

# Mother Earth is the Pluriversal *Panarium* of All: The Living and the Dead

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## *Modu wa taba*

*Tabakgolo sengwalweng se ke gore batho kamoka re a lekana ka maemo a goba motho. Ka lebaka le ke tshwanelo go phedishana gabotse, yo mongwe le yo mongwe a hlomphiwa mola le yena a hlompha. Phedishano e akaretja hlago kamoka. Nageng thopja ya Afrika Borwa phedishano ya mohuta wo e sale bothata le ge go na le molaotheo yo mofsa go tloga ka 1994. Mola ban aba mabu ba ema ka la gore bana ba motho re ngoathogana hlogwana ya tjie ebile lebitla la tlala ga le tsebjwe bathopi ba naga ka dikgoka ba tjwela pele go ganetja. Ga bjalo, ba shitisha phedishano ye botse.*

## Abstract

Mother Earth is the *panarium* of all who live and die in it. This is not restricted to human beings only. The principle of the equality of all human beings demands peaceful coexistence and mutual respect. This is not the case in conqueror South Africa despite the new constitutional dispensation inaugurated since 1994. The successors in title to conquest in the unjust wars of Western colonisation continue to insist that Mother Earth is their exclusive *panarium*. The conquered peoples continue to resist this insistence.

**Keywords:** conquest; Earth; justice; *panarium*, ubu-ntu

## Introduction

The title of this essay speaks to the obvious, namely, that planet Earth is the Mother of all that lives and indeed the dead as well. Through a complex and prolonged history of biological anthropology, Mother Earth emerged as the receptacle of life and transmitter of the same to all that lives. According to Hoyle (1983, 9),

Once one admits that terrestrial biology has been spurred on through evolution by a force outside the Earth itself, then the purposeless outlook of orthodox opinion becomes threatened. . . . This indeed is just what orthodox scientists are unwilling to admit. Because there might turn out to be – for want of a better word – religious connotations, and because orthodox scientists are more concerned with preventing a return to the religious excesses of the past than in looking forward to the truth, the nihilistic outlook . . . has dominated scientific thought throughout the past century.

Hoyle (1983, 18–20) goes further to argue that

Indeed it is to be doubted whether there is even one other system that operates so fundamentally on molecules composed of the commonest atoms in the Universe, the atoms of carbon, oxygen, nitrogen and hydrogen. . . . In effect, talk of a primitive aggregate collecting up potential enzymes really implies the operation of an intelligence, an intelligence which by distinguishing potential enzymes possesses power of judgment.<sup>1</sup>

Mother Earth is our repository of life. She continues to be the receiver of all that dies on land as well as in the water, the basis of life even for her. She is therefore the *panarium*, the breadbasket (Simpson 1964, 421) for all so that they may live, and the open grave for all. Understanding Mother Earth in this way means accepting that life in this earthly habitat is water-based.<sup>2</sup>

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- 1 I think it is definitely worth spending money on trying to duplicate the event in the lab and, by the same token, on SETI, because I think it is likely that there is intelligent life elsewhere (Dawkins 2007, 166). My emphasis to underline the coincidence of insight with the above citation from Hoyle.
  - 2 The anthropic principle was named by the mathematician Brandon Carter in 1974 and expanded by the physicists John Barrow and Frank Tipler in their book on the subject. The anthropic argument is usually applied to the cosmos, . . . But I will introduce the idea on a smaller, planetary scale. We exist here on Earth. Therefore Earth must be the kind of planet that is capable of generating and supporting us; however unusual, even unique, that kind of planet might be. For example, our kind of life cannot survive without liquid water. Indeed, exobiologists searching for evidence of extraterrestrial life are scanning the heavens, in practice, for signs of water. Around a typical star like our sun, there is a so-called Goldilocks zone – not too hot and not too cold, but just right – for planets with liquid water. A thin band of orbits lies between those that are too far from the star, where water freezes, and too close, where water boils (Dawkins 2007, 162–163). My emphasis to draw attention to the similarity with Hoyle's (1983) direct reference to "water" on page 49.

The waters of the rivers and the oceans are an integral part of our understanding of Mother Earth. No wonder she had become the open grave of the many forced out of Africa to be treated as slaves during the trans-Atlantic slave trade.

The problem is that like the birds of the sky, some human beings have arbitrarily decided to own exclusively some parts of Mother Earth in the name of private property. They have blocked access to the natural resources to sustain human and other forms of life as well as making life aesthetically beautiful. They insist upon control and domination over the intellectual, natural and spiritual resources of other human beings. This is the problem I examine here from various perspectives using the philosophy of *ubu-ntu* as my point of departure. In doing so, I cast my gaze also upon the power of name giving since the name *Azania* is the subject of contestation.

## Approach

My approach to the topic on hand is an African orientation in philosophy (Wiredue 1972, 10)<sup>3</sup> and all other branches of learning. I take the view that this orientation is consistent with the only pursuit of the scientific endeavour, namely, truth.

## The Struggle for Truth

The struggle for truth is as old as the emergence of *homo sapiens* on Mother Earth. It is different from “the quest” for truth in that quest connotes more the desire or wish to quench one’s thirst for something. The point about desire is that one might let it fade away with time. When this happens the quest dies. The struggle for truth is also not “the will to power” in the sense of Nietzsche. In this case one may have the will but lack the drive to actively pursue it. It is only when it is turned into action that “the will to power” turns into a form of struggle pursuing one or more goals. This reasoning on the concept of will applies also to Michel Foucault’s “the will to truth”. By contrast, struggle speaks to direct and immediate activity, in this case the activity – physical and intellectual – of pursuing one or more goals in practice.

Socrates, the Father of Western philosophy, is one example of this. He engaged in the physical activity of walking around engaging his interlocutors in critical intellectual dialogues. He engaged in these dialogues without appeal to any of the Greek gods of wisdom such as Prometheus or Coeus. Nor did he appeal to Athena, the goddess of wisdom, in justification of his critical arguments. And so, religion was not the preferred ground for his argumentation.

It is well known that his arguments ultimately led to the accusation that he was corrupting the youth. He was tried and sentenced to death. Those who sympathised with

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3 I have explained the difference between “Wiredue” and Wiredu in Ramose (2021, 32–33). Wiredu is the correct and authentic spelling.

him because they regarded his trial and sentence as travesties of justice, hatched a plan to have him escape death. He rejected it on the ground that he was willing to die in defence of the truth. He preferred the injustice of his condemnation to death on the conviction that even if he were to rise from the dead a hundred times and tried on the same terms, he would hold his steadfastness to defend the truth. He preferred a noble death convinced that truthfulness is more enduring than even a white lie. His pupil Plato was deeply disturbed. On this experience he posited the question: what is justice?

