

When Does a Settler Become a Native? Reflections of the Colonial Roots of Citizenship in Equatorial and South Africa

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The Vice Chancellor, Members of the Congregation, Friends and Colleagues

Settlers are made by conquest, not just by immigration. Settlers are kept settlers by a form of the state that makes a distinction -- particularly juridical -- between conquerers and conquered, settlers and natives, and makes it the basis of other distinctions that tend to buttress the conquerers and isolate the conquered, politically. However fictitious these distinctions may appear historically, they become real political facts for they are embodied in real political institutions.

The settler-native question is a political question. It is also a historical question. Settlers and natives belong together. You cannot have one without the other, for it is the relationship between them that makes one a settler and the other a native. To do away with one, you have to do away with the other.

My talk is going to focus on notions of citizenship in equatorial Africa, notions we have inherited from the colonial period and failed to redefine and reform adequately. I will argue that the form of the state we inherited from colonialism has written into it a distinction between 'native' and 'settler,' and that each political identity has become the basis of a different type of citizenship in the period after independence.

My starting point will be an argument culled from my recent book, *Citizen and Subject*. The colonial state in equatorial Africa recognized two types of political identities: civic and ethnic. Civic Identity was the identity of the citizen. It was racially defined. Citizen's rights, civil and sometimes political, were limited to those considered civilized. The rights of the civilized were written into civil law and were enforced by the central state. The language of the central state was the language of rights. Racism was the original sin of civil society in colonial Africa; civic rights were the rights of the settler.

The population of subjects was excluded from this regime of rights. Natives were said to belong, not to any civic space, but to an ethnic space. The native identity was not defined by where he or she was born or lived, but by his or her ancestral area. That area, in turn, was defined ethnically: you belonged to your ethnic area. You were obliged to follow the customs of your ethnic group. Your rights and obligations were defined by your custom, and that custom was enforced as a 'customary' law, by a Native Authority, whose seat was the local state. The local state spoke the language of culture, not rights.

Post-Independence reform

In the dominant variant of the post-colonial state, the distinction between citizen and subject was turned into two types of citizenship, civic and ethnic. Civic citizen, hitherto the settler's prerogative, ceased to be exclusive. Both native and settler were now recognized as citizens of the central state. The native's identity, however, became the

basis of an exclusive right. Only the native was recognized as possessing an ethnic citizenship. The settler had no 'customary' home, no 'customary' authority, and no 'customary' rights. Most importantly, there was no land to which the poor amongst the settlers could have a 'customary' right. The 'customary' right only belonged to the native, to those defined as 'indigenous' citizens, not to settlers defined as 'non-indigenous.'

We need to recognize a class question here. For poor people, ethnic citizenship was far more important than civic citizenship, for one reason: it was the only way of getting access to land. The rich could buy land anywhere. But if you were poor, one who could not afford to buy land in the first place, you could still claim land 'customarily', in your 'home' area, from your 'customary' chief, as a 'customary' right, under 'customary' law. So the poor came to have a better sense of ethnic belonging, of who belonged and who didn't, then did the rich. Also, this ethnic sense got sharper whenever livelihood -- especially access to land -- got more difficult.

The world had turned upside down. But it had not changed, at least not fundamentally. The big change was that civic space was de-racialized, so that civic rights became universal. Everyone, whether native or settler, was recognized as a civic citizen. But the distinction between the civic and the ethnic remained, since only the native was acknowledged as an ethnic citizen. There was also a corresponding distinction between civic and ethnic rights. Civic rights continued to be defined as individual rights in the civil and political sphere. In contrast, customary rights were defined as a group right, one you accessed by virtue of belonging to an ethnic group. The domain of customary rights was not as much civil and political, as it was cultural and economic. While individual rights were acknowledged as universal, only the native was supposed to have group rights. The continuity lay in the fact that the settler - native distinction continued to be written into the structure of the post-colonial state and the definition of rights.

