially been contemporaneous with the continental evolution towards emancipation from colonial rule. The vast majority of the 50–60 or more university institutions which exist today are less than fifteen years old . . . . The explosion in university development since the 1960s reflects, in large measure, the African awareness of the need for a solid intellectual base for the consolidation of Independence, as well as a means to meet the overwhelming requirements for high-level manpower (Yesufu, 1972).

However, these changes were agonisingly slow in many cases. As Ngugi wa Thiongo (1993: 6) recalled of his undergraduate days in the early 1960s:

> The English department at Makerere . . . was probably typical of all English departments in Europe or Africa at the time. It studied English writing of the British isles from the times of Chaucer, Spenser and Shakespeare up to the twentieth century of T.S. Eliot, James Joyce and Wilfred Owen.

Debates about the Africanisation of university curriculum and staffing dominated discussions about university transformation through the early 1970s (Crossman, 2004). As the decade wore on, however, and into the 1980s, increasingly most universities were simply concerned with aspects of survival in an era of social instability and International Monetary Fund/World Bank-inspired cuts in public spending, which resulted in a severe brain drain throughout the continent. In addition, university staff often found themselves at odds with the state, even in countries such as Tanzania, where militarism and its violent excesses did not take root:

> Between 1970 and 1980, two TANU [Tanzanian African National Union] party stalwarts in succession were appointed as Vice-Chancellors, and the party treated the university as one of its wings. In that decade, the university became a battleground, with a serious of violations of academic freedom . . . . The biggest crisis of that decade came in 1978, triggered by the dismissal and "retirement in the public interest" of six members of staff, who were picked for their own leftist teaching and research, as sacrificial lambs and also as an example to other academic staff on what would happen should they not toe the line (Yahyua-Othman, 2000: 31-32).

The 1990s were years in which universities struggled to reorient themselves towards developmental goals, enrolments boomed, and African academics debated where their primary loyalties lay. With their disciplines? Their institutions? With national leadership? With notions of truth, or with students? Or simply with their own paychecks and bank accounts? Thus, according to Lebeau and Ogunsanya (2000: vi):

> The African public university is no longer the breeding ground of the elite, as was the case during and immediately after the colonial period. Rather, its prestigious position has been progressively eroded by rapid population growth, and increased access to secondary school education, and by a decline in the socio-economic value of the certificate. Compounding this situation, education in Africa has witnessed a severe decrease in funding (resulting from extended economic stagnation on the continent), a standard depreciation and weak personnel management as a result of constant misdirected intrusions of the military and/or "one party" post-colonial governments into academic affairs...the dilemma of the African university is quite clear: either the academic community reacts through innovations that will justify its presence in the restructured higher education landscape, or the brain drain will continue and these public institutions will be relegated to the training of second-class citizens by equally marginalised lecturers.

According to Mama (2003: 11), African intellectuals in the 21st century now find themselves on a knife-edge:

> If Africa's intellectuals initially identified with the goals of regional and national development and committed themselves to an ethic of regional pride and social responsibility towards Africa's diverse people, then we have seen how this kind of intellectual identity has become

more precarious over the years, how it has been increasingly deprived of institutional support. Critical thinkers have been driven out of African universities, often by colleagues who defined their responsibility as obedient service to government, no matter how distant from popular interests government had become.

Operating amidst these agonising internal dynamics, African universities find themselves in a dual spotlight of renewed international interest, and a resurgent interest on the continent in vibrant national institutions (either substantively or as showcases of national development). Internationally, the discourse and funding for efficiency in institutional operation has taken the place of the earlier disdain for Africa's universities and the focus on primary education by international donor agencies. Having survived the lean years, these institutions are, ironically, now facing the spread of the global, multifaceted tidal wave of tariff reduction and free trade, which seeks to reduce the power that national governments have over "their own" higher education institutions and systems. This push is likely to be resisted by African governments, loathe to loosen their grip on education, training and intellectual production within their own borders.