Socrates belonged to what is commonly known as the era before the appearance of Jesus Christ on Mother Earth. This appearance marked a dividing tightly porous boundary between the era of Socrates and itself. It is known as the AD – in the year of our lord, sometimes in the year of the lord with a distinct preference for the former. The entry of Jesus Christ into Mother Earth is marked by the following characteristic:

- The introduction of religion in the justification of arguments. Religion, the urge to repose submissive loyalty to a deity of one's choice, is bound up with human existence from time immemorial. Radhakrishnan (1936, 275) stated:

Religion is, in essence, experience of or living contact with ultimate reality. . . . The real is known not as the conclusion of an argument but with the certainty of the thing experienced. . . . We cannot prove the reality of God in the same way in which we prove the existence of a chair or a table. For God is not an object like other objects in nature. God is the spirit which is distinct from the knowing subject or the known object. All proofs for the existence of God fail because they conceive of God as an objective reality. Spirit is life, not thing, energy not immobility, something real in itself and by itself, and cannot be compared to any substance subjective or objective. The divine is manifested in spiritual life or experience. It is given to us in life and not established by ratiocination.

Five years after the argument cited above from the East, Gilson (1941, 141) from the West stated:

the existence or non-existence of God . . . , is a proposition whose negation or affirmation determines no change whatever in the structure of our scientific explanation of the world and is wholly independent of the contents of science as such . . . the existence of God cannot be posited as a scientific explanation for the presence of design in the world ; it is a metaphysical one; consequently, God has not to be posited as a scientific probability but as a metaphysical necessity.

Contrary to the lines in Rudyard Kipling's (1889) poem, *The Ballad of East and West*, "Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet, till Earth and Sky stand presently at God's great Judgment Seat", the insights of the two philosophers from the East and the West on the question of the existence or nonexistence of "God" meet without having to wait for the Parousia. What about the insights from the North and the South? The North is the West and the East metamorphosed into different and, sometimes even contending, cultures and civilizations. The South is the cradle of the East, the West and the North. It rests on the epistemological thesis that "you cannot teach God to a

child” (Wiredu 1998). The consequence of this argument is that theology – as the scientific defence of a particular religion – is unnecessary in indigenous African religions. The same cannot be said with regard to judaism in relation to Yahweh, christianity<sup>4</sup> in relation to the “God” of Jesus Christ and islam in relation to Allah. Here it is necessary to pause and consider the following to place in context the three religions just mentioned.

## Contextualising Judaism, Christianity and Islam

The theology of Aristotle is found in his *Metaphysics*. There he demonstrated and affirmed the thesis already stated above, namely, that “god” is a metaphysical and not a scientific probability. Averroes (Georgiadis 1993) metamorphosed Aristotle’s theology – especially on the question of eternity – but with particular reference to Allah in islam. Maimonides (Georgiadis 1993) did the same for Judaism with regard to Yahweh. Aquinas also metamorphosed Aristotle’s theology in relation to the “God” of Jesus Christ (Georgiadis 1993). He even preferred to deprive Aristotle of his name by simply referring to him as “the pagan”. This he did despite his enormous indebtedness to Aristotle’s incisive logic and argumentation on the unmoved mover – *quidquid movetur ab alio movetur* – whatever is in motion is set in motion by another.

The three philosophers mentioned in the preceding paragraph converged on one very important point, namely, the use of religion as the means of controlling human beings by instilling a particular discipline in us. Their metamorphosis of Aristotle amounted to the suppression of metaphysics and the abolition of logic. Metaphysics is thus changed into the empiricalisation of the yet-unknown by recourse to the concept of mystery defined as a truth we must believe even if we do not understand it. This is the surreptitious subversion of experience with belief. It is the arbitrary imposition of limits to reason. By this route, the struggle for truth is terminated. We turn to Western christianity to illustrate this point.

## The Struggle for Truth – *Respublica Christiana* and Beyond

The claim of “One God for all” is stated in these terms in Christian theology. I draw deliberately from the Papal Encyclical (Pius XII 1957), *Fidei Donum*, because 1957 is the year in which Ghana attained political independence only. Paragraph 19 reads in part as follows:

Of course, you know the religious tenets of those people who, although they are quick to profess that they worship God, nevertheless are easily attracting and enticing the

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4 I take the view, following Wole Soyinka, that to privilege some “gods” or “religions” with the use of the capital letter but deny the same to other gods and religions is an injustice based upon a questionable claim to superiority. Accordingly, we write christianity or any other religion with the small letter as an argument for equal treatment (Soyinka 1999, 32).

minds of many into another path which is not that of Jesus Christ, the Savior of all nations. Our heart, which is that of the common Father of all, is open to every man of good will, but We, who are the representative on earth of Him, Who is the Way, the Truth and the Life cannot contemplate such a situation without great sorrow.

This claim to the truth and catholicity – allness – is the second characteristic of christian theology. It has been asserted many times over before 1957 by many successive Popes. It is buttressed, also many times over, by the affirmation as we read in paragraphs 17, 18 and 19 that

It is an undoubted fact that it was to Peter alone and to his successors, the Roman Pontiffs, that Jesus Christ entrusted the entirety of his flock: ‘Feed my lambs, feed my sheep’. . . . This mission, or ‘sending forth,’ embraces ‘all nations . . . even unto the consummation of the world’ and did not cease with the death of the Apostles. Nay, it still continues in the bishops who are in communion with the Vicar of Jesus Christ.

And how does this continue? The answer is found in paragraphs 79 and 81:

by battling beneath the banner of the Gospel [with the] consolation . . . of a pledge of assured victory to consider that this hidden and peaceful warfare that you are waging for Holy Church is not yours alone . . .

“A peaceful warfare” even if it may be described as “spiritual” is a bathetic oxymoron beyond the mysterious. No spiritual “warfare” can be waged without the medium of the corporeal body; the embodied human being. Some of the Patristics in the *Patrologia Latina* censured compulsion to conversion. Here is one example. The African Latin Patristic, Quintus Septimius Florens Tertullianus, popularly known as Tertullian (as cited in Gutierrez 1993, 140, 511) wrote:

It is a crime of impiety to deprive persons of freedom of religion and to prohibit them from choosing their deity, that is, not to permit me to honor whom I wish to honor. No one wishes forced homage, not even human beings. . . . It is a human right and a natural right that each one be permitted to worship the God of that one’s choice. One person’s religion must neither injure nor serve another’s. It is incompatible with the nature of religion that it be forced on a person. It must be adopted spontaneously, not by force. Sacrifice is of no value unless it is offered willingly. Accordingly, when you oblige us to offer sacrifice you give your gods nothing. They have no need of unwilling sacrifice.

