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A Blank Promissory Note: Ethics of Critical Black and African Research and Mental Health

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Abstract. This paper looks at the ways in which Black people's survival with mental health has been made real through the everyday research processes and practices. The article pays attention to the ways in which research has reproduced forms of oppression that continue to affect the mental health among Black people. Questions of numerical understanding of Black people's values and histories is core forms of colonial processes that continue to affect Black communities in new and unique ways. In that regard, this paper looks at the ways in which research can be done in ways that are ethical and relational to help bring forth substantive changes to Black communities.

Keywords: Blackness, Black, African, Ethics, Mental Health, Addictions.

Introduction

Discursive practices are characterized by the demarcation of a field of objects, by the definition of a legitimate perspective for a subject of knowledge, by setting of norms for elaborating concepts and theories. Hence, each of them presupposes a play of prescriptions that govern exclusions and selections (p. 11, Foucault, 1994).

the project of maintaining its power domestically and globally, rely on an ethic that is violent and unjust. It is an ethic that requires rational justifications for who lives, who dies, and who makes these decisions and for exclusionary or colorblind notions of justice—all of which are at the heart of bioethics. (p.57 Overstreet, 2022)

This paper attempts to envisage and navigate ways in which we can uphold and make real critical Black ethics (Overstreet, 2022) as a necessary requirement in knowledge production, capacity building, policy making and practice with Black communities facing mental health and addiction issues (Solanki, et al 2023). Though Solanki et al 2023 features the experiences of Black mental health service users in Britain, this paper takes up that Black ethics orientation to argue for a Black and African based research that pays attention to Black people's realities, histories and values in ways that allow Black mental health service users to speak in ways that are not only acknowledged but rather ethically and critically Black. The paper locates Black people's survival with mental health from a place of history whereby Black and African people are marked as instinctual beings who are yet to be emotional and as such marked out of the mental health categories and metrics. The argument that Black and Africa are instinctual beings help map them as not living but rather animals whose existence cannot be given an account within the dominant mental health and addiction discourse. Such forms of erasure have material and symbolic consequences on the social existence of Black and African people living with mental health and addiction. Black people have overtime been marked as violent and dangerous. Such marking is compounded at the intersection of mental health and justice/police system whereby violent death has been visited on Black people. The death of Andrew Loku is still fresh on the mind of most Canadians where an African man who was suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder was murdered by police officers (Ghebreslassie, 2017-C.B.C News). The lawyer representing the family claimed that what led the police officer to kill Loku was no other than fear and panic of a Black man holding a hammer. It was argued that care rather than Black phobia could have helped keep Loku alive. When the officer who fired the shot was asked why he chose to do so, his claim was that he feared for his death. Butler has discussed at length the issue of phantasmagoria and the death of Black men in the United States of America and asked relevant questions in terms of what makes a police officer open fire on a Black man. Butler (2020) says:

The police person who decides to shoot, or who simply finds himself shooting, may or may not be deliberating; but it surely seems that a phantasm has seized upon that thought process, inverting the figures and the movements he sees to justify in advance any lethal action he may take. The violence that the policeman is about to do, the violence he then commits, has already moved toward him in a figure, a racialized ghost, condensing and inverting his own aggression, wielding his own aggression against himself, acting in advance of his own plans to act, and legitimating and elaborating, as if in a dream, his later argument of self-defense.p.85

Their explanation on racial phantasmagoria could help set the pace into the ways in which anti-Black racism acts as a psychic elaboration, deliberation and justification of death dealing on black men.