Feminism in the African academy: walking a thin line

In South Africa, the apartheid state initially (and briefly) acquiesced to the development of the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) in the late 1960s, because it was perceived as a group dedicated to separate racial development. When it became clear in the 1970s that liberation, rather than separation was the goal of the BCM, the state quickly changed tack and crushed the movement in both its organisational and individual forms. Feminist epistemologies in Africa may be on a similar trajectory. African feminists have done the groundwork examining the lives of women on the continent – first proposed in the nation-building spirit. They began with quantitative studies that clearly and conclusively demonstrate that there are fewer girl students in school, that there are many more male students than female at tertiary level, and that women students are congregated in the lowest-status fields. Women in the professional ranks are similarly clustered in the lowest categories and there are few women professors in the African academy. All this data, based on sound research and widely disseminated has been available for at least the past ten years.

The development of a women's and gender studies curricula in Africa has developed from a realisation that the intellectual excitement of re-examining and transforming scholarship from a gendered perspective is widely shared, but

it must be given roots in the African academy. Thus there are a growing number of gender studies programs in Africa.[2] Although links are being made between them, and important work is being done, the male and female feminists who staff and defend these programs know that they are on uncertain terrain: thus the "restore, reform but do not transform" of Mama's recent article on gendered scholarship in Africa (Mama, 2003). The transformative potential of feminist scholarship and networking can be perceived as a threat to the status quo. Thus, as activists, feminists who carry the results and implications of their academic work on gender inequalities into the public domain can make themselves targets of vicious verbal and even violent physical attack (Tamale and Oloka-Onyango; Phiri in Sall, 2000). In this way, feminist scholarship can be a threatened, hazardous place to call home.

That said, there is space to examine the institutional and organisational structures which perpetuate and reproduce gendered inequality in African universities – and to investigate the structures and practices which challenge and confront those inequalities.

Gender, nationalism and higher education

Scholarship has demonstrated that a crucial aspect of the colonial project was the feminisation of African "maleness." Thus, post-colonialism has been marked by a search for a "new man" (Lindsey and Miescher, 2003). This examination of institutional culture of African universities starts from the dynamic premise that these institutions have been places "of the new-men for the new-men." In this way, African universities should not be seen as static, gender-neutral spaces to which women have been benignly and invisibly added. Rather, these spaces and places are intricately marked with codes for man-as-thinker, man-as-aggressive-debater, man-as-athlete, boys-becoming-men, etc. The addition of women to this men's club is thus not only a statistical, but also an extremely meaningful social and symbolic exercise – which is by its very nature, dynamic, challenging, and likely conflictual. It cannot be a coincidence that the dominant position of men remains a quantitative fact of life in African higher education. As of 1999, in Africa's 400 public and private universities, "more than 90 percent of their staff, 80 percent of their teachers and 75 percent of their students are men" (Otunga and Ojwang, 2003).

To the extent that the project of regaining "the nation" (in some post-colonies) or fashioning it anew (in others) was deeply woven with concepts of wresting indigenous masculinity away from demeaning colonial social

engineering projects, the university has been a prime site of struggle over meanings of nation and gender in a new age.

In Zimbabwe, for example, the University of the Rhodesias and Nyasaland (in the Federal period) and later the University of Rhodesia, was a kind of conceptual linchpin in the nationalist struggle. Resistance was conceptualised there. In the early 1960s, African students who could not gain admittance were recruited into the struggle on their way abroad to other universities; in later years, lecturers and students left the university to join the liberation struggle. The first minister of education in independent Zimbabwe, Dzingai Mutumbuka, was one such lecturer, as was Fay Chung[3] (Ranger, 1981; Chung, 1995). The process of Africanising the teaching staff of the university proceeded under Walter Kamba, vice-chancellor from 1981 to 1988 (see also Gaidzanwa in this volume). Attention to gender disparities and inequalities at the university only began to surface from the late 1980s, due to the pioneering work of women academics (generally around 20% of the academic staff) (Gaidzanwa, 2001).

As mentioned above, there are many valuable studies on African women's access to, and participation in higher education (Bloch, 1998; Kwsiga, 2002; Karega, 2001; Mboya, 2001; Masanja, 2001a; Masanja, 2001b; Nawe, 2003). These studies demonstrate conclusively that access to higher education has been an important vehicle for women's social and economic mobility, and they have seized opportunities with both hands (Mama, 2003). Yet, women students are concentrated in the social rather than natural sciences, and the African professoriate remains overwhelmingly male, as do the ranks of administrators and managers (Rathgeber, 2003). Numerous strategies and policies have been proposed to address these shortcomings.