The Settler and the Native

Settlers were without ethnic homes. They were, by definition, rootless, foot-loose, not tied to any specific territory, always trekking. They were said to come from somewhere, but from nowhere in particular. Neither did they seem destined for anywhere in particular.

The proto-type settlers were, of course, the whites. Of metropolitan origin, they were the core citizens of the colonial state. But they were not its only citizens. There were others, even if of second-class status, one lacking in all the rights. There were the Asians, who came from colonies outside Africa. Then there were the Arabs, who came from both within and from outside Africa. And, finally, there were the Tutsi, who came wholly from within Africa, whose migration had preceded the colonial era by centuries, but who were nonetheless turned into settlers by the colonial state, which claimed that they were a race apart, the Hemitic race. This meant that no matter where they were, the Tutsi were always said to come from elsewhere in Africa, and noone quite knew from where. The case of the Asian and the Arab, but particularly that of the Tutsi, shows that you didn't have to be white to be a settler.

The word for the white settler in Kiswahili is *mzungu*. *Mzungu*, however, does not literally mean a white person. It simply means a restless person, a person who will not stay in one place, a person full of anxieties. It comes from the verb *kuzunguka*. *Hawa wana zunguka kwa nini?* Why are these people always so restless? The Tutsi, the Arabs, the Asians, the Whites, these then were different examples of what I will call the Settler Proper.

In the Great Lakes region, the proto-type settler was the Tutsi, and the proto-type native the Hutu. When colonialism put forward the Hamitic hypothesis and defined the Tutsi as a race, and not an ethnic group -- like the Asian or the Arab -- that definition was more political than biological. It meant that the Tutsi never had a 'customary' home like real ethnic groups were supposed to have, even if they constituted the Authority of a Native Area.

But the homeless peoples were not the only settlers. There was also another category of settlers, those away from home, Native Settlers, even if this designation should sound contradictory. From the point of view of this kind of state, every native outside of his or her own home area was a settler of sorts, someone considered non-indigenous -- precisely because that person had an ethnic home elsewhere, even if within the same country. The distinction between the indigenous and the non-indigenous had ceased to be racialized; it was ethnicized. Every ethnic area made the distinction between those who belonged and those who didn't, between ethnic citizens and ethnic strangers.

Take an example. In Congo, in 1992, 200,000 Baluba were expelled from Shaba to Kasai as 'non-indigenous.' Many died along the way. The ethnic clashes in Nigeria around the civil war, in the Rift Valley in Kenya and in Kivu Province in eastern Congo contemporarily, all turn around claims to ethnic citizenship, and thereby to 'customary' land for the ethnic group as its home area. This is the stuff of one type of ethnic conflict throughout the region. The Mobutist state even had a name for it: it was called geopolitics.

This kind of ethnic conflict is structurally embedded. It is embedded in the institutional setup, and is generated as a contradiction between economic development and the nature of citizenship. The more commodity production expands, the more labour is set into motion, and the more the proportion of the non-indigenous -- of migrant labour and migrant peasants who have the political and civil rights of a civic citizen but not the social and cultural rights of an ethnic citizen -- increases, the more ethnic tension is generated.

Here, then, is the political dilemma: every time the economy sets people into motion, a new group of native settlers comes into being.

When Does a Settler Become a Native?

So, when does a settler become a native? There is no single answer to this question, for the answer depends on whether your vantage point is the civic or the ethnic. From the point of view of civic citizenship, it is merely a matter of time. That time period comes up for discussion every time citizenship is debated. And that time period is specified in citizenship clauses in most constitutions. The 1981 Citizenship Law in former Zaire, for example, said that anyone who had an ancestor born before 1885 in the territory that came to be demarcated as Congo with colonial rule would be considered a citizen of the state. Mind you, citizen here meant only civic citizen. This provision of the 1981 law was confirmed by the 1991 National Conference.