This is a pointer to existing anti-Black racism within the justice and mental health sector, and for which necessary steps in research must be taken into consideration. Available research does point to the ways in which Black and African bodies are disproportionately labeled as schizophrenic. Following the death of Loku, calls for a race-based data has been a topic of concern more so when it comes to ways in which to work with Black people who face mental health challenges. This paper seeks to go beyond the current performative perspective in participatory action research; that seems to be grounded on cultural competency and reconciliation to start opening spaces that go beyond neoliberal reconciliation of people's lives. Research that informs mental health services has been rationalized and generalized in ways and are white centric and heteronormative and whose aim is to evict Black communities from the space that are meant to heal them. To make the claim that spaces that are white and heteronormative are not safe for Black people is to lament that such spaces are not geared towards sustaining Black life but rather help in essentializing whiteness as the quintessential saviors of Black people. Such a claim maintains the fact that mental health and addiction services by social services are in and of themselves a technology of erasure of Black histories, values and realities. Of course, such an erasure is suctioned by research processes that believe in singular truth on treatment without considering the unique lived realities of Black peoples. Such forms of rationalization have been geared towards digitizing mental health and addictions services with the aim of coming up with a singular number on how to practice with those affected by mental health. Such a number when employed as the solution to remedying Black communities' mental health, the result has been various, complicated and catastrophic. Even in the age where most social services are being called to consider the values and realities of Black peoples, we still witness the loss of Black life. This is because such a consideration of cultural sensitivity and competency continues to forget that Black culture is an item of pleasure but rather one born out of the lived realities of Black peoples in the hands of a colonizing society.

To reconcile Black trauma in the name of being culturally competent has been marked as another form of new anti-Black racism that has been grounded on the business model of asset and liability where Black life gets to be lost in between this neoliberal market balance sheet. This has been prevalent among social service industrial complexes where Black life is reduced into an item that must be sold in the marketplace for profit. Such forms of business-oriented forms of balancing Black life as a model of reconciling anti-Black life within the social service sector must be investigated in new ways that are fundamentally Black and ethical. This will mean paying attention to Blackness as various in its forms and shapes. To reconcile Black hate is to remember in ways that are beyond cognition. It means bringing people together to grief the loss of Black life in the hands of a system that has fundamentally decided to forget them. To research within Black communities in ways that remember Black life will equally mean imagining and overstanding Black life beyond numbers. This does not entirely dismiss numbers but rather makes them agonize and grief the loss of Black life. Such forms of accounting must not be all about counting the numbers of tears shed as a way of reconciling Black life but rather imagining mourning as inconsolable (Torres and Nyaga, 2021). Such forms of mourning Black loss must be accounted for in ways that are not merely numerical but rather outside the quantitative and qualitative metrics. According to Overstreet, 2022:

When I think about the Black lives that are (have been) subjected to premature death by state violence, it appears that the state already has a practice of reckoning with unjust violence—by literally accounting for, or paying off with our tax dollars, families who have lost loved ones by the violence of the state (including institutions, government agencies, and private corporations that surveil, enforce, and execute its laws and policies) and those who act beyond the authority of the law to exploit group-differentiated vulnerability to premature death .p.57

This will mean a fundamental reorientation of how we think of research and the ways in which the process of knowledge making has sanctioned the truth about Black people as singular and linear (Nyaga, 2021). Most Black communities have instead failed the mental health system for its part in not allowing Blackness to inform research that orient ways of mental health practice. Various research on mental health and addiction on its part has laid blame on Black communities arguing that Black communities are backward and do not have an idea on mental health and its effect to. This makes mental health currency meant to mark service providers as intelligent and aware of the civilizational narrative of mental health while casting out Black bodies as deplorables that need white redemption. This kind of Black portrayal is grounded on the colonial definition of Black bodies as broken vessels that must be saved from

themselves. This is anti-Black sanism that must be substantively discussed from a transformative and ethical place. To me that discussion must be grounded on models of doing research and how we need to decolonize knowledge production. To do that we have to engage with the question of research and numerical metrification of mental health service.

