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‘Which journal is that?’ Politics of academic promotion in Uganda and the predicament of African publication outlets

‘De quelle publication s’agit-t-il?’ La politique de la promotion universitaire en Ouganda et la situation difficile des débouchés africains de publication

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Research and publication are some of the practices that define university work and therefore are part and parcel of the key considerations for promoting university-based academics. Whereas this promotion standard is widely appreciated in view of the importance of knowledge production, it raises several questions about the subtexts of its practice and their implications for publication in Africa. Through an empirical qualitative study of two Ugandan universities, this paper examines how promotion policies shape publication outlet choices and Africa-based publication initiatives. I show that promotion processes in Ugandan universities are driven by complex quality checks that are sometimes characterized by rationalized malice against individual academics in settling personal scores and biases against publications from African outlets. With the partial aid of theories of (post)coloniality and Southern theory, I explain the root of Afro-pessimistic biases in promotion criteria and argue that both the genuine quality checks and other neo-colonial biases incentivise publishing in the West and lead scholars to avoid African options. This exacerbates the already challenging circumstances of African publishers, limits local access to marketplaces of knowledge, and shrinks space for epistemic pluralism.

Keywords: academic promotion; epistemic justice; epistemic violence; African publications

La recherche et la publication sont partie des pratiques qui définissent le travail universitaire et par conséquent sont indissociables des considérations principales pour la promotion des recherches basées à l’université. Alors que cette norme de promotion est largement appréciée compte tenu de l’importance de la production de la connaissance, cela soulève plusieurs questions sur les sous-textes de sa pratique et leurs implications sur les publications en Afrique. A travers une étude qualitative empirique de deux universités de l’Ouganda, cet article examine comment les politiques de promotion forment les choix de débouché et les initiatives en matière de publication basée en Afrique. Je montre que les processus de promotion dans les universités ougandaises sont dirigés par des tests de qualité complexes qui sont parfois caractérisés par une malveillance rationalisée contre des chercheurs individuels pour établir des scores et parti-pris relatifs à des publications issues de réseaux africains. Avec l’aide partielle de théories de (post)colonialité et de théorie du Sud, j’explique la racine de parti-pris afro-pessimistes dans les critères de promotion et avance que de véritables vérifications de qualité aussi bien que d’autres parti-pris

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**At the time of writing this article I was working with both of the studied universities.

néocoloniaux incitent à publier en Occident et il en découle que les érudits évitent les options africaines. Ceci exacerbe les circonstances déjà exigeantes des éditeurs africains, limite l'accès local aux marchés de la connaissance et réduit l'espace du pluralisme épistémique.

Mots clés: promotion universitaire; justice épistémique; violence épistémique; publications africaines

Introduction

One of the central universal traditions in academic practice is conducting research and publishing one's findings or contributions, famously captured in the 'publish or perish' slogan. Whereas the significance of this tradition is widely appreciated, much concern has been raised about its practice. These concerns relate to impulsive publication, which is often done in haste to expand academics' publication profiles for promotion. Moreover, in this unprecedented supply, much of the published work is hardly read, it is produced for the dump. Syndicates have also been noted, where academics include each other as co-authors and others cite one another for higher citation scores. It is also not new to academia for scholars to write in jargon and prose that alienates the wider public, and to be detached from public engagement (Campbell 2008; Oppong 2013; Muller and De Rijcke 2017; Lariviere and Sugimoto 2018; Ssentongo and Draru 2018). Africa, in its imitative practice and in a struggle to fit in, also reflects much of these phenomena.

Due to historical reasons, power imbalances, and associated complexes, these issues tend to affect the 'Global South' differently than the academically hegemonic, post-imperial North (Sithole 2010). As Nyamnjoh observes, 'various hierarchies, both scholarly and otherwise, are there to ensure that only a few shall be recognised from the many that are published' (2004, 3). Thus, the realm of academic promotion brings particularly interesting publication dynamics to the surface, especially with regard to how and what is incentivised or disincentivised. In a communication under the 'Author Services' section of the Taylor and Francis website, John Harrison, an Associate Editor of the *Regional Studies* journal, observes that

... the question for authors – and which editors increasingly focus on – is who is going to be interested, and why? To make an impact, authors need to make sure their work has an audience (i.e. is on a topic that many are interested in), and makes a contribution.¹

Failing to heed to this, one could publish yet still perish.

We should note though that the question 'who is going to be interested?' means a little more for authors in the African context than concerns over impact. It is the interest of the editors of the preferred Western journals and their foreign audiences that is mainly considered. Yet, as Raewyn Connell (2017, 8) has observed, often, 'to publish in metropolitan journals, one must write in metropolitan genres, cite metropolitan literature, become part of a metropolitan discourse'. For many African authors, considerations on 'who will be interested' go beyond avoidance of substandard and predatory publishers, extending to how to smoothen the promotion process by publishing through outlets that would limit promotion boards' questions based on a mix of quality gatekeeping, geopolitical bias, and rationalized malice.² These three tendencies of promotion boards and their outcomes occupy the centre of this paper's analysis.

Regarding the geopolitical bias, with a few exceptions, journals and other publication outlets from Africa are met with doubt and suspicion in promotion assessment exercises – in Uganda, worse if the outlet is Ugandan. As this paper will show, publishers in developing countries face a number of operational and contextual setbacks that sometimes end up affecting quality. It would thus be understandable if their products face more scrutiny from publication quality assessors. However, this very important exercise has inadvertently come to further encumber

local publishers/publications and attract suspicion from some African academics about the attitudes behind the differential treatment of publications from within and without Africa (Bulhan 2015). In contrast, even unknown publishers and obscure journals from Europe and America (and sometimes Asia) attract much less scrutiny.

Apparently, the bias against African publications is not exclusively informed by quality concerns. As showed in Bulhan's psychological analysis, it also reflects underlying internalized bias and neo-colonized thinking that are pervasive in how many Africans tend to value African things. Understanding colonial legacies in the African psyche, as widely discussed in Colonial and Postcolonial Studies, is theoretically helpful in explaining such phenomena (Fanon 1963, 1967; Memmi [1974] 2003; Taiwo 2010; Rodney 2012; Mpofu 2013; Bulhan 2015). It is equally important to engage with hegemonic influences in academia, through which Northern universalisms reproduce monolithic academic traditions that entangle Southern institutions and academics into unjust, even if internalized, violent practices (Connell 2017). One of the key contributions of this paper is to demonstrate how Western hegemonic structures interact with legacies of colonialism, not each on its own, to shape publication and promotion practices and other consequences therefrom.