From the point of view of ethnic citizenship, however, the answer is: NEVER. So long as the distinction between settler and native is written into the structure of the state, the settler can become a citizen, but not a native. To say that is to say that the settler can be a member of the civic space, now de-racialized, but not the customary space, still ethnicized. On this point, at least, there was agreement between power and resistance in Mobutu's Zaire. All agreed that settlers -- the Banyamulenge, the Banyamasisi -- must be kept out of the ethnic space. When a colleague and a friend, Jacques Depelchen and I

visited Kivu Province on behalf of CODESRIA last year, several organized groups in civil society pointed out to us the 'subversive' tendency of settlers to mask their 'real' identity by taking on territorial identities: so that the Tutsi appear in one place as Banyamulenge (those of the location called Mulenge), and in another as Banyamusisi (those of the location called Musisi). This is how the settler appears from the point of view of the native, always trekking.

The 'indigenous' demand for a differentiated citizenship, one that makes a clear distinction between native and settler, the indigenous and the non-indigenous, is usually constituted as a demand of the majority; in other words, it is constituted as a democratic demand. It does not have to be promulgated as the decree of an unrepresentative, undemocratic government. When Habyarimana backed the creation of an organisation called Maghrivi in Goma, Ruchuru and Musisi in Kivu Province in the early 1980s, he made two demands in return for his material and political support: one, that all Tutsi be defined as non-indigenous, no matter where they lived; and two, that all questions of citizenship be settled democratically, by majority vote.

So, what is the solution?

Is it to turn the world upside down again? As seemed to be the first impulse of the post-Mobutu state in the new Democratic Congo, under Rwandese pressure, an impulse to recognize all immigrants as 'natives,' thereby signalling that they too can have their own 'Native Authority,' complete with its customary ethnic homeland, even if that be at the expense of an existing Native Authority, which is bound to be since the boundaries of Congo are not about to be expanded? If one looks at developments in contemporary Kivu Province in eastern Congo, is not the unintended consequence of such a solution to intensify the conflict between Native and Settler, between two kinds of citizens, the indigenous and the non-indigenous?

Or should we move to a liberal human rights solution, on the basis of a partial reform, one which reinforces individual civic rights while eroding group ethnic rights, but without totally undercutting these, and thus without doing away with the distinction between the civil and the customary, institutionally underpinned by two different types of authorities, civic and ethnic? This has been the South African solution to date. But what if this proclamation of inviolable rights of the individual should come to be seen as a way of strengthening settlers' rights, thereby provoking opposition from the native majority? In that case, ironically, will not the regime of individual rights -- not only divorced from majority rule but in the teeth of majority opposition -- be realized only by an enlightened dictatorship, whether the result of an internal dynamic, or a foreign occupation, or some mix?

Or is there a third solution, a solution other than the first which hopes to turn settlers into natives, and the second which hopes to strengthen the regime of individual rights and thereby fortify settlers against encroaching native demands? Why not explore a third solution which would seek to reform the very structure of the state which has institutionally underwritten the distinction between the indigenous and the non-indigenous, the Settler and the Native, into the division between the civic and the customary? To focus on this type of solution is to join the question -- which rights? -- to another: whose rights?

I will try and pursue this third type of option. I want to suggest that it is misleading to think of history or culture as some sort of a closure by itself. Historical and cultural constraints become real when written into our institutions, which is why to free us of that constraint requires institutional reform. I want to suggest that we explore the creative side

of politics. I will try and do this by making a distinction between two types of identities, cultural and political, between those politically enforced and those not, to make my point. I will illustrate the point with the case of the Hutu and the Tutsi.

Hutu and Tutsi

Anyone who wishes to understand contemporary Rwanda would do well to shed the Hamitic hypothesis and the history built around it by making at least two distinctions. The first is that between migration and conquest. The migration of Tutsi into the Great Lakes region went on for centuries before the establishment of the state of Rwanda after 1500. The migration was peaceful, and its context was peaceful coexistence between pastoralists and agriculturalists. In contrast, the state of Rwanda fortified over nearly four centuries a system of vassalage between pastoralists and agriculturalists, the Tutsi and the Hutu. The second distinction is between two different periods of state formation, first the four centuries preceding colonial rule and second the nearly half century of Belgian colonialism, and the relation that each forged between state and society on the one hand, and the Hutu and the Tutsi on the other. Anyone who takes into account this second distinction would also recognize that the Hamitic hypothesis did not stop at being a racist construct, but actually became the ideological justification of political institutions that distinguished between the Tutsi as a race and the Hutu as an ethnic group. Let me elaborate.