When I speak of ethics in knowledge, I am reminded that we need to have a relationship with numbers. To make this claim is to simultaneously say that they are objects that cannot hold hands and have over time been denied the art of grieving and being joyful. In short, the numbers meant to provide life are in constant process of being denied having life. Numbers are lifeless and if anything, the ethical role of the researcher is to make numbers cry, grief the loss of their emotion and stop saying numbers will always tell the truth. This kind of epistemological fatalism creates a fate where numbers remain silent and lack the emotional language to express the pain that Black communities face. To claim that numbers need to cry, grief and tell the story is to create a space for greater qualification of numbers in terms of how they get to express themselves beyond their objective self. That kind of attempted ethical requirement brings with it the loss of numerical toxic masculinity that has caused so many deaths and genocide more so among Indigenous and Black peoples. It is therefore prudent that this discussion takes the dimension of how numbers can open their hands to accommodate other ways of knowing. This way, we can start engaging with our environment and beingness in ways that are relational and respectful.

This paper is therefore a call for another methodology of imagining research in ways that are beyond numerical classification; to start thinking of how numbers can embody intersectional stories that are grounded in context, values, histories and realities of Black people. To do this, the paper looks at intersectional Blackness as the point of view of how holding hands can equally be a way of taking space-spaces where people can situate themselves in ways that break the violence of numbers in the representation of Black people. To be intersectional is to come to a point where Black becomes various when writing and doing research among and with Black communities. What follows from this intersectional conversation is an elaboration and engagement with the question of empowerment and how research comes in as a way of giving voice to Black people. Question that needs to be asked is whose empowerment is it that happens to be the only way to give voice to Black people. Whose voice is this that Black people must be made to embrace for them to be part of the human community. Does that mean that Black people cannot express themselves and that research happens to be the only way to give them the ground and the voice to speak. Are Black people speechless that research has to provide them with the voice to speak. What happens to their voice? What would be the space for speaking out in echo? This and many other questions will be focused on in the section that pays attention to empowerment. The section that follows engages with the question of remembering as both a cognitive and mind exercise while at the same time an activist practice of bringing people. This

means that the work we do has to not only be an exercise of the mind but that of forming a community of purpose. This means that for research to make change in the community, it will have to bring together those who have been forgotten. It means that for those people to come together we will need to speak in grammar that celebrates their realities, histories and values. It will mean that the mind cannot be understood through vacuuming the body. That rationalism cannot be without emotion. It is also recognized that the duality of rationality and emotion, body and mind must be broken in ways that allow other forms of realities that have no formal language to express their existence.

This will mean that such duality must be broken by allowing the spirit of knowledge to fuse with the ethics that borrows from Black realities and their values. The next section will look at activism. This section will attempt to make connection to the question of intersectionality and empower to call for a language of activism that goes beyond performative practice prevalent in research. How do we think of activism as an intersectional act of substantiating numbers to start speaking in ways that are demonstrative of Black realities and histories? How can numbers start mourning the death of Black community that has overtime been supervised by research. This section will open avenues of thinking of numbers through the acts that are emotional. If numbers can employ or embody their suppressed emotional self, then we can have a society that is transformed in ways that are ethical and political. I will then conclude the paper with a reflexive piece of research and numbers as our one place we need to rework transformative. Key is to save numbers from their objectivity and start crying again.

1. Intersectionality

The question of Black and Blackness must be conceptualized within the perspective that is intersectional, complex and nonlinear. This means that for any social touching on oppression of Black communities we will need to go beyond singular and neat conceptualization of Blackness. What means is that intersectionality as a framework cannot be understood without bringing on board the aspect of Blackness. Singular identitarian perspective has overtime failed us and as such to start a more substantive and transformative journey towards social justice, we need to bring on board the perspective of Blackness as the only ethical prerogative in understanding how our society is colonially formed and operationalized. My claim is that Blackness makes singular identities more complex and intersectional. This perspective when infused in knowledge formation will help in multiple ways to redefine the how of doing research such, we start questioning the place of linearity and the ways such lining of knowledge has actually helped destroy Black communities. It will also help think of how numbers that help organize the lining or what we refer as militarization of marginalized communities may be interrupted by Blackness to a point where the numbers will start telling complex stories rather than being neat and masculine. To