By appeal to yet another African Latin Patristic, the Roman Catholic Church concurs with Tertullian. We read in *Immortale Dei* (Leo XIII 1885, para. 36) that

the Church is wont to take earnest heed that no one shall be forced to embrace the Catholic faith against his will, for, as St. Augustine wisely reminds us, ‘Man cannot believe otherwise than of his own will.’

Yet, we had the fires of Namugongo in Uganda and from the ashes of this fire grew slowly the martyrs of Uganda. Over time some of them were declared blessed and we now have among them Saint Charles Lwanga. Signs are that another Saint in Limpopo is in the making, namely, Benedict Daswa (Tromp, Ndabeni, and Govender 2015).

And so, a “peaceful warfare” is possible because of the third characteristic of christian theology, namely, dogma. For this we turn to *Libertas* (Leo XII 1888, para. 4):

As the Catholic Church declares in the strongest terms the simplicity, spirituality, and immortality of the soul, so with unequalled constancy and publicity she ever also asserts its freedom. These truths she has always taught, and has sustained them as a dogma of faith, and whensoever heretics or innovators have attacked the liberty of man, the Church has defended it and protected this noble possession from destruction.

Radhakrishna (1936, 287) argues against dogma in these terms:

Intellectualism admits the possibility of attaining a perfect system of divine knowledge. . . . Intellectual religion pledges us to rigid definitions and obsolete dogmas. It encourages a hardness of belief almost mathematical in its rigidity. . . . It declares that what it affirms is the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. . . . The spirit in us is life and it resists death in all its forms, blind instinct, unthinking custom, dull obedience, intellectual inertia and spiritual dryness. A man’s religion must be his own and not simply accepted on trust or imposed by authority. While trust and authority may put him on the way, it is his own independent search that will take him to the goal.

Dogma decided the fate of Galileo Galilei. Three hundred and fifty years later, an indirect apology was given to him (New Scientist 1992):

The emergence of the theme of complexity probably marks, in the history of the natural sciences, a stage as important as was the stage to which the name of Galileo was attached, when a univocal model of order seemed to impose itself. Complexity precisely indicates that, to account for the richness of reality, it is necessary to resort to a plurality of models.

When this speech was released to the public, “the round Earth’s imagined corners”<sup>5</sup> were still a fixed reality in the bottomless roots of dogma. The admission that Galilei was right appears to have strengthened rather than abolished the everyday language of “the four corners of the Earth”. Despite its incurable infertility, dogma can give birth even to new churches as Thomas More’s *A man for all seasons* (Bolt 1996) testifies.<sup>6</sup>

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5 I am referring to the title and content of one of John Donne’s “Holy Sonnets”.

6 It seems worthwhile, in examining dogma, to reflect upon the description of reality (i) “as positive truth”, (ii) “as negative truth” and (iii) “as interrogative truth”. “We must create interrogative structures in our societies and develop an interrogative thinking. . . . positive truth needs a *creative conscience*; negative truth needs a *corrective conscience*; the interrogative truth needs a *critical conscience*” (Philippides 1990, 125).

Sarton ([1927] 1950) understood dogma as one of the fundamental obstacles to the struggle for truth. He observed (p. 5) that

. . . until relatively modern times, theology was an intrinsic part of science, and not only that, but, in the opinion of most men, all other sciences were subordinated to it . . . By some strange concatenation of circumstances they [‘our ancestors’] were brought to believe that a number of theological statements were absolutely certain. In those days the art of observation was so undeveloped (let alone the art of experimentation) that the facts which it revealed seemed very changeable and shaky; whatever positive knowledge they had was not very reliable; any one of their scientific statements could easily be challenged. Compared with that, the theological constructions seemed unshakable; they were not based upon observation, hence no amount of observation could destroy them; they were not based upon deduction, hence no amount of logic could impugn them. They stood apart and above the world of experience.

Dogma is against science. In his argument for the disestablishment of science Bronowski (1971, 235) submits that

The second kind of moral questions, those of *integrity*, derive from the conditions of work which science imposes on those who pursue it. Science is an endless search for truth, and those who devote their lives to it must accept a stringent discipline. For example, they must not be a party to hiding the truth, for any end whatever. There is no distinction between means and ends for them. Science admits no other end than the truth, and therefore it rejects all those devices of expediency by which men who seek power excuse their use of bad means for what they call good ends.

According to dogma, salvation is impossible outside of the Roman Catholic Church. Waclaw Hryniewicz (1998) focuses on the theological meaning of “heaven” and “hell”. Instead of the concept “heaven” he uses the expression “the Kingdom of God”. It is understood that “the Kingdom of God” is already here on Earth but “not-yet-here” not to celebrate an apparent contradiction but to suggest that the “not-yet-here” must be understood in the eschatological sense. It will attain fulfilment at the end of things when “God” will reappear at the Parousia (The last judgement).

Against this background, Hryniewicz (1998) examines the question whether or not “non-believers” can be redeemed, that is, can “non-believers” also enter “the Kingdom of God”? “Non-believers” here refers to all those who do not profess the Christian faith as understood and practiced by the Roman Catholic Church. In this sense, “non-believers” is almost like “non Roman Christians”. This is meaningful if one takes note of the fact that Hryniewicz situates his question in the Roman Catholic Church’s Council of Florence (1438–1455). He takes note of the major thesis of this Council, namely, that no one outside of the Catholic Church, “pagan, Jew, heretic and schismatic” may become a participant in eternal life. This thesis is sometimes rendered in Latin as *ex Sacrosanta Romana Ecclesia nulla salus*.

Hryniewicz (1998, 62) clarifies the above thesis by quoting the following directly from the Council of Florence:

The unity of the Church's body is of such great importance that church sacraments can help in redemption only those people who stay in this unity and only they can get the eternal reward through fasts, charity and other pious deeds and practices of Christian life. No one who stays outside the Catholic Church in disunity with It can be redeemed, no matter how great his charity and although he might have spilt blood for Christ.