As useful as this largely quantitative literature is, however, it does not generally address the question: what are the internal institutional mechanisms which have generated and perpetuated personal/professional identities and practices of gendered inequality?

From citizen to consumer?

The overriding impetus of the nationalist project was to bring African people into the ambit of citizenship, into a position of rights and responsibilities within the organs of the post-colonial state. The university was a premier site of production of an informed, critical and participating citizenry. However, increasing evidence from several directions suggests that this goal is increasingly being bypassed. First, theorists of managerialism in higher education point to

the ways in which the current tidal waves of neoliberal policies restrict access to university education to those who can pay fees (Pithouse, 2006). Secondly, the impact of the market has reached far into the internal curricular workings of universities, such that business priorities are dictating research and teaching agendas. Writing about the US academy, Mohanty asks,

> How does one theorise capitalist citizenship? And how is the university implicated in engendering this kind of citizenship? . . . If the market provides the ethical and moral framework for university life, educators and students exercise choices as consumers in a marketplace, not as citizens in a democratic polity. This is a dessicated version of democratic politics where "free choice" in the market is available only to those with economic capacities. Private sector decision-making is private – citizens have no rights to discuss and make policy. Thus, wealth determines citizenship. Instead of people governing, markets govern – it is not citizens who make decisions, it is consumers. So those who lack economic capacities are non-citizens. This results in a profound recolonization of historically marginalised communities, usually poor women and people of color (Mohanty, 2003: 182-183).

This idea is extremely suggestive when applied to the context of African universities, where the epistemological foundations were almost always of colonial origins, and nationalist transformations may not have had time to anchor before the onslaught of structural adjustment (Federiciet al., 2000). In addition, many African universities have had to survive years if not decades of civil and/or international strife. Such pressures may have had two conflicting sets of results: truncated or stunted growth, or the development of a certain expertise in keeping the ship afloat through innovative, albeit jury-rigged, solutions.

In terms of gender relations, Okeke writes that women in Africa are still struggling to be accepted as citizens, let alone practising and enjoying the rights of citizenship (Okeke, 2003). In the current global climate, African women's movements which are seeking participation in nation-building processes and activities are, in some instances, actually losing ground.

Politics of the body: identifying gendered dynamics at institutional level

Women academics: squeezed by macropolitics, belittled in micropolitics

The literature that exists suggests that gaining an academic position in an African university is challenging for women, and that maintaining it is even more difficult. Economic structural adjustment programs and military disruptions have had the most devastating impact on Africa's women. They have thus been squeezed by macropolitical forces over which they have little or no direct control. This has been matched by a lack of respect demonstrated to them in what Morley and others have termed micropolitics – the "subtext of organisational life in which conflicts, tensions, resentments, competing interests and power imbalances influence everyday transactions in institutions" (Morley, 1999).

These dual pressures make the achievements of Africa's women academics even more remarkable. For example, Molara Ogundipe recalls her experiences in the Nigerian academy:

> Most men do not like women concerned with social transformations that shake the roots of their male dominance. As a colleague of mine said to me at Ibadan University, "No man wants a revolution in his kitchen." This was in the eighties, and a female college professor's space was still considered to be the kitchen . . . . When I began talking and writing feminism in the late sixties and seventies, I was seen as a good and admirable girl who had gone astray, a woman "whose head has been spoilt by too much learning" (Lewis and Ogundipe, 2002).

Despite the prevalence of these attitudes, Ogundipe reported that she was able to put some feminist ideas into practice at the new Ogun State University in the 1980s, around issues of sexual harassment and improving women's conditions of service (Lewis and Ogundipe, 2002).

Academic women can find that their family ties pursue them into the academy, as reported by this woman at a rural South African institution.