No two conflicting groups in the Great Lakes region have a longer and more comprehensive history of inter-marriage than do the Hutu and the Tutsi. Inter-marriage between the Hutu and the Tutsi has been going on for centuries, at least three. The extent of that inter-marriage has been so large that it would not be an exaggeration to suppose that a half or more of the population in Rwanda is a product of such inter-marriage. And yet, everyone of these people is either a Hutu or a Tutsi. No one claims to be both; there are no Hutus!

This uni-dimensional social identity could not be reproduced without patriarchal institutions which passed social identity exclusively through the line of the father. You inherit your father's identity. Only when the line of the father is highlighted and that of the mother obscured can children be born as purely Hutu or Tutsi as were their fathers.

And yet, that you were born either Hutu or Tutsi did not mean that you could not change from Hutu to Tutsi, or Tutsi to Hutu -- under definitely prescribed circumstances -- during your lifetime. In pre-German and pre-Belgium controlled Rwanda, Tutsi was an identity of wealth and of power. Hutu signified a lack of both. A Hutu with means could go through a social ritual called Kwihutura. It was a ritual by which a Hutu shed his Hutuness. Your children could now marry Tutsi and their children would be considered Tutsi. Likewise, a Tutsi family without means may find it difficult to find a Tutsi spouse for their off-spring. These children would then have no choice but to marry Hutu. While the social space between Hutu and Tutsi was vast, with Tutsi as power and Hutu as subject, it was a space that some could and did negotiate, either through opportunity that came with enrichment or through compulsion that was a consequence of impoverishment.

With the colonial reforms of the 1920s, these identities were written and frozen into law. Every individual was issued an identity pass that classified him or her as Hutu or Tutsi. These identities were no longer just socially acknowledged, reproduced or negotiated, as the case may be; they were politically enforced. Tutsi was no longer an identity that signified access and proximity to power and wealth, and Hutu a lack of it. Tutsi now became an identity linked much more with power than wealth; in other words, to be a Tutsi was not always to be rich. At the same time, Hutu came to be a subject identity:

whether you were with or without wealth, so long as you were Hutu, you were a subject. With the end of Kwiwutura, the ritual shedding of Hutu status by the few Hutu who managed to acquire wealth, there could develop a Hutu counter-elite for the first time since the creation of Rwanda kingdom. Not surprisingly, this counter-elite became a vehicle for a radical Hutu consciousness, turning Hutuness from a mark of servitude to a badge of pride, demanding Hutu Power. It is that demand which fuelled the set of events that have come to be known as the 'social' revolution of 1959.

Rwanda was like a half-way house between direct and indirect rule: while its subject population was packaged into separate Native Authorities, and these enforced a customary law, neither the Authority nor the law they enforced could be seen as an instance of rule by one's own, a claim that was made as a matter of course by indirect rule authorities elsewhere. The result was that while Native Authorities everywhere else could be turned into so many separate ethnic enclosures, this could not be in Rwanda where every Native Area appeared as more or less equally Hutu and every Native Authority equally Tutsi, like a creamy layer spread thin on the Hutu majority. The relationship between the Tutsi chiefs in the Native Authority and the predominantly Hutu peasantry was much more characteristic of direct than indirect rule.

And yet, let us not forget that both Hutu and Tutsi were colonized subjects. Both had a victim consciousness. The Tutsi were defined as a race, but they were without civic rights. They were victims in the civic sphere. The anti-colonial radical nationalists of Rwanda were invariably Tutsi who had developed a radical insurgent race consciousness. The Hutu, in contrast, were defined as an ethnic group under Tutsi chiefs in Native Authorities. They were victims in the ethnic sphere. Their struggle against Tutsi chiefs was branded tribalism, not nationalism. Both struggles, the nationalist and the tribalist, had a democratic component. And yet, neither could be embraced uncritically. Both needed to be problematized.