He notes a change of mind on this over 500 years later in the Second Vatican Council. However, the change of mind does not deflect his attention to the main question he is examining. Here we wish to underline two crucial and interrelated answers to the question. It is best to quote them in full:

The failure of the plan of redemption cannot be called the triumph of divine justice or just retribution for the sins of life. An ordinary earthly feeling of justice shudders to think of eternal punishment for faults of sinful creatures committed in time because of weakness, blindness, anger or simply stupidity. This incommensurability of time and eternity induces many people today to favour the doctrine of reincarnation rather than the eternity of Hell. In this doctrine deeds committed in time are also subject to expiation in time, not in eternity. Although the doctrine on reincarnation is not easy to be reconciled with Christian teaching (. . .) it is a warning against formulating the theory of eternal torment. (Hryniewicz 1998, 68)

By way of emphasis Hryniewicz (1998, 70) elucidates the above citation thus:

Revelation as a whole can hardly be reconciled with the doctrine on Hell understood as an eternal reality opposed to the Kingdom of God. Hell is not a work of God. Hell is created by man, for himself and others. God does not create Hell for anyone. If I had thought so I would have insulted my Creator. I would have belittled him and made him look like the punishing and revengeful man. The faith in eternal Hell is in fact the faith in the power of evil, a sign of disbelief in Christ's power of salvation although he is praised at the same time for his victory over death, Hell and Satan. One of the greatest contradictions of Christian theology lies in this.

We infer from the two citations above that "the Kingdom of God" is not a place where "Our Father who art in heaven" resides. The "in heaven", being the locative case, leaves no doubt that "heaven" is a place to be reached only after death. The same reasoning applies to the concept of "hell". Against this and, in concurrence with Hryniewicz, we contend that "hell" is the renunciation of love and getting married to the practice of inhumanity and cruelty to other human beings, including all other beings. Concerning the latter, Samuel T. Coleridge's poem, *The rime of the ancient mariner*, is a pertinent example. After shooting the Albatross, the torment that followed his cruel deed impelled the ancient mariner to tell the lesson he learnt from his cruelty. He put it thus:

Farewell, farewell! but this I tell  
To thee, thou Wedding-Guest!  
He prayeth well, who loveth well  
Both man and bird and beast.

He prayeth best, who loveth best  
All things both great and small;  
For the dear God who loveth us,  
He made and loveth all.

Hell is the evil that we do unto others and others do unto us. It is not a place to be found somewhere outside of this world. Hell is the human heart turned against goodness. It is the renunciation of *ubu-ntu* or the *pu jen*, an unbearing heart; a heart that cannot bear suffering and strives to remove it. Hell belongs thoroughly and pre-eminently to the sphere of human relations. It ceases to exist when human beings decide to share even the last crumb of bread in recognition of each other's right to life. Allowing oneself to live complacently in the luxury of Constantia in the Western Cape and being indifferent to the condition of those who live in *amatyotyombe* (conditions of life below the dignity of the human being) in the Eastern Cape or Khayelitsha; to live in Houghton with indifference to the condition of those in Alexandra township; to wine and dine in Waterkloof in total forgetfulness of Atteridgeville and Mamelodi is to celebrate the country-wide contrast between the heaven and hell that we witness every day.

The relevant ethical proverb underlining this kind of sharing in Northern SeSotho – one of the vernaculars of the indigenous peoples in conqueror South Africa – is that *bana ba motho ba ngwathogana tlhogwana ya tjie*. Living in such sorority and fraternity is to live in heaven because heaven is life here on Mother Earth thoroughly permeated and soaked in goodness towards one another. In this situation, the prospect of a trans-empirical disaster after death is neither necessary nor desirable. Even Nietzsche's *Beyond good and evil* turns out to be “a tale, told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing” (Shakespeare, Macbeth, Act 5).

From the point of view of the philosophy of ubuntu, religion does not require theology. *Abaphansi, badimo* do not compel anyone to establish a church as the passage to future eternal bliss or doom. Dogma is philosophically incompatible with the rheomode logic I elaborate upon in chapter three of my book, *African philosophy through ubuntu*. The religious option for *aBantu* is already embedded in our philosophy of *ubu-ntu*. We now turn to other aspects of life in conqueror South Africa.

## Thou Art Peter

We have identified the three characteristics of christian theology founded upon the Petrine commission: “thou art Peter and upon this rock, I shall build my church” – *tu es petrus et super hanc petram aedificabo ecclesiam meam*. The successors in title to

conqueror South Africa understood and were motivated by this commission as the preamble to the 1961 constitution of this country testifies. To satisfy ourselves about this we visited the Voortrekker Monument recently with the express purpose to be informed about the weight of the three antiquated but huge Bibles locked in the basement of the Monument. For this purpose, we took a scale along to have them weighed. Alas! We were not permitted to weigh the Bibles. Instead, the curator informed us that each of the three Bibles weighed a minimum of 3.1 kg, the normal weight of a newly born baby.

A 10 kg plastic bag full of the appropriate content can feed some of the uncaged birds of Mother Earth for at least three weeks. This is a life-giving gesture. A 10 kg plastic bag full of a variety of seeds can be distributed to people for planting and harvesting. How many more people can have seeds distributed amongst them from a 9.3 kg plastic bag? But the travellers from the antique lands of Western Europe preferred to bring along 9.3 kg of inedible paper. After they had conquered the indigenous peoples in the unjust wars they waged against them, they force-fed them the message of inedible paper in the name of conversion to christianity. It seems the eagerness to convert others permitted haughty disregard for the following commonsense question. If eating inedible paper can cause constipation, would conversion not cause religious indigestion? Such is the recipe of conversion continuing to reap only religious intoxication as we see believers eating grass, rats and mice and doomed with pesticides.

Is this “Father of all religion” free from racism against blacks? With regard to conqueror South Africa it may be sufficient to remember the Reverend Beyers Naude and his decision to form the Christian Institute of South Africa to answer this question in the negative. For a short answer we turn to Goldenberg (2009). In his distinctly erudite and critical reflection on Benjamin Isaac’s book, *The invention of racism in classical antiquity*, Goldenberg examines the fact that “Isaac does not discuss Black Africans, the one group for which, in our time, the term racism is most closely associated. Isaac gives his reasons for this exclusion but as I thought about it, I began to realize that anti-Black racism is of an entirely different sort than the racism that is discussed in this book”. He includes in his criticism of Isaac’s book the symbolism of good and evil as found both in the patristic and the rabbinic traditions, including “the theology of Qumram”.