> Sometimes you find that I am here working with people who are friends with my father. Instead of talking to me as a professional, they will go home to my father and say, "talk to your daughter. She is not behaving well. She is rude to me." So you find that people who have no business interfering with your work come to you and say, "Professor so-and-so says you are rude to him. You must be careful how you talk to him." Now

> I have to explain myself. With us women, we have to explain ourselves all the time. Otherwise our professional actions are misinterpreted (Mabokela, 2003).

Or, the maintenance of family life is considered to be something that is only the concern of female academics.

> . . . my husband had difficult times at [the University of] Ibadan, there was a lot of politics in their Department. He decided he wanted to go to Lagos, so he got a job in Lagos, they gave him a Chair there and all that . . . And I was in quandary [about] what to do, whether I should go to Lagos or not. You know, it was a good opportunity to stay in Ibadan . . . there were a lot of vacancies and I think people were being promoted, the opportunities were greater. I had difficulty deciding so I spoke to one or two colleagues whom I respected. One of them, whom I respected very much, he is a man, he said, "Look, I can't advise you. If you want a career, you can stay here but if you care for your family, you go to Lagos, but it's your decision." And [he] left me standing there like that, you know (laughs). So in the end I said, "Well I have three boys and I think they need their father as much as their mother," so . . . I went to Lagos (Pereira, nd).

Pereira has also identified some of the micropolitical behaviours that are used at various times by various parties to marginalise women in the academy: "jokes, snide remarks, insinuations, comments in class to students, comments in the office of the dean/head of department/other, comments on the faculty board, comments in the staff club, laughter when women speak e.g. at meetings, selective monitoring of female (but not male) academics by heads of departments." When women speak at meetings or academic fora, the following behaviours can be used to get similar messages across: "heckling, continual background noise/movement during a woman's presentation, men begin to leave when women are scheduled to speak, irrelevant questions asked at the end, advice offered that implies the woman lacks experience/basic understanding etc." (Pereira, nd)

Masculinist practices and male academics:
getting most of the airtime

Academics hold seminars and they know that some are to be feared: where discussants and commentators quickly and unerringly go for the jugular. In these situations, participants are supposed to expect their thrusts to be confidently parried, for a satisfying combat to ensue and the whole matter to

be wrapped up amicably with a cup of tea after the seminar. This boxer-like eagerness to strike telling intellectual blows and land the knock-out punch can certainly be seen at universities throughout South Africa.

This is an example of the way that higher education has been and continues to be constructed as a masculinist process – one that privileges confrontation, and the strong, dismembering the weak. There are, of course other methods of teaching and learning, disseminating research results, and examination. For example, external examiners could give their comments and feedback before the final copy of a master's thesis is submitted so that the final product could embody more of a sense of consensus. But such an idea, although it might assist the writer of the thesis in the learning process, would never fly. Intrinsic to the culture of modern higher education is the figure of the examination candidate, a lone individual on a hill, waiting to be beset by his detractors and pursuers. Should he prevail and beat them all back, he is worthy of a degree. Should he not prevail, he fails and simply becomes a bad throughput statistic.

Thus, institutional cultures in modern, Western, African/South African universities maintain the ability to produce and reproduce ways of knowing that privilege certain kinds of maleness, and sideline and marginalise other ways of knowing and of knowledge production.

In South Africa, for example, two of the most celebrated and meaningful confrontations over the transformation of the academy involved competing versions and visions of racialised male power: the "Makgoba Affair" (regarding management) at Wits University in 1994-95, and the "Mamdani Affair" (regarding curriculum) at the University of Cape Town shortly thereafter. Neither of these conflicts was formally described in gendered terms but it is striking that both involved bitter, gladiatorial struggles between black and white men over vital aspects of institutional change. Although repeatedly referenced as struggles over racial transformation, these two "affairs" could also be seen as struggles between competing racialised masculinities. They share, for example, common aspects with the following description of R. Kanter's study of the ways that particular manifestations of racialised and gendered power are generally privileged in corporate organisational management.

> . . . certain male managers are selected according to their ability to display appropriate social credentials . . . because they are perceived to be more reliable, committed and predictable, free from conflicting loyalties between home and work. In the latter case [Kanter] argues that the extensive pressures on managers to conform to corporate expectations

and demands can exclude not only women, but also many men. The typical profile of managers, she argues, is 'invariably white and male, with a certain shiny, clean-cut look' (Collinson and Hearn, 2000).