There has been much debate around Southern Theory concerning how such performances ensue from imbalanced North–South relations (Connell 2008, 2017; Takayama et al. 2016). Southern Theory originated from Raewyn Connell's book (2007) by the same title. The observation around its discourse has generally been that the global knowledge economy is skewed in favour of the hegemonic North which exercises epistemic gate keeping to determine what counts as knowledge or not. The South is mainly relegated to the role of collecting data, which is then collated in the North to produce theory to be sent back to the South. This is not unique to knowledge production, it is part of the wider hegemonic structure that characterizes the unjust North–South relations.

Yet, how and why these dynamics specifically play out in the publication and academic promotion arena has not received much attention, despite it presenting a significant impediment to the growth of African scholarship, alternative epistemic voices, and African scholars' internal and extra-continental intellectual influence (Ssentongo and Draru 2018). This paper is situated in Southern Theory as a decolonizing attempt at 'identifying and contesting the processes and mechanisms of academic knowledge production that sustain the uneven knowledge producing relationship both within and across nation-states' (Takayama et al. 2016, 11). In studying practices around academic publication and promotion in African universities, the aim is to 'challenge the existing structure of knowledge production and dissemination and various institutional mechanisms that sustain it' (Takayama et al. 2016, 12). This is part of a wider task of staking out foundations for a 'liberated African modernity' (Chinweizu 1985) in the different spheres of subaltern experience.

That it is becoming strategically convenient ('safer') and preferable for African academics to mainly – sometimes exclusively – publish with Western outlets should also raise concern because, by extension, where African academics publish also affects what they can research and publish; what counts as knowledge and what is worth publishing. This way, colonial/hegemonic violence against indigenous knowledges is perpetuated and knowledge is homogenized 'resulting in a highly skewed and ultimately provincial knowledge of the world' (Takayama, Sriprakash, and Connell 2015). Working in two Ugandan universities (Makerere University and Uganda Martyrs University), I have heard testimonies from many academics whose applications for promotion were rejected because their publications were in 'unknown' or 'unsustainable' Ugandan or African journals or publishers.

As an editor of a university journal and book series, on several occasions academics have intimated to me their fears to publish with Ugandan or African outlets to avoid promotion hurdles. The promotion process is often easier and quicker where the publishers are in the 'North'. It is these observations that prompted this study to delve deeper into the performances and psyche

behind these practices. The paper is based on empirical findings from ad hoc observation and qualitative interviews with selected academics from Makerere University and Uganda Martyrs University whose promotion applications were rejected on grounds of suspicion of their publishers. The interviews were backed by analysis of rejection reports and feedback, respective promotion policies, and where possible, scrutiny of the publishers. I also interviewed some members of promotion boards to understand their practices and internal rationale. Whereas the findings from this study may not be generalizable as a complete picture of the studied settings, practices and logics, they provide instructive insights.

The findings show that, in many ways, several of the factors often cited in acceptance or rejection of publications submitted for promotion in Uganda tend to serve as a disincentive for publishing in Africa. In view of genuine quality checks, with a few exceptions, it is found to be convenient to publish with Western journals, which are generally less carefully scrutinized and thereby come with more default prestige. Whereas there may be no clear-cut ways of avoiding ‘malice’ based on personal reasons, it becomes more difficult to play foul on an applicant with publications from ‘high impact factor’ journals as compared to the ‘low quality card’ that can be conveniently played against scholars publishing only in African journals. Thus, it is not only outright bias against African publishers that disadvantages them. The ultimate effect is that, added to the North–South power imbalances within global scholarly practice, Ugandan scholars further marginalize themselves as to remain with very limited local avenues for expression of knowledge that does not pass through the Western sieve.

Publication dynamics in developing countries

Little has been written about academic publication dynamics in Uganda; thus, it is insightful to view them in the context of what is happening elsewhere in the South and especially in Africa, where many sectoral dynamics are similar. One of the perennial challenges in Uganda in particular and Africa in general is that of a poor reading culture (Ssentongo and Draru 2018). This arises from a wide array of other issues, such as poverty, lack of access to higher education, multilingualism, socialization, and pedagogical approaches that undervalue reading comprehension and critical thinking. This deficiency has had a negative bearing on literary markets in general and academic publishing in particular. Publication, especially of academic material, is a financially risky business, worse in low-reading environments. This is one of the reasons why some African publishing houses/initiatives eventually fold. A case in point is the Heinemann African Writers Series, which, based in Britain, brought many African writers to the scene, starting with Chinua Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* in 1962. The publishers had to close this initiative in 2003 because of losses resulting from limited readership on the continent (Nyamnjoh 2004). Nyamnjoh observes that:

... only an elite few in Africa read in English (or any other European language), and amongst those who do, few who can afford to buy a book want to read African authors. In some cases, students read African authors only reluctantly as part of an examination, perhaps because neither teachers nor educational institutions are keen to celebrate Africanness beyond rhetoric. (Ibid., 2)

Thus the few substantive publication outlets that exist can be seen as exceptions that are struggling in a difficult environment. These include the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA); the Organisation for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa (OSSREA); Pambazuka Press; the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), and South Africa’s university presses plus some journals here and there. Many others exist and make stringent efforts to beat the odds in trying to keep up standards –

but largely at the publication periphery, ‘periphery of the periphery’ (Tucker 1999), or in paralytic limbo. Whereas many of the above realities have earlier been highlighted in the literature, the key contribution of this paper in extending this debate is by explaining how promotion politics in Uganda serves to entrench bias against publications from African outlets and to discourage Ugandan scholars from publishing ‘locally’.

In Uganda, the main scholarly publishing house for the last twenty years has been Fountain Publishers – a private company that runs on a business model. Having been a monopoly for a long period, it is rather expensive and overwhelmed with work. Yet still, it is also struggling. Its founder, James Tumusiime, reveals that it is largely sustained by proceeds from government contract books which are then ploughed into non-syllabus but important literature (Matsiko 2012). With over forty universities, Uganda has only two running university presses. Of these, Makerere University Press is just being revived from many years of collapse and Uganda Martyrs University Press mostly publishes content from its staff. Uganda Martyrs University being private and tuition-dependent, funding an unprofitable venture is rather a tall order. The Press’s work is therefore quite limited. There is a number of journals run by academic units in the different universities, but, for reasons discussed later in this paper, many are irregular in their publication frequency (see Ssentongo and Draru 2018). This is one more reason why Ugandan scholars tend to be hesitant to publish with them if they can find Western alternatives.