The 1959 'social revolution' was a peasant jacquerie that would have remained a rebellion, unable to attain power, had it not been for the Belgian power shifting allies on the eve of colonial rule. The revolution was preoccupied with one question: Justice. It was determined that every institution must reflect the identity of the Hutu majority in society. The first demand of Hutu Power was that the occupants of educational institutions and the holders of state employment must be predominantly Hutu, as predominantly as was the population of Rwanda. They demanded what is now called 'affirmative action' to stamp every institution with a majority character. And they demanded eternal vigilance to keep it so. Thus the 1972 coup d'etat by which the military regime of Habyarimana replaced the civilian presidency of Kayibanda was baptized a 'cultural' revolution, which was triggered by Hutu vigilante mobs in the university and secondary schools, intent on uncovering 'cheaters', i.e., Tutsi children of 'mixed' marriages who were posing as Hutu.

The Tutsi who have come to power after the 1994 genocide share one thing with the Hutu revolutionaries of 1959. Both see themselves as revolutionaries. Both have vowed never to forget the past. And both are determined that the struggle must never end: A Lutta Continua! The irony is that, determined to make history, both have turned into prisoners of that same history. For every turn in the ongoing cycle that appears as sweet justice to one, appears to the other as the cruel face of revenge. One is compelled to ask: Are not the worst perpetrators often those with the mindset of a victim?

The Tutsi is a proto-type settler, and the Hutu a proto-type native. After 1994, the Tutsi wants justice above all else, and the Hutu democracy above all else. The minority fears democracy. The majority fears justice. The minority fears that democracy is a mask for

finishing an unfinished genocide. The majority fears the demand for justice is a minority ploy to usurp power forever.

When does the pursuit of justice turn into revenge? I shall propose two answers to this question in the course of this lecture. The simple answer will be: when justice is denied. The more complex answer, the one that our journey through Rwandese history suggests, is: when the quest for justice turns into a permanent preoccupation, into a vendetta, into a self-righteous settling of scores that knows no bounds.

What can be acceptable boundaries for the pursuit of justice? Life itself. The agreement to live as part of a political community within the same state, the community of those willing to live together under a single political roof, and thereby to affirm that it is better to live with one's political enemies than to die with them. This is why, in my view, the question of citizenship becomes so important.

I would like to take this discussion as a backdrop against which to make observations about citizenship in contemporary South Africa.

Citizenship in Contemporary South Africa

The South African transition has a double significance from a continental point of view. For the first time in the history of African decolonization, a settler minority has relinquished exclusive political power without an outright political defeat. I am not arguing that this minority has given up its interests, only that it has consented to exploring ways of defending these interests other than a monopoly over political power and the rights of citizenship. In doing so, I believe it has established -- in native eyes -- a political and moral claim to citizenship in a post-apartheid order.

Secondly, in relinquishing the demand for power-sharing and accepting a post-apartheid political order predicated on majority rule, the settler minority has recognized that the majoritarian character of the native population is a fact of political significance. I suggest to you that this change is of epochal significance for it has set the political trajectory of the African continent on a course radically different from that of the Americas. The Americas is the continent of settler independence. The South African transition means that nowhere on this continent has a settler minority succeeded in declaring and sustaining the independence of a settler colony.

The fact that both settler and native are citizens in a post-apartheid order does not mean that this citizenship is common or equal. From this point of view, the 1994 compromise has brought South Africa in line with other equatorial African countries: while civic citizenship is deracialized; ethnic citizenship remains unreformed. Faced with a political order that recognizes majority rule but is not based on a single and equal citizenship, the settler minority has responded with two sharply different political initiatives, one identified with the mainly English liberal mainstream, the other with the mainly Afrikaner right-wing. Neither questions the divide between civic and ethnic citizenship. Both position themselves assuming that this divide will continue. The difference between them is telling: while the liberal initiative calls for a strong defense of the property rights of civic citizens, the main body of the right wing demands the Afrikaner volk no longer be considered settlers, but be recognized as natives, complete with a native homeland and presumably a Native Authority.