In the Wits and UCT "affairs", black men hired by white men were quickly perceived as not fitting into the traditional cultures of the institutions. For example, Professor Malegapuru Makgoba chose to wear formal, Africanist attire for his first Senate meeting as the new deputy Vice-Chancellor at Wits: full Arab dress. It is likely that the subsequent dismay expressed by Professor Robert Charlton was rooted in concepts of acceptable and unacceptable masculinities in this institutional context. Similarly, Professor Mahmood Mamdani's justified outrage at having his curricula overruled by a faculty committee (made up of institutional insiders) had gendered elements: as noted above, professors are considered to be figures of authority in a distinctly masculine register. Professor Mamdani, on the other hand, felt that his rightful authority had been disregarded; to paraphrase, treated like a boy rather than a man (Makgoba, 1997; Mamdani, 1998).

Abusive body politics: sexual harassment and sexual violence

The contests around gender in the African university do not only involve management, curricular and pedagogical issues. Sadly, they also involve the bodily expressions of inequitable power relations. Attention is increasingly being paid to the prevalence of sexual harassment and gender-based violence on African campuses. In 1994, Hallam suggested that there was "an almost endemic problem of gendered hostility towards women and girl students and in higher education, towards women staff" in African institutions (Hallam, 2001). These odious practices work to silence individual woman in particular, and intimidate women in general. They are absolutely antithetical to the ideal of the university as a collegial community of aspiring and credentialed scholars. Yet the practices persist. As Bennett notes in relation to universities in Southern Africa:

> Sexual harassment within higher education presents a particular threat to the redevelopment of human resources that have been depleted by decades of restricted entry to educational opportunity (the kind of educational opportunity on which access to professional employment tends to depend). The profile of sexually harassing behaviour may differ from one institution to another, but the existence of any form of sexual violence on campus creates a climate in which women routinely have to

> fight harder for their right to the diplomas, degrees, and job opportunities that offer them the change of a professional future. At the same time, the prevalence of sexually abusive behaviour...may deepen the divide between men and women on [a] campus (Bennett, 2002: 4).[4]

Obviously, of course harassment also affects the ability of women students to succeed in their studies, as noted by Ndlovu,

> One lecturer in the arts, with a reputation for threatening female students who turned down his proposals, is alleged to have said to one of his victims, 'Girl, your future depends entirely upon what I decide and you shall regret why you ever made the decision' (to turn down his sexual advances). The female student . . . explained that such victims have had to withdraw from active participation in lectures as a measure of self-preservation (Ndlovu, 2001: 73).

Perhaps the most infamous case of sexual harassment in African higher education involved the heckling of a female student at the University of Dar es Salaam to such an extent that it was generally accepted as the reason that she committed suicide (Sall: 2003). Acts of direct physical violence – rape and assault – are also, sadly, far from unknown (Bennett, 2002; Pereira, nd).[5]

Research gaps regarding gender and institutional culture in African universities

Thus, some of the background pieces of the puzzle of gender and institutional culture in African universities are:

- African men were admitted to, and became professional staff in African universities in far greater numbers and much earlier than African women, who are relatively recent arrivals on the scene (at least in terms of quantitative parity).
- Varied expressions of the importance of the gendered post-colonial project of regaining or re-imagining manhood in the former colonies.
- Resistance, if not hostility, to changing the norms of the university club-like atmosphere to accommodate the perspectives, experiences and needs of women as students and staff.
- The ever-present possibility of institutional leadership forming an alliance with the state and its organs (in some countries the police; in others, the media – or both) to discipline "unruly" women students or staff at the university over issues which seemingly threaten patriarchal control or symbols of patriarchal control.

- The multiple burdens of women students and staff, who have both their teaching/learning/professional lives, and the logistics of their family lives to manage.
- The constricting influence of the ideologies and policies of international institutions such as the World Bank on national freedoms such as the expansion of educational provision, salaries, benefits, employment flexibility, etc. These pressures are referred to as globalisation(al) in some of the literature.
- Academic life is an area into which African women have moved enthusiastically.
- Women in the African academy have been developing strategies such as international networking to identify and cope with changing national dynamics.
- The relationship between professionalism and gender in the African setting remains under-theorised.