He concludes that

in considering the origins of racism in regard to the black African, I find that color symbolism played a key role. The very dark skin color of the African was interpreted negatively in the classical world (as a color of ill omen and death), in Philo (as evil), and in Rabbinic literature (as sin). Christian interpretation then adopted this symbolism, greatly expanding its application for its own exegetical and theological purposes. From here, it influenced the West’s developing racism against black Africans. . . . Anti-black sentiment seems to be different from the hostile thinking encountered against other peoples. Against others it is for what they do; against Blacks it is for what they are. And what they are, that is their blackness, is found to be objectionable because (a) it most

visibly indicates their otherness, their somatic dissonance, and (b) its symbolic value connotes a host of negative notions. . . . anti-Black sentiment is truly color prejudice. (Goldenberg 2009, 99–100)

## Religion and Politics

We have dwelt on religion at some length to underline the point that it plays a crucial role in the day-to-day life of human beings whether or not they are agnostics or atheists. Yet, we are familiar with the well-known Marxist claim that “religion is the opium of the masses”. The opiate intoxication of religion is counterbalanced by the thesis that religion is oriented towards affirming life and resisting death also in the sense of seeking good and avoiding evil.

Religion is an eternal revolutionary because no order of life can ever satisfy it. It demands the most radical transformation of man and society. It will not be content until a new social order with basic economic justice, racial brotherhood and equality, free intellectual and spiritual co-operation and true friendship among the nations is established. (Radhakrishnan 1936, 288)

Understood in this way, religion is an ethical revolutionary constantly questioning any “order of life” – economics, law and politics – in terms of truth, justice and peace for all. We take cognisance of the fact that many of the founding fathers of political independence in Africa were either christian or moslem having been either willing or innocent heirs to the compulsion to convert to either christianity or islam. The reason for the compulsion was that the religions of the indigenous peoples in Africa were based on superstition and that these peoples were “uncivilised”. This reason – in the case of Roman Catholicism – strengthened the justification derived from the Petrine Commission, “Thou art Peter and upon this rock I shall build my church (*tu es Petrus et super hanc petram aedificabo ecclesiam meam*).”

### *Lebitla la tlala ga le tsebjwe*

*Lebitla la tlala ga le tsebjwe* means that death and burial from hunger in the midst of plenty are unknown in African culture. A stronger less literal but ethically significant meaning of this Northern SeSotho (Sepedi) proverb is that no one ought to die from hunger. The proverb is much more than the seed to plant the tree of life for everyone; life worthy of the eminent and inalienable dignity of the human being.

The problem is that the original injustice of Western colonialism through the unjust wars it waged against the indigenous peoples in Africa continues to ensure that this seed falls on the arid white soil of capitalism. Many arguments have been advanced and practical steps had been taken to demonstrate that capitalism – a socio-economic system “unjust at its root” (Pope Francis 2013, para. 59) – can have a human face (Richer 2018, 114, 117, 187, 190). But none of these have eradicated the injustice at the root of capitalism.

This may be illustrated by reference to the unique historical experience that for more than 500 years, the indigenous peoples in Africa – conquered in the unjust wars of Western colonisation – continue to live in a daily survival state of emergency despite the plenty that is available. President Kennedy declared in his inaugural speech in 1961 that it was possible to satisfy every human being’s right to food on Mother Earth. To this day, capitalism is stubborn unto death on its refusal to satisfy the human right to food globally. This colossal historical, structural, systemic and systematic violation of the human right to food is ethically indefensible.

Mothers poison their children. When they are sure that their children shall die, they then commit suicide. Other mothers dash to give birth alone in secret. After delivery, they throttle their beloved newborn baby and pack it up in a plastic refuse bag. Sometimes, the unerring snuffle of dogs saves the baby from this undignified burial. Ironically, the case of culpable homicide or manslaughter is opened against the mother. Although this is correct, it is a diversion of attention from the main and real culprit, namely, capitalism – a socio-economic system “unjust at its root”.

Shakespeare’s Lady Macbeth, willing to crush the skull of her newborn baby for the sake of fame and glory, is the best example of a mother freed from economic strangulation but imprisoned in the contemplation of cold-blooded killing of the innocent. Such women are intoxicated by the overdose of luxurious economic freedom. They ought to be urgently detoxicated. When they are sober, they must embrace the ethics of ubu-ntu predicated on the maxim that “preserve life, avoid killing”.

For much more than 500 years, Mother Africa has been reduced to a *Mater Dolorosa* – the mother of sorrows – bearing the yoke of the triple injustice of economicide, epistemicide and religicide fuelled by the violent Western impulse to “civilise” and to “christianise”. Blindfolding the subjugated, “The wretched of the Earth”, with a litany of human rights based upon the unjustified violation of the fundamental human right to life, is a travesty of justice. The time is long overdue to affirm preventable historical, structural, systemic and systematic death from hunger as a crime against the inalienable and inviolable human right to life.

Capitalism is a direct and strategic attack on this right. Pope Leo XIII (1891, para. 10) stated that “since the domestic household is anterior both in idea and in fact to the gathering of men into a commonwealth, the former must necessarily have rights and duties which are prior to those of the latter, and which rest more immediately on nature. If the citizens of a State – that is to say, families – on entering into association and fellowship, experienced at the hands of the State hindrance instead of help, and found their rights attacked instead of being protected, such associations were rather to be repudiated than sought after”.

The new tree of life ought to and shall be grown upon the black humus soil that *lebitla la tlala ga le tsebjwe*.

## Against an Ethically Errant Constitution

Two Latin verbs, namely, *con-statio -uere (constatuere)*, to cause to stand and, *con-sto -stare (constare)* to stand in a fixed relation to some person or thing have the connotation of cum – with – appearing as the prefix “con”. Add to these, *constituere*, to decide. The motive force causing to stand in a fixed relation to some person is the collective “we” since “with” necessarily requires at least two human beings. By virtue of their right to reason the collective “we” cause the coming into being of *kgosi* and fix by collective decision the mutual relations between the king and *batho*, the people. Thus con-stitution means to decide to stand together in fixed relations based upon decisions arrived at collectively. The people have thus decided to reason together and to stand by the decision arrived at through collective deliberation. *Batho* is the *demos* – the people – and their collective deliberation is the *kratos* – the force that moves them to a decision. This is democratic constitution making that warrants the description, constitutional democracy. For some this is bantu-cracy and for others it is *demo*-cracy. The epistemological implications of each conception have the potential for divergent and even contending consequences in practice.

A constitution worth its name is an ethically justified response to an encounter with other human beings, including everything around and surrounding all human beings. Only an ethically defensible response to encounter with other human beings confers political legitimacy upon a constitution.

## The Quest for Truth Is Inseparable from Philosophy and Science

Patrick Bond (2005) described the political dispensation of 27 April 1994 as an “elite transition”. He was undoubtedly correct in this.