speak of Blackness as a method/logy on intersectional knowledge production is to come to terms of the fact that numbers that have historically been employed to line Black communities and subsequently cause Black hate; must be made to mourn and grief those days in ways that are ethically and politically powerful. This recognition of how Black overtime has been situated as disordered and the ways in which numbers have been employed to line and militarize black communities in the name of civilization and development. This paper therefore interrupts such a colonial perspective that numbers can give the truth about Black communities even to the extent where Black people are disappeared and lost in the name of production of truth. Truth becomes the price that Black people must pay. To speak of such form of numerical metrics of measure on Black communities is to understand the ways in which research has helped support and suction the death and genocide of Black peoples. This means that for Black to be known, it must be reduced and simplified in a singular Black color such that there are no other colors that are expected to mellow into Blackness. Anything outside the hue of Black is marked as an anomaly and for which a form of new search is announced, and the process of coloring is made as physical as possible. Research has become the technology of such forms of coloring meant to maintain a singular understanding of Blackness. This paper argues that Blackness is beyond color coating (Nyaga, 2021). What this means is that Black and Blackness are intersectional points that work with other colors in ways that are complex. What that means is that Black and Blackness goes beyond color politics to start asking how other colors can be seen as Black. This perspective seeks to look beyond the singular formulation of Black and Blackness to start asking how Blackness makes other identities various.

This means that Black politics in knowledge making must be seen and acted as more than a color coating exercise (Nyaga, 2021). What that means is that Black and Blackness in research must be seen and acted upon as ethical politics of knowledge making that goes beyond the current western colonial, singular and simplified performative acts. To speak of knowledge as performative is to say that such knowledge is not substantiable and unable to bring ethical transformation to Black communities. This kind of knowledge fails to give accounts of Black peoples and as such cannot bring transformative change. It misses or loses ethical language of existence and therefore cannot be substantiated nor claim representation of what exists in human language form. Since humans exist as linguistic forms, it therefore makes sense that the current operation of knowledge fails to capture human grammar, instead opting to erase them and make them numerical beings. This form of numerical formation of the human takes linguistic life force in ways meant to reduce and silence them and subsequently commit social linguistic deaths. It is therefore important to recognize that knowledge making as currently constituted is not meant to transform the human into ethical beings but rather an exercise meant to erode their existence as linguistic beings, leaving them as beings incapable

of speech acts. In the process of making human speech less, they cannot therefore act against any form of alienation; since in the first place they fail to have intelligible language that can be understood within the community of language.

This sense of alienation or estrangement remains western since those who are human and have a language to be erased are already marked as accountable beings. The whole process of numerical human erasure elaborated earlier fails to capture the lived experiences of Black and African people who have overtime been considered as not having language to represent themselves, therefore rationalizing research as the savior of these instinctual beings. We must give an account of the term human since not all are understood as living humans. Black body is considered as subhuman with animalistic tendencies; and whose existence must be cleared from the face of the earth. Black and African body must be cleared from existence because it fails the very process of numerical rationalization of the human. It is a life full of echo and has no linguistic existence. The claim is therefore made that such instinctual life must be improved in ways that help to linguistically modernize it. This African or Black body must be objectified. This means that it must be given up to language for it to be considered, imagined and represented as human with objective language.

Research takes up the process of giving Black and African over to language. Such taken over beings must now speak in the true scientific language of the researcher for them to be considered as living and intelligible beings. They must be transcribed and translated into the language of the researcher for them to be considered as living beings. It is in the process of translation that we witness the loss of values and realities of Black bodies. Such acts of Black translation and transcription help substantiate western knowledge making as the standard of truth making and as such a saving grace. This takes a theological perspective whereby western research is seen as breathing the air into the non-living to give them life. Divine intervention is made real through linguistic birthing. Western research is seen as divine intervention of the non-living and whose existence helps to create other life forms using words. Truth making becomes the altar of Black and African loss and death. This has fundamental material and symbolic consequences on Black lives. The current policies and practice informed by western research and meant to help Black communities continue to miss the unique ontological existence of Black lives. What seems to be a practice, or a policy meant to help Black communities has become another colonial model of either erasing their existence or postponing their death.