Both positions are problematic. The first position, the hopeful defense of racialized privilege as the rights of a citizen in a post-colonial order, is not new. It was attempted by the wealthy section of Asians in Uganda. Asian immigrants came to Uganda in the

colonial period, as both indentured labour and free immigrants. Unlike those who came to South Africa, most of those indentured died in the course of building the railway or returned home after completing the railway. It was the subsequent inflow of commercial workers and petty entrepreneurs who formed the bulk of Ugandan Asians. Though denied a share of political power, this immigrant minority had privileged access to the market place in a growing import-export economy. Without having a privileged access to power, the Asian minority became beneficiaries of inequalities generated by the colonial order. Members of a highly racialized civil society, they depended on the colonial state for a defence of racialized privilege.

Faced with a deracialized state at independence, the wealthy stratum of Asians hoped to defend their gains in the language of citizenship and rights. There developed a clear breach between the language of rights and that of justice. In native ears, rights-talks increasingly sounded like a defense of settler privilege, and justice a language to articulate native grievance. Part of the lesson of the Uganda Asian experience is that the denial of justice bred a wave of popular discontent, a wave a demagogue rode to power. The story of Idi Amin Dada has been racialized and told over and over again, as that of an anthropological oddity. To be meaningful, it needs to be retold as the story of an unaddressed social grievance that could be harvested by a demagogue. It needs to be understood as a lesson in the limits to which the non-racial language of rights can be effective in defending racialized privilege once it has become illegitimate in the eyes of the native majority.

The second position is that put forth by the Afrikaner right, that erstwhile settlers be recognized as natives. This too is not new, and this too is problematic as illustrated by the continuing saga of Uganda Asians. In the consultations which led to the promulgation of the new constitution in Uganda in 1991, citizens of Asian descent applied to be considered an 'ethnic' group, and to be listed as such in the appendix to the Constitution. It was a petition that had little chance of succeeding, for its consequence would have been to define an 'ethnic homeland' for Uganda Asians. While the Uganda Asian petition was met with little more than a raised eyebrow, a similar demand by South African whites is likely to evoke a stronger response, mainly because of a different historical backdrop. Is not the demand for a Boer homeland, with its own Native Authority, likely to be seen and resisted as a continuation of settler appropriation of native land?

I would like to suggest that we explore a third alternative, one that would transcend the political divide between settlers and natives, between civic and ethnic citizenship, and forge a single citizenship for all. But this single citizenship cannot just be declared formally, or written into a constitution. For it constitutes such a radical departure that, for it to be reality, its very practical basis has to be created. In the context of a former settler colony, a single citizenship for settlers and natives can only be the result of an overall metamorphosis whereby erstwhile colonizers and colonized are politically reborn as equal members of a single political community. The word reconciliation cannot capture this metamorphosis. For this is not some Latin American dictatorship that can hope to return to some pre-existing political arrangement. This is about establishing, for the first time, a political order based on consent and not conquest. It is about establishing a political community of equal and consenting citizens.

If the experience of Uganda is any guide, this cannot be without justice. And if the experience of Rwanda is any guide, this justice will need to be different from a victor's justice. That different form of justice, one that can establish the practical basis of a common political community between yesterday's colonizers and colonized, is what I call survivor's justice. Different from victor's justice, it needs to be seen more as the practical embodiment of empathy than as the setting of a historical score. That, in my view, is the

political challenge for contemporary South Africa.