A generally poor reading culture in developing countries such as Uganda compounds the publication problem. It would effectively mean that her scholars mainly publish for Western audiences, if not for the dump. Whereas it may be true of Western scholarly publications to have limited readership as well, in Uganda it is a combination of a generally poor reading culture and irrelevance of much of the stuff published. African academics have to appeal to Western tastes and standards in order to find expression (Zezeza 2016). Because publication is increasingly informed by considerations of marketability, African research outside the interests of the Western knowledge markets faces rejection from Western publishers. Indeed, Western publishers have the right to protect and promote their own traditions, standards, and worldviews. This gatekeeping may not always affect perspectives from elsewhere, but it often does (Schipper 1990; Oppong 2013). And, in such circumstances, those who cannot abide by the dictates of ‘a world saturated with Western hegemony’ (Tucker 1999, 19) are faced with frustrating rejections – until they speak the right language.

Such assimilative/neutralising politics is compounded by the fact that most research from which the publications are drawn is Western funded and often in collaboration with Northern scholars who usually wield more power over research projects. These tend to determine methodological and theoretical choices, and sometimes choices over where to publish (Branch 2018). Such skewed power relations easily produce and reinforce epistemic injustices and, more specifically, what Michel Foucault (1980) (also see Spivak 1988 and Mignolo 2009) has referred to as ‘epistemic violence’. This refers to various ways of ‘othering’, delegitimation, and suppression of kinds of knowledge and knowing that are not in line with the ones sought to be dominantly legitimated. It is close in meaning to the Beninian philosopher Paulin Hountondji’s (1996 and 2002) concept of ‘intellectual extraversion’ which explains structures and processes through which knowledge is produced and managed by rich countries that push the rest to the periphery. This violence is well articulated by Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff (2012, 1):

Western enlightenment thought has [...] posited itself as the wellspring of universal learning, of Science and Philosophy [...], it has regarded the non-West – variously known as the ancient, the orient, the primitive world, the third world, the underdeveloped world, the developing world, and now the global south – primarily as a place of parochial wisdom, of antiquarian traditions, of exotic ways and means.

However, theorists of injustice around coloniality in knowledge production (such as Mignolo 2009 and 2011 and Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013 and 2018) have been accused of arguing without scientific evidence on the manifestations of epistemic violence and injustice they refer to (Morreira 2015). Among other aims, this paper helps to bring some empirical evidence to the debate.

The deplorable readership of African outputs is partly brought about by a plethora of other challenges faced by African publishers. They suffer from limited resources, editorial deficiencies, marketing and distribution shortfalls, substandard submissions, invisibility, and, relatedly, poor reputations. The lack of funding and institutional commitment can be located within the wider indifference by universities to support their own research, not necessarily institutional deprivation. In Nyamnjoh's (ibid.) view, and as some Ugandan respondents in this study confessed, this indifference is partly because scholars have successfully broken into (or are trying to break into) Western publishers through whom they can gain academic legitimacy. As Sardar (1999) has intimated, because of the known power of the West in defining and (de)legitimizing standards, the choices of scholars from the periphery are shaped by a fear of the possibility of being defined out of scholarly existence. The dilemma is: 'turn white or disappear' (Fanon 1967, 100). In the current case though, as this paper will show, though related in character, the dynamics in the experience of coloniality are more complicated beyond the Fanonian binaries of White and Black, colonizer and colonized.

Theoretical perspectives

To understand the dynamics of publication, recognition, and promotion in African universities, it is helpful to theoretically approach them in lieu of the dynamics and interlinkages between colonialism, metacolonialism (Bulhan 2015), coloniality (Ndlovu 2013; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2018), postcoloniality (often used interchangeably with coloniality), and North–South politics. These can help us locate the longstanding impact of colonialism on the colonized's psyche and behaviour (Fanon 1963, 1967; Memmi [1974] 2003; Connell 2008) and the power dynamics inherent in the global knowledge economy – especially between the Global North and the Global South (Sardar 1999; Ndlovu 2018).

In *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon provides an expansive analysis of the psychological determination of the colonized (especially black) peoples' behaviour – how the experience of coloniality shapes their thinking, valuation, and relation to the white world. More recent literature (Bulhan 2015; Ndlovu 2013, 2018) has shown that many of these effects outlast the period of direct colonialism.

One of the self-justificatory saviour practices of colonizers is to frame the colonized and targets for colonialism as sub-human, of lower intellectual capabilities, backward, barbaric, primitive, underdeveloped, and therefore needing civilization. In Africa, several white anthropologists, explorers, and philosophers offered plenty of literature to feed and entrench such instrumental bias. Most prominent of such works are Hegel's *Philosophy of History* ([1824] 1956), Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1899), and Levy-Bruhl's *How Natives Think* ([1910] 1985). Such images were practically socialized and pumped deep into the colonized's self-perception both to make them accept their 'fate' and appreciate their 'white saviours'.

In this violent smear campaign, most African realities (save for wildlife) and people are demonized in ways to depict them as disgustingly miserable and unattractive. In *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963, 33), Fanon cites examples of this 'colonial vocabulary' to include attributions such as 'hysterical masses, faces bereft of all humanity, distended bodies which are like nothing on earth, a mob without beginning or end, children who seem to belong to no body, laziness stretched out in the sun, vegetative rhythm of life ...'. In the same vein, even missionary 'evangelisation' carried the same messages, where what was presented as Godly, virtuous,

holy, was in most cases not only Christian but also part of European cultures (P'Bitek 2011). On the other side of the missionary holy-unholy dichotomy lay the non-European ways as pagan, satanic, demonic, and, therefore, sinful. The devil was black anyway (Rodney 2012).

The colonial construction of black inferiority, which Fanon refers to as the 'white gaze', attracted and still attracts a broadly two-fold response in black being and doing. In some cases, the indoctrination and denigration of the black person bred abhorrence and resistance against the white supremacist project and its perpetrators, while in others it was internalized (Oelofsen 2015; Bulhan 2015) into imitation of whiteness and all associated with it, together with an attendant disdain for blackness and whatever it came along with. As observed by Amartya Sen,

Western imperialism over the last few centuries not only subverted the political [and mental] independence of the countries that were ruled or dominated by the colonial powers, it also created an attitudinal climate that is obsessed with the West, even though the form of that obsession may vary widely – from slavish imitation, on one side, to resolute hostility on the other. (Sen 2007, 85)

In the imitating category that is typified in many scholarly practices in Uganda, colonialism achieved this long-term negative legacy by eroding the confidence of its victims (Tevoedjre, cited in Sen 2007). The conscious and unconscious ambition of the formerly colonized eventually became that of achieving equality with the splendid model of the colonizer and to look like him/her to the point of disappearing in them (Memmi [1974] 2003). Thus, whereas Memmi says that many of the colonized would see themselves in his book (*The Coloniser and the Colonised*), even many postcolonial societies still would – for they are still under different forms of 'coloniality', some rooted in the period of direct colonialism but now without its crude means (Bulhan 2015). In the current dispensation, what is new is the semblance of free agency amongst the actors and the disguise of injustices as universal standards necessary in the so-called scholarly global village.