We therefore must substantiate Black politics within knowledge making processes since this is a fundamental ethical demand for both policy and practice with Black lives. To speak of Black substantiation in politics of knowledge making as a substantive ethical requirement calls for us to form relationships that are beyond the now issues and see how the now is a composition of yesterday and tomorrow. I also want to add that the art of

substantiation of Black and Blackness in research must be seen through the art of repetition and reiteration within and without what we claim as knowledge making process. To repeat is a form of remembering. To remember is to bring together or resurrect that which has been forgotten. The process of remembering claims that emotions and instincts have a mind. This claim seems to underline the fact that the mind cannot exist without the body; and therefore, breaking away from scientific demarcation of the mind and body. This argument goes against boundaries of human consciousness to start resurrecting other ways of knowing that continue to be discounted within the western knowledge frame. To make such a claim against the body and mind split is to question the presence of epistemological boundaries that continue to mete violence against Black and African peoples.

To make such an argument is to align ourselves with non-violence as a framework of Black research. Such an argument calls for reimagining knowledge as not only a rational and violent processing of emotions into singular truth but one that must give account to how truth forgets and erases peoples' values, histories and realities. To blur the western conceptualization of mind and body split is to remember and thread what lies between the splitting of the mind and body. It is thus epistemological gaps that Black bodies are forgotten and buried. Our work as Black and African researchers is to open those hidden gaps or graveyards to start resurrecting Black knowledges in ways meant to bring substantive insights into knowledge making. Research therefore becomes a process of not only giving account about Black people's realities but also mourning Black death in ways that are inconsistent with numbers and therefore inconsolable (Torres and Nyaga, 2021). The art of threading rather than splitting the mind and body is a form of forming ethical relationships between the western epistemologies in ways that remembers other epistemological orientations of knowledge making. They are ethical relationships since they disrupt the comfort of western knowledge to start asking how compounding knowledge can inform how we come to know what we know. Such threading is disruptive since it goes back and forth in repetitive mode to allow a coming together of multiple and unique life forms that can help birth knowledge that is ethically transformative rather than performative.

This epistemological returning and going forth in reiterative mode gives a space for what is to come to pass through what has been existing. This passing through existing knowledge helps expand and compound existing knowledge in ways meant to frustrate the now. To pass through is to cause discomfort to western body of knowledge in ways that allow other ways of knowledge to exist. It's flushing out the current western knowledge by creating space for other life forms to inform knowledge making. The forward movement cannot be without returning to timelessness. This return is not just a move to the past but one that is disruptive to the claim of an original past. I make this claim because what is backward (the body) has been reflected by the colonial system as nothing other than instinctual life

force. When it comes to Black bodies, a return to the back means to move forward while remembering the histories of colonialism and plantation slavery. This means that Black ethical perspective in knowledge making must be rethought as an act of resisting the current forgetting of Black people's realities and therefore making what has been marginal more prominent and reiterable. This is an act of reliving and giving accounts of what has been left behind in the act of making knowledge. It is giving space to forgotten Black/African epistemologies in knowledge making processes. These disruptive acts must be intentional and oriented toward reimagining knowledge and the process meant to confirm the knowledge birthed through that process. In that case, the knowledge process must be seen within the perspective of unending disruptive epistemological exercise meant to not only give rise to other ways of knowing but also acknowledging their existence as a quintessential aspect of knowledge making. That relationship is a form of not forgetting the histories, values and ways of life of Black people as necessary in knowledge making.

Black politics and epistemologies are beyond blushing color on surfaces to claim accommodation of Blackness in the research process (Nyaga, 2021). The process of knowledge making must be seen beyond color coated performative acts that have become the main driver of market-based research (Nyaga, 2023). Instead, what should be seen as Black based research must engage with the realities and values of Black peoples in their diverse and compounded backgrounds. This means that we will need to think of Black based research as beyond Black as a singular category. Black is tuned up to issues of disabilities, citizenship, gender, sexual orientation and many other social aspects of life (Mulyani, and Putri, 2024). Modernist research has overtime looked at Black and blackness as singular and linear. What that kind of colonial research does to Black epistemologies is reducing and simplifying Black epistemological thinking and patterns into objects that can be sold into the marketplace (Nyaga, 2023). Such forms of objectivity cause and has been implicated in social genocide of Black ways of knowledge making. In a nutshell, the intersectionality of Blackness fail's singular commodification of people's ways of life and their realities that has become the norm within market-based research.