In his book, *Lost in transformation*, Terreblanche (2012) underlines the point made by Bond with incisive boldness and undisguised disclosure. His book is about the politics of conqueror South Africa. It is about the economy of the country. On this topic, his focus is pointedly on the deliberate and inhuman systemic and systematic unilateral racial accumulation of wealth by whites at the expense of the indigenous peoples conquered in the unjust wars of Western colonisation. It is an elucidation of why and how the economy of conqueror South Africa is linked to the dominant global capitalist system. With unwavering courage and clarity of expression, Terreblanche (2012, 63–64) emphasised the point made by Bond in these terms:

The ideological shifts that took place in the African National Congress’s (ANC ‘s) economic views from 1990 until 1996 can only be described as breathtaking and even revolutionary. The ideological shifts from an explicitly socialist and redistributive approach towards embracing the American ideologies of neoliberal globalism and market fundamentalism were so radical that all kinds of ‘unholinesses’ must have taken place behind the scenes during those six years. From 1990 Nelson Mandela and Harry Oppenheimer met regularly for lunch or dinner and from early in the 1990s the Mayoral

Executive Committee (MEC) met regularly with a leadership core of the ANC at Little Brenthurst, Oppenheimer's estate. When other corporate leaders joined the secret negotiations on the future of the economic policy of South Africa, the meetings were shifted to the Development Bank of Southern Africa, where the secret meetings took place during the night. During these meetings an elite compromise gradually emerged between the WTA (under the leadership of the MEC), a leadership core of the ANC, and American and British pressure groups. The secret negotiations reached a climax in November 1993. At that stage South Africa was (p. 63) being governed by the Transitional Executive Council (TEC) comprised of eight members of the NP government and eight members of the ANC leadership core. The TEC decided that South Africa needed a loan of \$850 million from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to help tide the country over balance of payments difficulties. Before the IMF granted the loan to South Africa it requested the TEC to sign a document about economic policy of the future government. . . . The document committed the TEC to the ideologies of neoliberalism and market fundamentalism. The TEC reached agreement on a historic compromise in November 1993, the elite compromise, which is the foundation on which the new South Africa has been based since 1994.

Terreblance (p. 71–72) continues:

As the power and privileges of black elitism were consolidated over the past eighteen years, the impoverished black majority was not only neglected, but actually betrayed by the ANC's leadership core. . . . For the MEC and the rest of the corporate sector the 'great prize' was to be exonerated of the huge apartheid debt that accumulated on their 'accounts' as they exploited black labour relentlessly over a period of a hundred years. On this issue the MEC outmanoeuvred the leadership core of the ANC by clever deal-making in the process of which the South African corporations were empowered to metamorphose themselves unjustifiably from ugly apartheid ducklings with a heavy apartheid debt on their shoulders into South African corporations exonerated of their apartheid debt. . . . With the two-stage metamorphosis the ugly apartheid ducklings were miraculously transformed into supposedly beautiful transnational swans, free to swim in all the global seas and out of reach of those South Africans who wanted them to pay wealth tax.

It is politically significant that Terreblanche is known never to have been challenged publicly by either the ANC or other participants in the secret talks on the veracity of his disclosure. He appears also not to have been questioned on the timing of the disclosure.<sup>7</sup>

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7 This observation on the veracity and the timing of the disclosure applies also to the books of two other insiders to the "secret talks" on the transition to the "new" South Africa. The books are: *Geheime gesprekke en die einde van Apartheid Eindstryd*, by W. Esterhuysen in 2012 in Afrikaans, later translated into English as *Endgame Secret talks and the end of Apartheid* and *Secret revolution Memoirs of a spy boss*, by N. Barnard in 2015. The author of this latter book was closest to the "secret talks", particularly with regard to their organisation. It is politically significant that the triplets of truth, namely, Terreblanche, Esterhuysen and Barnard, all belong to the Afrikaner tribe among the white tribes of conqueror South Africa. It looks like more than a happy coincidence that the books of Terreblanche and Esterhuysen were published in the same year, 2012. Equally interesting is the fact

What he describes as the “actual betrayal of the poor” can hardly be seen as a “breakthrough” in ethical terms. It is trespass against the bounds of gullibility to claim a “breakthrough” on deals designed to intensify and multiply the ethically unjustified deadly violence of the historical–structural pauperisation of the already economically and intellectually poor for the selfish benefit of the few.

However, from the point of view of the successors in title to the Western colonial conquest in unjust wars together with the volunteers to the defence of the “actual betrayal of the poor”, the outcome is a “breakthrough”. One of the methods used to protect this design is the tactical transition from parliamentary sovereignty to constitutional supremacy in defence of white conqueror privileges under the banner of a Bill of Rights for all. Rights are coeval with the contingent ontological existence of all human beings, including the living-dead (“ancestors”). A Bill of Rights feeding selfishly on the empty stomachs of the many can hardly be an attraction to the hungry downtrodden.

A constitutional dispensation that affirms and endorses the “actual betrayal of the poor” for the benefit of the plutocrats is thoroughly devoid of ethical legitimacy. When the well-being of the people ceases to be the supreme law – *salus populi suprema lex* – then necessity overcomes law – *necessitas vincit legem*. Necessity then laughs at the fetters (chains) of the law – *necessitas legum vincula irridet* reaffirming that Mother Earth is the *panarium* of all who live and die in her.

“[T]he right to have a share of earthly goods sufficient for oneself and one’s family belongs to everyone. . . . If a person is in extreme necessity, he has the right to take from the riches of others what he himself needs” (Second Vatican Council 1965, para. 69). “Extreme necessity” need not be sudden and spectacular like an earthquake or the tsunami. On the contrary, the inevitability of massive but slow deaths caused by the historical structure of the contemporary global economic relations places the victims in a situation of “extreme necessity”. It is no defence that the right to private property, material or intellectual, imposes limits in advance on the kind of action that those in “extreme necessity” may take for the sake of their individual and collective survival. The right to private property is not absolute (John Paul II 1991, para. 30).

In view of this, it is vital for Africa and all human beings of goodwill to recall that

The entire colonial history is a grave offence against the dignity of our dead and of their offspring. The loss of human lives through forced labour and the slave trade deprived the continent of its essential life force and impoverished it. The exploitation of natural resources by colonial powers – for their own profit and without regard for the local population – demands a new form of justice today. The now-living African population feel that the black person has been unjustly treated by the industrial nations as these

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that the books of Esterhuysen and Barnard – three years between them – were published by the same publisher.

have greatly benefited from the injustices against their forefathers through the prevailing economic structures. Instead of compensation, the African continent is increasingly finding itself under the wheels of international exploitation.