Taken together, these factors begin to indicate ways in which the African university is a gendered space for the production of knowledge which privileges not only masculinist power, but certain kinds of masculinist power over others. However, there are as yet many questions which urgently cry out for research around the qualitative intersections of gender, culture, and higher education institutions.

Firstly, for example, there is a small but interesting literature on organisational development, which compares management strategies cross-culturally. Does it offer any useful insights about male managers in African settings? Similarly, given that the vast majority of administrators and managers in African universities have been male, what do we know about their perspectives on gender and institutional development? Specifically, as universities moved from colonial/metropolitan to nationalist control, what messages/discourses were passed from one generation of male managers to the next?

In terms of the situations of women academics in Africa, does the "glass ceiling" metaphor speak to their experiences? Have they reacted differently to the disintegration of national economies under regimes such as structural adjustment than have male academics – i.e. do they, or are they able to find other work outside their formal workplaces in order to make ends meet as economies disintegrate underneath them? Are there "femocrats" (feminine + bureaucrats) (Currie, 2002) in African universities and if so, do they contribute to the achievement of greater gender equity?

At the nexus of the personal and the professional, how much childcare do African male and female academics do? How are family needs understood, met, experienced in this setting?

Finally, in terms of gender, sexuality and overall institutional culture in national political economies, there are many questions which need to be asked. Does the concept of a "sexual economy" (sexual favours traded for academic services) have resonance on particular campuses? Are non-heterosexual voices heard, bodies seen, and affirmed, on campuses? Further, Bennett has suggested that higher education in Africa is a prime site for the performance of heterosexuality "as a major route into resources, stability, identity and citizenship." How are these dynamics and pressures institutionalised in the African university setting? What are the formal and informal policies on and reactions to gender-based violence? How do severe national economic and political crises, and ubiquitous budget cuts impact on the already precarious positions of academic staff and students and the search for transformative knowledge? Have the post-colonial poor now been effectively barred from universities by neoliberal fee requirements? Is it true, as Lebeau and Ogunsanya (2000) have suggested, that under all these pressures African men and women must now be resigned to only receiving and reproducing second- or third-class "higher" educations?

Conclusion

Above all, the university provides the individual with the capacity to seek after the truth and to discriminate between truth and falsehood. A major component of this educational process is to stimulate the student's capacity to be critical in the face of all of life's trials. A university graduate who is merely endowed with certain practical skills and knowledge, but who lacks the ability to be critical, to seek after the truth and to follow the truth irrespective of the consequences to his person, is ultimately an enemy of the society which he purports to serve (Eastern and Southern African Universities Research Programme, 1987: 15).

For the better part of the past fifty years, the African academy has recognised (if not always responded with alacrity to) the need to transform the composition of academic and management staff, students, and curricular content: most often in terms of race (Mabokela and King, 2001; Mabokela, 2000). In this effort, the development of new epistemological methods and models rooted in Africa's rich histories and sociologies, have been vital conceptual tools. The

ideal search for truth, as described above, was optimistically and hopefully categorised as congruent with making a new, first-class citizenry in the early nationalist project. Arguably, the transformative impulse survives at least in nooks and crannies even in repressive states where university life has been re-oriented towards political quiescence and sycophancy, as we are now seeing in Zimbabwe.

Overall, however, much less attention has been paid to transforming the structures and practices which actively discriminate against women in the academy, and which reproduce combative and exclusionary intellectualisms. Although African women have gained important handholds in the academy, and many have made impressive achievements, they remain a marginalised minority, soaking up the pressings of the sour fruits of inequality.

More introspection, research and activism are required to put additional flesh on the existing theoretical and descriptive bones of this situation, so that new generations of academics in Africa can conceptualise and participate in fuller, and more meaningful transformative institutional policies and practices. The challenges of confronting varied waves of global pressures, exacerbate the difficulties of such a mission. In the meantime, the literature suggests that on African campuses, a "chilly climate for women students" (Ndlovu, 2001), the marginalisation of women administrators and scholars (Mabokela, 2003), and the institutional privileging of their male counterparts and of masculinist expectations and practices – all continue to be the norm.