Nelson Maldonado-Torres (cited in Ndlovu 2013, 7) makes a crucial distinction between colonialism and coloniality that is vital for the interpretation of practices in 'postcolonial' universities like those focused on in this study:

Colonialism denotes a political and economic relation in which the sovereignty of a nation or a people rests on the power of another nation, which makes such a nation [the latter] an empire. Coloniality, instead, refers to long-standing patterns of power that emerged as a result of colonialism, but that define culture, labour, intersubjectivity relations, and knowledge production well beyond the strict limits of colonial administrations. Thus, coloniality survives colonialism. It is maintained alive in books, in the criteria for academic performance, in cultural patterns, in common sense, in the self-image of peoples, in aspirations of self, and so many other aspects of our modern experience. In a way, as modern subjects, we breathe coloniality all the time and every day.

Added to and emergent from colonial distortions, the relations that hold between the Northern and Southern postcolonial societies are mainly held in place by the economic and cultural powers that the former colonizers and their institutional networks wield (Sardar 1999; Oelofsen 2015). Ultimately, as Southern Theory holds (Connell 2007), the most disruptive impact of direct colonialism and its subsequent hybrids on Southern scholarship should be understood in view of the power relations that it constructed/constructs between North and South. In *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, Walter Rodney succinctly sums up the significance of power in shaping influence and negotiation:

Power is the ultimate determinant in human society, being basic to the relations within any group and between groups. It implies the ability to defend one's interests and if necessary to impose one's will by any means available. In relations between peoples, the question of power determines maneuverability

in bargaining, the extent to which one people respect the interests of another, and eventually the extent to which a people survive as a physical and cultural entity. (2012, 224)

What we experience in the current global power relations is what Ramon Grosfoguel (2007) has called a move ‘from global colonialism’ to ‘global coloniality’. Such coloniality is subtly manifest in the drama of blacks bleaching³ their skins with an intent that Fanon summarizes as throwing off ‘the burden of that [black] corporeal malediction’ (1967, 111). This corporeal act is a vivid gesture symptomatic of a deep-seated self-spiteful inclination in idolization of ‘whiteness’ and its ideals. A colonized black mind imagines its existence and derives its self-image (even of institutions and academic standards) from a mirror held up by whites. It is incapable of grasping the completeness of its being outside the mental universe constructed by white people⁴ (Mashele 2010). This includes what counts as knowledge and what doesn’t; science and non-science; true religion and paganism; development and backwardness; authentic and substandard. Some injustices in relation to the valuation of publications and knowledge systems that fall outside the standards/criteria of Eurocentric definitions starts from this attitude towards self and other. If a Ugandan scholar were to publish in a journal in the North, they either trim their epistemes to kinds and forms acceptable to Western gate keepers or face rejection. Many of the ‘reputable journals’ in the developed countries may find no interest in publishing work that is crucial to Africa but of no adequate ‘international interest’ (Oppong 2013). But if publishing locally comes with a risk of non-recognition and one has to publish elsewhere to earn promotion credit, then alternative epistemes and their values are the ultimate casualties. Contrary to Hountondji’s noble call to the African scholar ‘to consider his or her African public as his or her prime target’ (2002, 139), the practice in Uganda thus mostly provides incentive to consider foreign audiences.

Achille Mbembe (2015) is right in suggesting that decolonizing the university ‘has to do with creating a set of mental dispositions’ away from the colonial psyche. Yet, the bigger challenge lies in disrupting the power imbalances and relations that perpetuate what Rodney might have called the dependency psyche and inferiority complexes in Southern universities. The fronts of this ‘battle’ certainly extend outside the university. Within the scope of this paper, the above explanations help us to make sense of publication and promotion valuation practices in selected Ugandan universities. A combination of the colonial factor theoretically accounted for above and other dynamics within the general performance and politics of promotion presents a complex outcome which is not only shaped by coloniality but also cyclically reproduces and reinforces it. In the next section, I specifically study promotion politics at Makerere University and Uganda Martyrs University with a key interest in explaining how publications from African outlets are treated differently in relation to those from Europe and America.

Promotion politics and African publications at Makerere University and Uganda Martyrs University

While the promotion requirements do not significantly vary, the difference between the two studied universities in terms of size and in terms of one being public and the other private do lead to some important differences in promotion procedures and practices. Makerere, being much bigger, has more layers of bureaucracy in its promotion process that moves from department to school, to college, before getting to the central promotions board. While these layers provide checks and balances on each other in the process, they also render more interfaces for politics. The more people and levels involved, the more complex the mindsets and interests at play. UMU being smaller, the promotion application moves from one’s unit of work to the staffing and promotions committee, central Management, then to the University Council. Being more centralized, the politics involved are at fewer levels. This also means that checks are fewer, and the chances of

a bad judgement going through are higher. There is more room for appeal in the public than in the private university. But the appeal process itself is sometimes infiltrated by political interests, including those of the state. Whereas the nature of the two kinds of institutions differentiates promotion procedures, many of the mindsets and publication valuation dynamics highlighted here are seen to be at play at both – but more prominently at Makerere University.

Promotion is certainly one of the highly political exercises in African universities, and perhaps elsewhere. In Uganda, some of the most publicly heated tensions regarding promotion have been at Makerere University. Among the most publicized were the cases of Prof. Mahmood Mamdani vs Dr Stella Nyanzi and Assoc. Prof. Jude Ssempebwa vs Dr Ronald Bisaso and Prof. Masagazi Masaazi. Stella Nyanzi's case came into the limelight in 2016 when she stripped naked in protest of what she called Prof. Mahmood Mamdani's high handed administration at Makerere Institute for Social Research (MISR). Her application for promotion to Senior Research Fellow had not been endorsed by Mamdani, the Director of MISR, with the reason that she had refused to undertake teaching roles, which Nyanzi insisted was not part of her terms of work. Mamdani alleged that Stella was adamant because she was related to the Vice Chancellor by then, Prof. Ddumba Ssentamu. He said the VC was intent on sabotaging his leadership at MISR through Nyanzi (Okuda and Namagembe 2016). Nyanzi, who is as well an outspoken government critic, was later suspended from Makerere University leading to court battles that are still ongoing.