2. Empowerment

Any research worth pursuing and that is Black based must build capacities and develop Black communities (Nyaga, 2023). Empowerment is central to Black based research and calls for research to be conducted in ways that are consistent with Black life. This means that research with Black communities must come from their daily lives as well as focused on bringing substantive and compounded transformative change to Black communities. This will mean that research should be conducted in ways that raise Black consciousness to overcome racial, gender and other forms of discrimination that continue to affect Black communities in various ways. Research therefore should be for building Black capacities rather than charitable exercise of saving Black lives. Such research must be carried out

in ways that Black people take a central role in meaning making and final implementation (Nyaga, 2023). Empowerment within Black Lives means that research becomes a mirror image of Black people. This means that such researchers reflects with Black people so they can recognize their place in the process of knowledge making. This is psychic in that when they see who they are within such a research practice and exercise, they can reflect and reflex in ways that are grounded in their own realities and values built over time. These forms of consciousness help interpret the research in such a way that builds community capacity and develops it in ways that are substantively transformative.

3. Remembers

Black research must be a psychic activity. It is a practice that has spiritual roots. This means that research must be beyond knowledge. Black based research must be ethical in terms of creating trustworthy and respectful relationships between and beyond Black and Blackness. To build such relations, Black research calls for re-membering and remembering as the how of making knowledge. What that means is that research employs an intersectional orientation into the politics of mind and body. The assumption is that these two western epistemological systems must work together by remembering that their existence is built on respectful relationships. That means that research brings people together to build knowledge that unites all without singularizing them. Such a practice of bringing together goes beyond individual and collective memories; and looks at individuals as intersected and complex.

4. Activism

Black based research is supposed to transform communities in ways that are grounded to their histories, values and realities. While research is supposed to change policies, it must also be employed to substantively transform the mind of policy makers, and other stakeholders in ways that disrupt the current conservative and western policy direction. This means that research for change must be conducted in ways that are not just for producing knowledge but rather adding social justice perspectives to the how of doing research. Activism also calls for bringing people together to take up space. Research that is grounded in activism is one that pushes for fundamental and substantive change that can bring change to society. Such a research orientation must not be documented but rather speak on the ways that can transform society not just for Black peoples but also for all. Black research therefore is a form of research that is beyond identitarian politics. Rather Black research acts to recognize all people as human beings who have unique realities and experiences. This means that our humanity is grounded in everyday exercises that transform us beyond the now singular imagination of social life.

Methodological processes

Deciding the design

When we think of research design, we are opening a spatial conversation in the 'how' of producing knowledge. Design as an architectural plan in knowledge making helps us visualize how to answer research questions. It's in the visualizations of research that we need to add a third eye or be compounded in our gaze. To make such claims is to call for ethical reasoning into how we are going to answer the research questions. Third eye or what I now call the Black eye is to see beyond the usual presentation of design and calls for psychic imagination of our research plan.