References

Bennett, Jane. 2002. *Southern African Higher Educational Institutions Challenging Sexual Violence/Sexual Harassment: A Handbook of Resources.* Cape Town: African Gender Institute.

Bennett, Jane. 2002. "Exploration of a 'Gap': Strategising Gender Equity in African Universities", *Feminist Africa* 1.

Bloch, Marianne et al. eds. 1998. *Women and Education in Sub-Saharan Africa: Power, Opportunities and Constraints.* Boulder: Lynne Rienner.

Chung, Fay. 1995. "Education and the Liberation Struggle," in Ranger, T. and Bhebe, N. eds. *Society in Zimbabwe's Liberation War 2.* Harare: University of Zimbabwe Publications.

Collinson, David and Hearn, Jeff. 2000. "Critical Studies on Men, Masculinities and Managements", in Davidson, M and Burke, R. eds. *Women in Management: Current Research Issues 2.* London: Sage.

Cooper, Frederick. 2002. *Africa Since 1940: The Past of the present.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Crossman, Peter. 2000. "Perceptions of 'Africanisation' or 'endogenisation' at African universities: issues and recommendations", in Zeleza, P.T. and Olukoshi, A. eds. *African Universities in the Twenty-First Century II.* Dakar: Codesria.

Currie, Jan et al. 2002. *Gendered Universities in Globalized Economies: Power, careers, and sacrifices.* Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.

Eastern & Southern African Universities Research Programme. 1987. *University Capacity in Eastern & Southern African Countries.* London: James Currey.

Federici, Silvia et al. 2000. *A Thousand Flowers: Social struggles against structural adjustment in African universities.* Trenton: Africa World Press.

Gaidzanwa, Rudo. 2000. "Academic Careers and women at the University of Zimbabwe." Paper presented at Conference on Gender Equity, Democracy and Human rights, University of Zimbabwe.

Gaidzanwa, Rudo. 2001. "Gender issues at the University of Zimbabwe: An Introduction," in Gaidzanwa, R. ed. *Speaking for ourselves: masculinities and femininities amongst students at the University of Zimbabwe.* Harare: University of Zimbabwe Affirmative Action Project.

Hallam, R. 2002. "Crimes without punishment: sexual Harassment and violence against female students in schools and universities in Africa" (African Rights Discussion Paper 4), cited in Jane Bennett, "Exploration of a 'gap': Strategising Gender Equity in African Universities", *Feminist Africa* 1.

Karega, R. 2001. "Higher Education: Statistical Overview on Girls' Education at the University Level." FAWE.

Kwesiga, Joy. 2002. *Women's Access to Higher Education in Africa: Uganda's Experience.* Kampala: Fountain Publishers.

Lewis, Desiree. 2002. "In conversation with Molara Ogundipe", *Feminist Africa* 1.

Lebeau, Yann and Ogunsanya, Mobolaji eds. 2000. *The Dilemma of Post-Colonial Universities: Elite Formation and the restructuring of Higher Education in sub-Saharan Africa.* Ibadan: IFRA/African BookBuilders.

Mabokela, Reitumetse. 2003. "Donkeys of the university: organizational culture and its impact on South African women administrators", *Higher Education* 46.

Mabokela, Reitumetse and King, Kimberly. 2001. *Apartheid No More: Case Studies of Southern African Universities in the process of transformation.* Westport: Bergin & Garvey.

Mabokela, Reitumetse. 2000. *Voices of Conflict: Desegregating South African Universities.* NY: Routledge Falmer.

Makgoba, M.W. 1997. *Mokoko: The Makgoba Affair, a reflection on transformation.* Florida Hills: Vivlia.

Mama, A. 2003. "Restore, Reform, but do not Transform: the Gender Politics of Higher Education in Africa", *Journal of Higher Education in Africa* 1(1).

Mamdani, Mahmood. 1998. "Teaching Africa at the post-apartheid University of Cape Town", *Social Dynamics* 24(2).