In the case of Jude Ssempebwa and his Dean (East African School of Higher Education Studies and Development), Ronald Bisaso, after a series internal contentions and back and forth contestations, a headline appeared in *The Observer*, a popular weekly newspaper: 'Makerere Dons in Promotion Fight' (Nangonzi 2018). In 2017, Bisaso had applied for promotion to Associate Professor, while Ssempebwa applied to be promoted to full Professor. Bisaso's was granted and Ssempebwa's rejected, which the latter blamed on the former's foul play. Ssempebwa later petitioned the Principal of his College, Masagazi Masaazi, withdrawing his earlier endorsement for Bisaso's promotion on the grounds that he had established that the latter had published some of his papers in 'quack journals' (predatory journals). 'Accepting Dr Bisaso's application after I have given you independently verifiable evidence of the inaptness of the journals where two of his papers are published would not only depict you as failing in your administrative duty of care, but also bring to question your personal motives,'⁵ he urged. His petition was not considered. In what he deemed to be malice, Ssempebwa alleged that Bisaso and Masaazi had manipulated the promotion criteria and processes to frustrate his application as he had met all required standards. Like Nyanzi's case, this one is also still ongoing upon appeal.

In an interview, a Head of Department in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences depicted the mood thus: 'we are going to have unnecessary violence over promotions. People are very bitter over promotions. I receive letters here but I can see how bitter people are ... And some of us are going to court'.

Findings from Makerere University and Umuohariewe University (UMU) show that the politics rotates around: who gets promoted, to what, how old they are, what internal networks they have, where they publish, and how one's promotion is perceived by peers in light of their own academic rank. In some regards, such as consideration of financial implications, these dynamics play out differently in public universities like Makerere and private ones such as UMU. But this paper will not delve into such peculiarities because they are not core to the argument I seek to make relating the promotion politics to implications for African publications and publishers.

The sense in which the word 'politics' is used in this paper does not denote party politics or ethnicity based power dynamics that are widely at play in Africa and her institutions. This is not to say that these do not occur at universities, but that they are not central to the factors that came up in this study. What respondents in this study deemed as politics in the promotion process were the 'games' and manipulations beyond official representations in standards and criteria – including

how standard criteria are conveniently dressed up with other elastic meanings in promotion practices. This is two-way; both performed by applicants and promotions boards. I here categorize such politics into genuine quality checks that end up being misunderstood or scapegoated, and selective or more overtly biased considerations informed by internal power struggles plus malice (which involves intrigue and settling personal scores). Both categories are found to affect African publications (from ‘native’ publishers) in various ways, especially in shaping definitions of quality, knowledge, science, authenticity, and attitudes towards different publishers. This way, beyond affecting individual candidates for promotion, these practices and their interpretations shape publication choices through their signalling effects to other scholars that intend to apply.

A member of a college Promotions Committee at Makerere intimated that, among other reasons, promotion is treasured as an incentive for publication at the university. This goes with increasing strictness on quality, especially considering that ‘predatory publishers’⁶ that get paid to publish work without rigorous review are on the rise. Consequently, more promotion applications fail to meet the standards and are thrown out. Some applicants receive such news in positive acknowledgement of the cited gaps, while others cry foul – mainly attributing the rejections to malice and bias towards African publications and some applicants. I looked at some of the rejected publications, and indeed some were wanting in quality and the issues raised about them seemed genuine – especially that some had been published without any peer review in predatory outlets. I noted though that there are no clear standard criteria for assessing the merit of publications. On the type and quality of publication to be considered for promotion, the Makerere promotions policy simply says:

Publications which appear in refereed journals are the most serious test of one’s scholarship ... Scholarship in refereed journals as well as published books and articles in published books are of academic value and should be considered. A good publication is that which is based on original research and published by professional organisations and has been peer review[ed]. (2009, 28)

While the above explanation can be appreciated in general terms and as much as it is understood that policies may not address every specific detail, at times promotions committees fill the policy silences through arbitrarily operating by ‘unwritten rules’. These may not be uniformly applied, as they largely depend on those who sit on the promotions boards at a particular time, making the process unfairly subjective.

Whereas all of the interviewed academics appreciated the need for quality assurance of publications in the promotion vetting process, many were concerned about the ‘double standards’ applied and the ‘erratic way’ of establishing criteria for selecting which publications are considered. Apparently, according to some interviewees, sometimes malicious intentions are hidden behind quality checks. Accordingly, a lecturer from Uganda Martyrs University said, ‘to be precise, when you apply [for promotion], you have to lobby. Otherwise they raise this and that’. In the explanation of one academic whose application had recently been turned down at Makerere, ‘some of them [professors on the promotions board] try to push away the ladder once they reach up ... The very publications [publishers] on the basis of which they were promoted are the ones they are throwing out now’ (interview held on 16 April 2018). Another scholar wondered, ‘you publish with a journal to one step [rank] and they accept, at the next level you publish with the same journal and they reject it!’. There are two sides to this though: It could be rationalized malice as some interviewees alleged or sometimes that the quality flaws of a publisher develop or are realized later. The latter is the case of Lambert Publishers at Makerere, which has been blacklisted due to lack of peer review, though some people had earlier been promoted on the basis of the same.

In some cases, some of the members on the promotions committees at college levels and on the central board were said to use promotion vetting exercises to settle other personal scores and frustrate real and perceived competitors. In a chat with me, Ssempebwa, whose case I cited earlier, lamented that sometimes ‘the people supposed to promote you, are the same people who are competing with you’ (15 April 2018). Hence they have to find reasons to delegitimize your application. Many of the rejected publications are from African and Asian journals. This can be explained in two ways: *First*, many journals and academic publishers in Africa certainly face a number of challenges (Oppong 2013) that affect the quality of their output. As editor of the Uganda Martyrs University monograph series (*Mtafiti Mwafrika – African Researcher*), I frequently interact with such challenges – underfunding, low quality manuscripts that are sometimes selectively sent to home publishers, understaffing, and difficulty in finding committed qualified reviewers. Testimonies from the Managing Editor of Makerere University’s newly revived Makerere Press and the Managing Editor of the same university’s Journal of Higher Education highlighted similar experiences.