This is an ethico-political question to the design of research as much as it is about knowledge making. According to Foucault (1980) knowledge and power are Siamese twins and that they feed into each other in ways that are inseparable. The question we are left to ask is - why do we produce knowledge? Within western epistemology, knowledge is produced to be individually owned like property for the sake of making its owners proper human beings with rights and freedoms. In retrospect, within the African Indigenous systems, knowledge is owned by the community for the purpose of improving and enhancing their lives (Dei, 2011; Dei et al., 2000). Western view knowledge as an organized, rationalized and controlled process that must be reliable and provide a valid answer to research question (Faulkner and Faulkner 2014). This means that knowledge production must have a rubric as the architecture of knowledge production. The rubric makes sure that each section stands independently of each other (Faulkner and Falkner, 2014) such that data collection is divorced from data analysis and that finding stands alone as if not in relationship with other sections within the architecture of research. Boundaries between the sections allow a linear process of decantation such that there is no miasmatic infestation of one section from the other. To enhance that epistemological structure of separation and boundary formation, scientific violence must be employed to justify the need for truth. A good example is that data collection which is imagined as infected by emotion and instinct must not be mixed up with analysis which is seen as the hospital space for cleansing the dirt and pathology found in data. Analysis becomes the place of violating emotion for the sake of birthing singular truth. An epistemological line is drawn between the data and its analysis and clear boundaries are erected to prevent any infestation of the study by the miasmatic data. Analysis becomes a process that is industrially meant to give life to data through reducing its crudity and dependence to emotion. The assumption is that emotions and instinct are pathological and as such must be labeled in ways that give them a lease of life.

This is a fundamental principle that is laid down within the western architecture of knowledge. It means that we have epistemic distancing and violence between one section of knowledge making to prevent infecting another and to make it easy to determine where infection is coming from in

the whole epistemological industrial complex. Key to this industrial processing of data is to remove any compounding factor that may affect or infect truth making. Scientific titration of knowledge is a fundamental process within the western architecture of knowledge and helps fine tune what is to become the truth about social life. On the other hand, African Indigenous knowledge looks at knowledge as a complex process that must work within and without the knowledge; and must be considered as equally ethical in its process and practice. This means that we cannot take funneling of knowledge as the quintessential and original element of knowledge making. Rather, we must give an account of the ways in which knowledge becomes valued at the expense of ethical values. In fact, we can open multiple processes of knowledge making and each of these processes must be open to engage with errors or mistakes. When we consider what gets to be marked as the wrong and the processes that earmarks such a wrong as the birthplace for the rights, we start asking other questions regarding what is forgotten in the righting and wronging. That silent place or gap has an ethical value in research practice and must be made visible to our current understanding of knowledge making and management.

This epistemic orientation believes that errors are part of the process of knowing. Unknowing is knowing in other ways. The issue we currently face is an assumption that truth must be at a distance from errors. That form of epistemological distancing eliminates the possibilities of learning from error. I point this out because most African Indigenous perspectives have been framed as erroneous and inaccurate. We cannot know the truth without error. The error becomes an ethical requirement for truth to be legitimate. Truth cannot be understood without error. As such African Indigenous perspectives to knowledge making is open to multiple processes of knowledge making and which includes the western perspective. Key is that we cannot employ such a western perspective as the only process of knowledge making.

Conclusion

This paper engages with the moral question of understanding that we live in a multi centric world where no one knowledge process is given precedence over others. That said, the African Indigenous designs must disrupt the rationality of the western architecture to turn its attention from linearity and boundary making to opening up the gates between levels or designs of knowledge making. This means turning upside down western epistemological architecture. What that means is that data collection must be based on mutual understanding that the error is the truth in other ways. What that means is that the error has a space to speak and create knowledge. That knowledge must be seen within the context of relationship building meant to break the scientific and colonial code of epistemological distancing and independence. Boundaries between sections of knowledge production must be blurred to allow mutual disruptive orientation to how we come to imagine research. This allows the denial of colonial violence that continues to control the ways of knowing. In a nutshell, the architecture

of western knowledge is built in a colonial framework of violence and separation. Within the African framework, knowledge is grounded on community building principles that are based in non-violence and community capacity building. African knowledge systems allow for the holding of hand between data collection and analysis in ways that allow it to take space and develop communities in ways that are contextual, ethical, intersectional and critically reflexive. This allows greater community engagement and collaboration which makes knowledge production within African communities possible. Such knowledge grounded on non-violence is not for profit but rather community capacity building and development. That knowledge does not deny the differences between community members but rather acknowledges their uniqueness as an important ethical imperative in knowledge making.

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