The Intellectual Challenge

There is also an intellectual challenge. For the world of the native and the settler was not just a political and a social world. It was also an intellectual world. What is called African Studies was in reality a study of natives by settler intellectuals. These intellectuals were not simply men, they were also women. And they were not simply rightists; they also included many a leftist and liberal. They shared a common horizon. Even when they empathized with the native, they believed the native to be incapable of self-consciousness. For many in the first generation, the native was the product of a disadvantaged biology; for the more sophisticated latecomers, the native was the product of a disadvantaged history. In their view, natives were like Peter Pan, perpetual children, who needed to be patronized and matronized. It is this context that makes sense of Jomo Kenyatta's comment in the preface to *Facing Mount Kenya* that, when he wrote the book, he felt like a rabbit turned poacher.

There were, of course, exceptions. There always are, those who stand on the shoulders of their contemporaries and manage to see beyond one horizon to another. But I am talking of the rule. It is out of this limited horizon that the notion of South African exceptionalism has been born. At its core, South African exceptionalism is the contention that the South African experience is so totally and irrevocably shaped by the initiative of the settler, that South Africa is no longer, in any meaningful sense, a part of Africa, native Africa. When I came to UCT nearly two years ago, I was aware that the notion of South African exceptionalism had stained the South African intelligentsia with a prejudice more than just skin-deep. What I was not prepared for was the ferocity with which it would be defended, not simply by its intellectual articulators who seemed to lack conviction but more so by the managers of the academy whose self-righteous tendency seems to be to see any external critique as taking the initiative out of their bureaucratic hands.

Without an intellectual return to Africa, you cannot shed the notion of South African exceptionalism. And without a serious endeavour to shed that notion, you cannot have an intellectual renaissance. Many may try to avoid it. Some may even seek to defend the oasis of South African exceptionalism in the language of political correctness, as some sort of a homage to intellectual pluralism, painting winds of change from the north as alien and hegemonic, in words as fresh as a few weeks ago, as "hierarchical" and "patriarchal" notions brought from elsewhere -- as if hierarchy and patriarchy is so alien to the settler experience that it needs to be brought in as some kind of a native virus from the equator.

I doubt any single institution has the power to stop the debate around South African exceptionalism, for it is a debate whose time, I suspect, has come. The choice you have is slightly different: either you continue to act as a well-endowed home of intellectual orthodoxy, or you open your doors to a great debate which will go beyond transforming the complexion of your student body to transforming what you actually teach these students.

A Dedication

I would like to dedicate this inaugural lecture to two individuals, who have been so close to me that I have often dared not admit their influence. The first is my mother: a lady of such great religious conviction that as a kid she went to a Catholic convent school in the mornings and an Islamic madressa in the afternoons; a lady who remains incessantly

curious about the world inspite of -- may be, because of -- the fact that she has had no more than four years of formal schooling; a lady who combines two great virtues, one to struggle for justice no matter what the odds, and two, to remain fair-minded and full of empathy while doing so. This lady is not here, she is at home, in Kampala. But she was in Cape Town on April 22nd, that day of the great curriculum debate on African Studies. After the debate, she told me that she had only heard half my talk. Why? I asked. Because I was praying during the other half. For what? I asked. Taake sachki jeet ho, meaning, so that the truth may prevail.

The second person to whom I wish to dedicate this lecture is my wife and companion, who is here in the audience. Mira is the member of the family who sets its standards. Her tenacity of purpose makes me think sometimes that she must have learnt the art of swimming against the tide in her mother's womb. What makes Mira a rare person is that she combines this incredible resilience with an equally amazing humility as a seeker of knowledge. For this is a person who never stops learning, so much so that sometimes you run out of breath and wish she would learn to stop -- but, you realize you have once again missed the point -- and the point is that for this is a person for whom no experience is so routine as to lack nuance. Nothing, and noone, passes her by. To live with her is to learn to live life as a great learning experience.

So, you see, life has been kind to me. I do not come from a disadvantaged background. When I asked myself while writing this as to what these continuing influences have nurtured in this common ground, I could come up with only one answer: what it means to hold convictions with doggedness but without dogma.

I salute these great ladies and I thank you for your patience.