The above challenges are not helped by corrupt editorial practices such as syndicate publication and cronyism which are reported to have killed Makerere’s *Mawazo* journal in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences. It is only being restored and rehabilitated currently, after over eight years in limbo, following rejections of its papers by Makerere’s central promotions board over editorial concerns. Generally, one of the biggest challenges is that facilitating publication is not really prioritized in many Ugandan universities. There are so many other competing needs to address with limited resources. The underfunding is also partly because, as one of the interviewed academics from Makerere stated in corroboration of Nyamnjoh’s (2004) observation, ‘after all they [Makerere academics] can publish elsewhere’ (interview held on 15 April 2018). Moreover, he added, publishing ‘locally’ comes along with contempt from peers and suspicion from promotions boards. And, according to the Managing Editor of Makerere University Press, for some ‘established scholars’, ‘coming back to publish at Makerere is to stoop so low’ (interview held on 16 April 2018). So it is usually early career academics that consider ‘local publication’. All these factors pose serious quality challenges and, indeed, have seen many African journals collapse after a few issues.

Looking at the politics around promotion in the two universities, one of the conspicuous overarching observations is articulately stated by the Managing Editor of Makerere Press: ‘there are other attitudes [mindsets] involved, but I think many times we also shoot ourselves in the foot’. This is in reference to some of the quality shortcomings we allow or are somehow compelled to let pass in our editorial processes, hence leading to suspicion about our outputs. The other unfortunate effect in the backdrop of postcolonial politics is that some really poor quality publications are now defended with Pan-Africanist rationalizations, something that breeds a denialism that further takes down publication quality. Sen calls this ‘reactive self-perception’, as a characteristic of the colonized mind with the effect of encouraging ‘needless hostility to many global ideas under the mistaken impression that they are Western ideas’ (Sen 2007, 89). Nevertheless, it is also clear that these quality gaps both directly and inadvertently pave the way for the reinforcement and deployment of stereotypical colonial biases that further stifle and kill African publication initiatives – especially in an environment of coloniality with mindsets skewed to the disadvantage of the ‘local’, ‘native’, and indigenous.

The *second* reason why many promotion rejections are pinned on African journals was said to be their subjection to stricter scrutiny by the committee, partly due to their suspected low quality but also widely explained to be rooted in prejudices in favour of Western publications and in doubt of African ones. Many academics placed these perceptions within wider social attitudes on things European as opposed to things African. One of the interviewees put it sarcastically:

‘of course if it is from Europe then it is ok’. This prejudice is not divorced from everyday valuation tendencies.

When buying things, we ask for England. One values a short course from Europe more than a Masters from here! It is not restricted to academia. The issue is that we should be different from the rest of society, but we are not. (Interview with a Makerere lecturer, 15 April 2018)

This echoes Bulhan (2015) and Memmi’s observations on the behaviour of the colonized, in this case mentally: ‘A product manufactured by the coloniser is accepted with confidence. His habits, clothing, food, architecture are closely copied, even if inappropriate’ ([1974] 2003, 165).

It is possible though that some of the publications of those citing colonial bias in the process actually had quality flaws shielded behind excuses. I looked at some of the rejected publications and, in my opinion, some were truly wanting. However, it could be seen that assessors’ Afro-Pessimistic biases, personal workplace issues, and genuine concerns over quality were so intricately entangled for one to precisely point at what was at play in some cases. Nevertheless, there are many examples where the prejudicial considerations stand out vividly.

The biased mindset, for instance, was manifest where a promotion applicant at Makerere received feedback that the ‘sustainability’ of one of the journals (of a Ugandan university) where he published was doubted. Ironically, no question was raised about the quality of the articles/journal and, assuming it is necessary, about the ‘sustainability’ of other European journals where some other submitted articles were published. Nuances of such bias can as well be seen in the common dualistic distinction between ‘local’ and ‘international’ journals. ‘International’ is often synonymous with either Western-based or following Western epistemic, methodological, and structural standards, while ‘local’ tends to refer to either Ugandan or African journals. This way, often what is presented as international is sometimes ‘the promotion of another local culture and knowledge to the world stage’ (Yankah, cited in Oppong 2013, 38). Yet, in this language, local tends to simultaneously imply a likelihood of low quality. It is not only meant to distinguish between journals addressed to a particular geo-linguistic audience, sometimes written in a local language (usually not English) from those for universal consumption (often in English and addressing subjects of wider concern) (Sambunjak et al. 2009). Subsequently, some emerging journals (including the predatory) have to nominally authenticate themselves by adding ‘international’ to their name, thus raising more suspicion. And many more African scholars are thus falling into traps of predatory journals that strategically brand themselves.

This mindset of African journals’ inferiority came out vividly at a research supervision workshop held at Uganda Martyrs University recently. The facilitator, a professor in his 70s from a public university, asked who among the academics in the room had published and where. One participant said he had published with Emerald,⁷ which the professor said was for beginners, before adding: ‘throw it away’. Unusually, a Western publication outlet was being referred to as substandard by an African scholar. For other journals named, he asked what their ranking was – another consideration that suffocates emerging journals from the South due to contextual factors affecting their visibility and citation. After this initial conversation, a drama ensued when another participant argued that publishing in the West and following Western standards restricts many African scholars from publishing. He then suggested that African scholars set their own standards. In utmost fury and authority, the professor cut him short, saying:

Oh my God! Thank God this came up. Never listen to a person who says that. He is an academic devil. You cannot establish your own rights. Academics is international. Let me tell you; do you know that the level you are publishing [at] here is primary school level? Com’on, thank God I came ... Don’t

even entertain that. We measure ourselves by those people [the West]. If we [who publish there] survive, you can. You fight, it is your business. Don't listen to him [urging others]. Don't promote him [urging authorities]. Please, this is a very serious matter. Don't play with academics. It is not local ...

I hope you are not trying, that Umu is going to start its own standards here. Don't try it ... This is an abomination. Don't set standards, because you are not in the business of setting standards. You are in the business of following standards. If you can set standards, it is because you have evidence. The only evidence you have is that you have failed to reach their standards. It is evidence of failure, not of success ... When people [from the West] come looking for us, it is because they have seen us in their journals. This debate is regressive. (Workshop presentation at Uganda Martyrs University, 6 March 2018)

The above vignette can be read in two insightful directions. One is the call for African academics to strive to improve the quality of their work instead of creating 'Africanist' excuses and distractions. As explained earlier, there are several cases exemplifying real quality lapses that cannot be helped by playing victim. The second indication is how some African academics have internalized their peripheral status in the publication arena (Hountondji 1996, 2002) where their role is to 'follow standards' – thus paving the way to self-inflicted epistemic violence and other associated injustices. The internalized biases displayed by such a senior academic are not limited to those academics who hold them, but rather shape the whole system through gatekeeping practices, mentorship, and, as discussed here, promotion committee appointments.