Today, when there is so much talk about human rights and their violation, the position of the dead, chiefly in Africa, cannot be forgotten. The deceased remind us that history is still in the making and that the struggle for justice by the forefathers to secure for their offspring a better, more just and peaceful world order must not be dismissed as having been in vain. (Bujo 1998, 155)

Bujo's argument from the perspective of the African experience – the experience of the indigenous peoples conquered in the unjust wars of Western colonisation – calls to mind the ethical position enunciated eleven years earlier than his:

Unfortunately, from the economic point of view, the developing countries are much more numerous than the developed ones; the multitudes of human beings who lack the goods and services offered by development are *much more numerous* than those who possess them. We are therefore faced with a serious problem of unequal distribution of the means of subsistence originally meant for everybody, and thus also an unequal distribution of the benefits deriving from them. And this happens not through the *fault* of the needy people, and even less through a sort of *inevitability* dependent on natural conditions or circumstances as a whole. Therefore, political leaders, and citizens of rich countries considered as individuals, especially if they are Christians, have the moral obligation, according to the degree of each one's responsibility, to take into consideration, in personal decisions and decisions of government, this relationship of universality, this interdependence which exists between their conduct and the poverty and underdevelopment of so many millions of people. (John Paul II 1987, para. 9)

## Affirming that Mother Earth is the Pluriversal *Panarium* for and of Every Living Being

The incorporation of the “Coloured” and Indian peoples into the constitutional history of conqueror South Africa in 1983 happened without legislation on “reconciliation”.<sup>8</sup> This negligent disregard of these peoples is already affirmed in the Freedom Charter of 1955. The Freedom Charter declares firmly that “South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white”. It is an imperative of reason to recognise that the affirmation just cited terminates with a comma. This means that the meaning of this affirmation is to be ascertained by reading the whole sentence until we reach the full stop. In our movement towards the full stop, it is necessary to acknowledge the point of logic that “all” does not mean some. If it is true that “South Africa belongs to all who live in it”, then “black and white” are already included in “all”. What then is the reason for restricting this “all”

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8 For a distinction between “the indigenous conquered peoples” as well as a prior discussion of issues pertaining to the paragraph immediately following after this one, see Ramose (2007, 319–322). This article contains Ramose's objections to the appellation “Coloured”. These are elaborated further in Ramose (2016, 547).

and turning it into “some”, precisely by identifying only “black and white”? The fact is that there were “Coloureds” and Indians in Kliptown where the Freedom Charter was adopted and declared. Why were they not identified specifically and separately like “black and white”? Why the complete and total silence about them?

In answering the above question, it is crucial to keep in mind that the concept “black” did not at that time have the same meaning it acquired since the late 1960s through the philosophy of the Black Consciousness Movement. At that time, the concept “black” meant “native”. This is the meaning in the original name, South African Native National Congress later renamed African National Congress. What is the meaning of “native” used by Sol Plaatje ([1916] 2017)? The Western colonial conqueror reaffirmed this meaning by establishing the “Native Affairs Commissioner” and enacting the 1913 Native Land Act.

It is probably safe to assume that the successors in title to Western colonial conquest dropped “native” and replaced it with Bantu because the former was an admission that the land did not belong to the Western colonial conqueror. The admission was evidenced by the existence of British Kaffraria and Kaffraria proper in the his-tory of conqueror South Africa. The suffix -ia, well known to signify a land and it’s peoples, like Mongol-ia, Ethiop-ia, Bulgar-ia and Russ-ia is testimony that the land belonged to the Kaffirs.<sup>9</sup>

We read that

On the 25th of December, 1497, three small Portuguese vessels sailed slowly up the South African coast past the Bluff of Natal. . . . It was a land of exceeding loveliness, but no European had before gazed on its beauties or heard the thunder of the breakers on its shores. In honour of the day, Commander, Vasco da Gama, named it Natal. For two hundred years it remained merely a name to white men, and even down to the beginning of last century it was inhabited entirely by Kaffirs. (Palmer 1924, 217)

We read further that

Even in the remote parts of the Colony an occasional Jew is found. Commissary-General de Mist, travelling with secretary Lichtenstein, was entertained, as Lichtenstein records, near the Kaiman’s River by Herz Grudnstadt, a baptized Jew. The Jew apologized for the makeshift wooden hut to which he welcomed the great man. He had built it himself after his house had been plundered and burnt by Kaffirs who had recently made their appearance in those parts.

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9 According to Wikipedia, “The word ‘Kaffraria’ came to refer specifically to the Xhosa lands in what is now the Eastern Cape. Later, the western Xhosa lands which fell under British rule came to be known as British Kaffraria, while the still independent Xhosa territory to the east in the Transkei region was simply known as Kaffraria proper and would be incorporated into the Cape Colony later. The term Kaffraria stems from the derogative word ‘Kaffir’ which was used as a term for Black African inhabitants from the Arabic Kafir that is usually translated into English as ‘disbeliever’ or ‘non-believer’, i.e. a non-Muslim or ‘one without religion’.”

New members meanwhile were being added to the society, among them, in 1846, Aaron and Elias de Pass. The de Pass brothers were prominent in the expansion of the Cape coastal trade, and the important role they played in other South African economic developments is described in Chapter 19. Elias, a mere youth, left Cape Town to fight in the Kaffir wars after hearing, at a meeting of the society, of Joshua Davis Norden's death in battle. On his return, with a slight assegai wound and the rank of lieutenant, he assumed the office of honorary secretary to the congregation. (Herrman 1955, 5, 10)

We read, yet again, that

The white inhabitants of Salisbury, in 1891, had sent a petition to the Administrator demanding that no further contracts should be given to Kaffirs while white artisans were unemployed: the Administrator accepted the argument at once, declaring that he 'fully recognized the prior claim for consideration of the white population' . . . In a small kraal between King William Town and East London, in South Africa, a blind English lady lived at this time with the Kaffirs, who treated her with kindly courtesy: occasionally they took her into town to beg from the white people, but in the evening, she always returned to the kraal, and shared her profits with her hosts." (Morris 1968, 145, 229)

Visser, the Afrikaner poet, writes in the first stanza of his poem, *Amakeia*:

<i>In die skadu van die berge</i>	In the shade of the mountains
<i>Bos-beskut aan alle kant,</i>	Covered with forest on all sides
<i>Staan alleen die hartbeeshuisie</i>	Stands only a little wattle and daub house
<i>Op die grens van Kafferland.</i>	On the boundary with Kafferland.