Masanja, V. 2001. "Structural Changes and Equal Opportunity for All: A Case Study of the University of Dar es Salaam", FAWE.

Masanja, Verdiana et al. 2001. "Female Participation in African Universities: Issues of Concern and Possible Action". Paper presented by FAWE to AAU.

Mboya, M. 2001. "Gender Sensitive Qualitative Data: Sample Collection Instrument for African Universities". FAWE.

Mohanty, Chandra. 2003. *Feminism without borders: decolonizing theory, practicing solidarity.* Durham: Duke University Press.

Morley, Louise. 1999. *Organising Feminisms: The Micropolitics of the Academy.* New York: St. Martin's Press.

Nawe, Julita. 2003. "Strategies for enhancing female participation at the University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania," in Zeleza, P. and Olukoshi, A. eds. *African Universities in the Twenty-First Century II.* Dakar: Codesria.

Ndlovu, S. 2001. "Femininities amongst resident female students at the University of Zimbabwe", in Gaidzanwa, R. ed. *Speaking for Ourselves: Masculinities and Femininities amongst students at the University of Zimbabwe.* Harare: University of Zimbabwe Affirmative Action Project.

Okeke, Philomena. 2003. "Higher Education for Africa's women: partners with or cheerleaders for men?" in Zeleza, P. and Olukoshi, A. eds. *African Universities in the Twenty-First Century II.* Dakar: Codesria.

Othman, Saida Yahaya. 2000. "Tanzania: Engendering Academic Freedom", in Sall, E. ed. *Women in Academia: Gender and Academic Freedom in Africa.* Dakar: Codesria.

Otunga, Ruth and Ojwang, M. 2003. "Women and leadership positions in higher education: A study of Kenyan universities", in Zeleza, P. and Olukoshi, A. eds. *African Universities in the Twenty-First Century II.* Dakar: Codesria.

Pereira, Charmaine. Undated. "Beneath the surface: Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence in Secondary and Higher Education in Africa", unpublished manuscript.

Pereira, Charmaine. Undated. "A Gender Analysis of the Nigerian University System", unpublished manuscript.

Pithouse, Richard. 2006. *Asinamali: University Struggles in Post-apartheid South Africa.* Trenton: Africa World Press.

Ranger, Terence. 1981. "Towards a radical practice of academic freedom: the experience of east and central Africa: The 22nd TB Davie Memorial Lecture". Lecture at the University of Cape Town.

Rathgeber, Eva. 2003. "Women in universities and university-educated women: the current situation in Africa", in Teferra, D. and Altbach, P. eds. *African Higher Education: An International Reference Handbook.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Sall, Ebrima. ed. 2000. *Women in Academia: Gender and Academic Freedom in Africa.* Dakar: Codesria.

wa Thiongo, Ngugi. 1993. *Moving the Centre: the struggle for cultural freedoms.* Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers.

Williams, Grace Alele. 1993. "Women in Higher Education Management: The Nigerian Context," in *Women in Higher Education Management.* Paris: UNESCO.

Yesufu, T.M. ed. 1973. *Creating the African University: Emerging Issues in the 1970s.* Ibadan and AAU: Oxford University Press.

Zeleza, P.T and Olukoshi, A. eds. 2003. *African Universities in the Twenty-First Century II.* Dakar: Codesria.

Endnotes

1   A version of this article was presented at the South African Association for Research and Development in Higher Education conference at the University of KwaZulu/Natal in June 2005.

2   See the Gender and Women's Studies website maintained by the African Gender Institute at the University of Cape Town.

3   Interviewed in this volume.

4   See also Nomcebo Simelane. 2001. Sexual Harassment: A Case Study of the University of Natal, South Africa. South Africa: Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE). Available at www.fawe.org.

5   See also "Soyinka wants Nigerian Universities Closed," Panafrican News Agency, 22 August 1999. (http://allafrica.com/stories/199908220041.html, 2005-02-10).

Teresa Barnes is an Associate Professor in the History Department at the University of the Western Cape in Cape Town, South Africa. Her research and publications are in the fields of Zimbabwean labour history, gender studies and higher education studies. She was the senior researcher on the Gender and Institutional Culture in African Universities Project.