An academic from Makerere attributed mindsets like that of the above professor to the fact that many African scholars, especially the old ones who often sit on promotions committees, pursued their advanced studies from Europe and America, where they were socialized into the Western scholarly tastes and traditions.⁸ Subsequently, to use Seth Oppong's (2013, 39) coinage, many become 'more English than the Queen' in doing their work at African Universities. Of this category, Rodney had earlier observed too that '[t]hose were the ones who evolved and were assimilated. At each further stage of education, they were battered by and succumbed to the values of the white capitalist system ...' (Rodney 2012, 248). Thus even the education they propagate back home is of limited emancipatory value since it has not done much to unchain itself from its colonial roots and purposes. Okot p'Bitek mocks such scholar-elites in his *Song of Lawino and Song of Ocol*:

Their manhood was finished
In the classrooms
Their testicles
Were smashed
With large books. (1989, 117)

It is from the background of such perceptual transformation, or what Hountondji (1996) calls intellectual extroversion, that African scholars construct standards and meanings that alienate them from local publication efforts; creation of alternative spaces for voicing locally relevant knowledges that are unwanted or disregarded in 'universal' spaces; and writing in languages that can be understood better locally (Mpofu 2013; Ssentongo and Draru 2018). I will come back to this in the next section. Stripped both by internal and external dynamics, of power to define, they often remain with little choice but to abide by the theoretical, methodological, and other epistemic requirements of the West.

In so doing, as has been explained of the predicament of coloniality, African scholars take over the baton from the direct colonialist to now run the self-disregarding project. Nyamnjoh eloquently captures this drama:

Thus socialised into glorifying whiteness and the universality of the civilisation it claims, wittingly or unwittingly African creative writers have often bent over backwards to prove themselves to whites even as they write from Africa and about Africans. When we write, it is not to please our fellow primitives; it is to demonstrate to the authors of the universal civilisation that we too qualify to be counted. We virtually mimic them in all we do, and compel everyone else around us to do the same. We distance ourselves from those who take exception to such a craving for induced universalism or those who fall short of excellence in this regard. (2004, 9)

Because this inclination is held by scholars occupying decisive positions at many African universities, it finds its way into university policies and practice, thus institutionalizing epistemic injustices. In echo of this phenomenon and in agreement with Comaroff and Comaroff (2012), reacting to the Rhodes Must Fall campaign at Cape Town University, Mbembe contends:

We also agree that part of what is wrong with our institutions of higher learning is that they are ‘Westernized’.

But what does it mean ‘they are westernised’? They are indeed ‘Westernised’ if all that they aspire to is to become local instantiations of a dominant academic model based on a Eurocentric epistemic canon.

But what is a Eurocentric canon? A Eurocentric canon is a canon that attributes truth only to the Western way of knowledge production. It is a canon that disregards other epistemic traditions. (Mbembe 2015)

In the next section, I show how the politics of promotion in Uganda reinforces intellectual extraversion thereby curtailing epistemic freedom of Ugandan scholars through diminishing local publication space. I also show the wider implications of these practices to knowledge production in and for Africa.

Implications to publication and epistemic freedom in Africa

The findings presented in the foregoing section suggest that promotion considerations and politics in the two universities (and perhaps elsewhere in Africa) have a huge influence in determining where and what scholars in those institutions publish. This would be expected in any serious university, but what particularly stands out here is that the genuine quality checks and the sometimes associated biases tend to work as a disincentive for publishing with Africa-based publishers – with the exception of a few. Here we look at the wider implications of this phenomenon.

I earlier indicated that one of the advantages served by publishers in Africa, especially those that are grounded and with genuine interest in African issues, is that they provide alternative avenues for disseminating knowledge on local issues that publishers outside Africa may not find interesting or worth space on their pages (Oppong 2013) – which is a vital prerequisite for epistemic justice and pluralism to prevail in academia. Otherwise, it may not be possible to exercise what Walter Mignolo termed as ‘epistemic disobedience’ (2009, 159) – a decolonial act of refusing to be forced to fit into an exclusive conception of what is and is not knowledge. It also constitutes in practically defying the idea that ‘in terms of epistemology there is only one game in the world’ (Mignolo 2011: xii). Without alternative publication outlets, it simply means that whatever is rejected outside Africa goes straight to the dump, if it cannot be revised to fit their interests. This also limits space for production of knowledge to solve Ugandan (African) problems with home-grown solutions, not always as sieved through Western epistemic meshes.

The West has a right to determine what they can publish or not, and as such to set their standards of ‘scientific rigour’. Whereas the ideal should have been epistemic pluralism with mutual

respect for various knowledge systems and standards, I still wouldn't regard Western epistemic gatekeeping per se as 'epistemic violence' (see Mignolo, *Ibid.*). Violence would be in imposing those standards on others. In this case, when Western publication considerations are projected as universal while locking out other legitimate variances, that is where the problem is. This practice is seen in the West's undue relegation of some Southern cosmologies to 'the realm of myth, superstition, and irrationality' (Tucker 1999, 19). Sardar (1999) refers to this as the West's power to define non-conformists out of existence. And indeed, without alternative fora, such cosmologies disappear into oblivion, or into the object of study rather than the lens of analysis. Further, the argument here is not that Western scholarly and scientific standards in their diversity are mutually exclusive to those from the South or that there can be no learning from each other. Dialogue and mutual engagement are progressive, but should be grounded on mutual respect and commitment to expanding knowledge, not domination and imposition.

The suggestion here is not to polarize the North/West and South as incompatible in their approaches, rather, it is to provide space for what the other may not be in a position to publish due to contestable variations in validity measures and estimations of relevance. More importantly, relevance and justice to African scholars' local communities would also call for publishing where African audiences and gatekeepers are located. The idea is not to compromise on quality by establishing outlets simply meant to escape scholarly rigour. This would instead cause more damage. Ultimately, the onus is on African scholars and academic institutions to build credible publishers and combat the internal regressive mindsets. By not doing so, 'the non-West thus promotes Eurocentrism, both wittingly and unwittingly, and colludes in its own victimisation as well as in maintaining the global system of inequality' (Sardar 1999, 19). But how can this be negotiated in the current intricate set up, especially when some of the biases against African products are held by the Southern policy makers and gatekeepers themselves?