Visser was in no doubt that many readers would know the meaning of "Kafferland". The "Amaxosas" are the inhabitants of "Kafferland" from time immemorial. The territorial boundary between the "Amaxosas" and the land where Amakeia lived was built upon the ethically unjustifiable "right of conquest" acquired by the West in its unjust wars of colonisation. Visser, and all the other members of the white tribes of conqueror South Africa are the successors in title to this questionable "right". The poem is in praise of a loving and faithful woman black servant who stood in defence of a white child she was caring for when the "Amaxosas" threatened to kill it. The "Amaxosas" replied that "if you cannot be separated in life then remain united in death" and, then they killed both Amakeia and the little white child. What remained after this in the Amatola cliffs was the song wind of winter, through the reeds and the moonshine, "Tula-Tula – stil, my kind!", "Quiet, quiet – silent, my child!"

The above citations together with Visser's poem leave no doubt as to whom the land called South Africa belongs from time immemorial. Title to the territory called South Africa was and still is vested in the indigenous peoples conquered in the unjust wars of Western colonisation. Since the colonisation of this country by the West, the conquered peoples of this country have lived in Kakania (De Souza Santos 2014, 8) under a deadly kakistocracy. The time is overdue for the establishment of Azania; where all its peoples shall live under the life-giving *feta kgomo o tshware motho based on motho ke motho*

*ka batho, umuntungumuntu ngabanyebantu.* These two ethical maxims are the foundations of bantocracy in the yet-to-be-born Azania.

“The east African coast was known to the Greek and Roman traders of the early centuries AD. They referred to the region as ‘Azania’. The earliest known written reference to the land of Azania is in a first-century Greek handbook. The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea (‘The Voyage of the Indian Ocean’). This was written in the great Egyptian trading port of Alexandria in about 100 AD. ... What is known for sure is that by at least the fifth century AD, Bantu-speaking farmers and fishermen were well-established along the east African coast. . . . Arabic writers of the time referred to the main central region of the east African coast as ‘the Land of the Zenj’ (sometimes spelt ‘Zanj’)” (Shillington 1989, 122, 124). Is there any reason to doubt that the Bantu-speaking peoples in conqueror South Africa are the genetic and historical kin of the Azanians in the east coast of Africa?

“Africa” was initially reserved for the North-West region of the continent in the Mediterranean cultural space. It was the region subjugated alternately by the Greeks and the Romans. The latter occupied it for more than 600 years. Over time – under the banner of Western colonisation – the whole continent came to be known as “Africa”. This was not by way of natural growth. It was a coerced imposition. Although Azania referred to the eastern region of “Africa”, it may, through consensus replace South Africa; a mere geographic index with a subtle but heavy denial that the country so named by the Western colonial conqueror was populated by human beings. To this, self-interested Western historiography subscribes to the enigmatic theory that only the Khoisan peoples inhabited the area where the 1652 Dutch voyagers settled.

One of the startling implications of this historiography is that the Khoisan peoples have no connection whatsoever with the established scientific position that homo sapiens, including homo sapiens sapiens, idulta originates in east Africa, Ethiopia. The meaning of this self-interested historiography is the preposterous conclusion that the Khoisan peoples sprouted like grass in the area where the 1652 Dutch settlers “discovered” them. Such is the absurdity of historiography whenever it diverts from the only reason for the existence of science and philosophy, namely, the pursuit of truth.

The struggle for Azania is indeed the demand for the reaffirmation of the contingent ontological equality of all human beings. There is no need for Yahweh, Jesus Christ, Allah or Karl Marx to help recognise and uphold this evident truth. It is a truth that is visible to the blind and audible to the deaf. It is a truth loudly spoken by the dumb and cherished by everyone otherwise abled. It is salutary to note that contemporary science reported as one of its findings from the Human Genome project that “At the DNA level, we are all 99.9 percent identical. That similarity applies regardless of which two individuals from around the world you choose to compare. Thus, by DNA analysis, we humans are truly part of one family” (Collins 2007, 125–126). We are one only as

individual human beings. But as a genetic family we are a oneness floating holo-cyclically through the wholeness of be-ing.

And so, the quest for Azania extends in the first place, to the restoration of unencumbered sovereign title to territory (Ramose 2003, 543–589). Upon the achievement of this aim, it expands to the rest of humankind in the name of the truth that we humans belong to one family and upon this rock we ought to rebuild human relations so that Mother Africa is truly the Mother of all human beings wherever we may be. After all, “the world became African” as the inscription in the National Museum of Ethiopia in Addis Ababa so insightfully reads. This was spoken by evolutionary biology millennia before “the Word was made flesh” – *et Verbum caro factum est*. The contestation between these two declarations is still a smouldering volcano in Africa today.

## Conclusion

We are aware that justice and peace are systematically elusive. Every moment of their attainment constitutes the reason to seek more for their perfection. But they are worth striving for under the banner of truth with everyone and justice and peace for all. “The Africanists take the view that there is only one race to which we all belong, and that is the human race. In our vocabulary therefore, the word ‘race’ as applied to man, has no plural form. We do, however, admit the existence of observable physical differences between various groups of people, but these differences are the result of a number of factors, chief among which has been geographical isolation.” Thus spake Mangaliso Robert Sobukwe during his opening address of the inaugural conference of the PAC (Sobukwe and Pan Africanist Congress of Azania 1978).

## Epilogue

A reading from the suburbs according to the townships

In the beginning there was Mother Earth  
The panarium to all the living and the dead.  
There was justice and peace  
when everyone practised  
the truth  
that Mother Earth belongs to all who live  
and die in it.

But selfishness and greed  
begot conquest in unjust wars  
and private property dwelt amongst us  
though no one can claim ownership of one’s body  
except by metaphor.

Private property expanded  
through  
the ruthless enslavement of blacks  
as though by nature  
born to be slaves.

Slavery was abolished  
And replaced with deadly exploitation  
flavoured with bitter charity  
in defence of private property.

The Absolute bomb  
dwells amongst us  
in pious genuflection  
to ideology  
ready to abolish the delusion  
that Mother Earth is eternal.

Heaps and heaps of  
Smelling and smouldering rabble  
in the townships  
poisonous spiders and venomous snakes  
agile lizards and crawling snails  
the tiniest ants, busy as bees  
all shall be no more  
when the Absolute bomb  
descends upon all  
reducing everything  
into a radioactive rubble.

Such is the impending  
Celebration  
of the ultimate folly  
of the rational animal  
inhabiting the suburbs  
Giving the township dwellers  
no chance at all  
to have the last laughter.

The suburb spoilers  
live at the edge of  
“a man without reason, is a beast in season”.

When the Absolute weapon  
more fiery than the paraclete  
descends irrevocably  
with relentless speed, unleashing total  
complete and comprehensive annihilation

of Mother Earth  
it shall give creation ex nihilo a fresh start.

You have heard the word from ubu-ntu.  
Glory be to THEIR senseless selfishness and unbridled greed.

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