Memmi warns that 'the crushing of the colonised is included among the coloniser's values. As soon as the colonised adopts those values, he [she] similarly adopts his [her] own condemnation' (Memmi [1974] 2003, 165). In some ways, his view characterizes what we witness in the promotion politics above. The value in question here is that of value judgement, in which African scholars are seen to acquire both by assimilation and for survival a self-destructive taste thus becoming 'beings for the other'. But the other complication to the fate of publishing in Africa is that the quality lapses in African journals that sometimes lead to the rejection and suspicion of their products eventually scare away scholars from publishing with them too. Hence sentiments such as: 'it is more convenient to publish outside [Africa] in order not to suffer' (lecturer from UMU, interview held on 10 April 2018). Thus a combination of quality inadequacies and other genuine plus stereotypical biases plays in favour of publishing from the West.

The above dynamics are not helped by the now common grading of journals' prestige, and therefore that of the scholars that publish with them, by use of journal impact factor (JIF). Peers gauge each other on the basis of where they publish, and indeed publishing with highly ranked journals (by JIF) makes promotion much easier and boosts one's international scholarly credibility (Ssentongo and Draru 2018). The JIF measure, though helpful in some regards, has been criticized for not paying attention to disciplinary differences, inflating scores, relying on skewed citation distribution to gauge individual authors, and for basing on misleading self-citations and sometimes coercive citation (Campbell 2008; Muller and De Rijcke 2017; Lariviere and Sugimoto 2018). Nevertheless, it remains a popular measure, but one whose indicators inconsiderably pay no attention to the operational circumstances of many African journals. It should be noted that due to internet connectivity and information technology challenges, many African journals have limited or no internet presence – which severely affects their visibility and therefore citation counts. Also, on account of the biases discussed earlier and at times in response to Western editorial demands, some African authors are hesitant to cite from African

journals (Oppong 2013). Disregarded at home, neither are they really regarded outside. In effect, their impact factor remains either so low or unknown thereby furthering their cycle of misfortune as African scholars, in a bid to prove their scholarly prowess, continue to aim for high impact factor journals that are mostly in the West. This way, the cemetery of African journals is always busy.

Conclusion

The key argument I make in this paper is that, in spite of the procedural variations in promotion in Ugandan universities, the politics involved in the process plays out in ways that ultimately disincite publishing through African outlets and thereby squeeze academics out of their local audiences. The question ‘which journal is that’ which as one academic said ‘tends to meet African journals in promotion vetting exercises’ is seen to be informed by three considerations: (i) quality checks, (ii) Eurocentric/Afro-Pessimistic biases, and (iii) malice. I have shown that the above factors often play out in a complex entanglement by which sometimes it becomes hard to specifically isolate the influencing one. Sometimes quality questions are driven by malice through selectively taking advantage of criteria lacunas. Yet it is also common for quality checks to be consciously or inadvertently hinged on both rational biases and prejudicial perceptions about African publications. Through the aid of (post)colonial theorists such as Fanon, Memmi, Rodney, Sardar, and Connell, I have explained the roots of the Afro-Pessimistic biases and their attendant epistemic injustices. I argue though that whereas these theories are quite insightful in understanding promotion politics in the studied universities – especially in understanding the constructions and ideals of ‘quality’ publication, standards of knowledge/science, and self-perception – they do not explain other aspects such as malice, though they explicate its common deployment of (neo)colonial tools.

Ultimately though, in many ways, all the factors often cited in acceptance or rejection of publications submitted for promotion tend to discourage publishing in Africa therefore rendering African scholars of less local relevance. In view of genuine quality checks, with a few exceptions of African outlets, it is seen as ‘safer’ to publish with Western journals, which are generally less carefully scrutinized and thereby come with more default prestige. Whereas there may be no clear-cut ways of avoiding foul play, it becomes more difficult to malice an applicant with publications from high impact factor journals as the ‘low quality card’ that can be conveniently played on African journals is denied. Thus, it is not only outright bias against African publishers that disadvantages them. The ultimate effect is that, added to the North–South power imbalances within global scholarly practice, African scholars further marginalize themselves as to remain with very limited avenues for expression of knowledge that does not pass through the Western sieve. And, ‘as far as controversies and interpretations remain within the same rules of the game (terms of the conversation), the control of knowledge is not called into question’ (Mignolo 2009, 10). The answer to quality assurance in publication by African scholars should not be by exclusive emphasis on publishing with high ranking journals most of which are in the West. This works to reinforce epistemic walls that lock out approaches to knowledge from Uganda in particular and Africa in general that may not suit Western interests and theoretical/methodological sieves. There should be deliberate attempts at initiating, nurturing, and publicizing publication outlets in Africa so as to expand space for academic expression and scholarly negotiation. But for this to be possible, there is also the need for an education that counters perceptions that perpetuate self-deprecation by Africans.

Since it is indeed a challenge for universities to assess the quality standards of African journals where staff publish, it would be helpful to consider publications in African databases whose quality checks meet desired scholarly standards that are open to epistemic alternatives from

Africa. Databases such as African Journals Online (AJOL), Scopus, Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), Africa-Wide Information have already initiated linkages with African universities that can be used to work out more just/relevant quality gate-keeping in dissemination of knowledge from African scholars and building reputation of African journals.

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Notes

1. From <https://authorservices.taylorandfrancis.com/can-you-publish-and-still-perish/> Accessed on 13 March 2018.
2. Many interviewees used the word ‘malice’ in the sense that someone was malignantly trying to fail them in settling other personal workplace issues, out of job-related insecurities, or sheer sabotage. Some called it witch-hunt. Such malice is covered up in other reasons that are foregrounded in feedback to promotion applicants.
3. Termed by Fanon (1967) as *denegrification*.
4. <https://www.news24.com/Columnists/PrinceMashale/Of-the-colonised-mind-20100719> Viewed on 19 March 2018.
5. Jude Ssempebwa (25 February 2018). ‘Petition to Dismiss Dr. Ronald Bisaso’s Application for Promotion to the Rank of Associate Professor on Account of Publications in Predatory Journals’. Written to the Principal of the College of Education and External Studies, Makerere University.
6. The term was coined by Jeffrey Beall, a librarian. He came up with a list of predatory journals, popularly known as Beall’s List that included all journals he deemed predatory. He has since pulled it down from the internet due to what he called ‘threats and politics’. Though some of his listing criteria unfairly played against journals in developing countries, the List is still used in some universities in assessing the genuineness of journals.
7. Emerald Publishing Limited is a publisher of both academic and non-academic books and journals based in the United Kingdom.
8. Not to argue that Western scholarly tastes and traditions are homogenous, but to denote overarching orientations of which certain common standards can be cited.

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