

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN  
Department of Computer Science

Community-Based Co-Design (CBCD):  
Reciprocity and Empowerment




CENTRE IN INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGIES FOR DEVELOPMENT  
Edwin Blake – edwin@acm.org 8/10/16

Digital Rescue: Reciprocity and Empowerment

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- Values and Action
  - Transform
  - Empower




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This is a political and value laden exercise

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- Nygaard (and the roots of Participatory Design)
  - “It seems obvious that construction always will be a central, or the central aspect of informatics. Without construction the purpose and content of the other aspects become empty.
  - “Information systems are, however, typically introduced and operated for economic reasons, designed and implemented using insights from informatics, and result in a changed environment for people.
  - “Modifications of the informatical properties of the organization may have desirable economic, but undesirable social consequences, or vice versa”



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4 A DIFFERENT SET OF VALUES

Immigrant crisis has caused both an affirmation and a questioning of Western (European?) values.

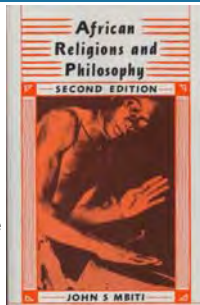

- What are these?

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Humanity and Community: Kenya

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- Canon John Mbiti (Kenya):
  - “In traditional life, the individual does not and cannot exist alone except corporately. He owes his existence to other people, including those of past generations and his contemporaries. He is simply part of the whole.”
  - “I am, because we are; and since we are, therefore I am.”





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Humanity and Community: South Africa

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- “My humanity is caught up, is inextricably bound up in yours.”  
Archbishop Desmond Tutu
- In Zulu one can say “umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu”
  - Sotho: “Motho ke motho ka batho (babang)”
  - “a person is a person through other persons”
  - “a person is a person because of other persons”
  - “I am what I am because of what we all are”



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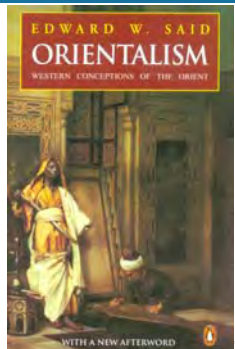
### Shadow Side to Ubuntu?


- Core values of privacy may be threatened by the widespread use of ICT
  - a naïve community based set of values might not question this.
- Totalitarian control of the individual?
  - Tallest poppy syndrome
  - Fear of stigmatization
- Narrow circle  $\equiv$  nepotism?
  - Officials obliged to provide for their extended circle of responsibility as if they are close family
  - Appointments according to relationships and not capacity to deliver



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### Romanticism

- Romanticised notions of “other”: African orientalism
- Mazrui: *Black Orientalism* “strange combination of cultural condescension, paternalistic possessiveness and ulterior selectivity”





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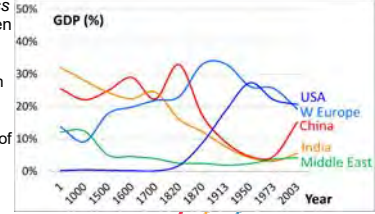
## VALUES IN ACTION


**Not one or the other**  
**Ethics cuts both ways**


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### Some of this may be uncomfortable but it is not a political correctness exercise

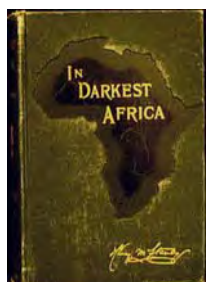
- From by a (reasonably-)proud white male South African of a certain age ...
  - Britain has a terrible history of oppression and looting
    - Hindustani लूट / لوٹ (lūt, "spoil, booty"), from Sanskrit लुण्ठ (lunṭ, "to rob, plunder").
  - It also has a great history of the opposite
  - Colonized countries have been driven into the ground
  - Their own kleptocracies are often keeping them there
- It is not political correctness because the opinion is open to debate
  - It acknowledges the irony and envy often inherent in remarks against western arrogance.
  - Lets not loose our sense of (black!) humour





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### Into the Wild

Henry Morton Stanley (1890)



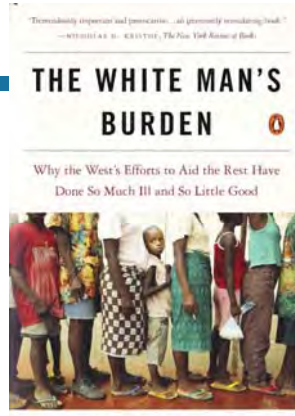
Map of the African continent: 1389  
Amalgamated Map of the Great Ming Empire





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### The Irony of Language

- Expressing oneself in French, understanding French, was no longer tantamount to treason or to an impoverishing identification with the occupier. ... conveying in a positive way the message of the Revolution, the French language also becomes an instrument of liberation.
- Fanon, Frantz, *A Dying Colonialism*, Grove Press Inc. 1967 (p 90)





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### Can we accept?

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- The community might be very ambivalent to change since it upsets cherished notions and values and they might even be used to “comfortable dysfunction”.
- Who decides?



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### Achieving a balance between Indigenous Knowledge and Western Education

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- How?

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### Corruption

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- What are your obligations to the broader community?




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**Am a tribal leader**  
They loot, rape, burn and kill in my defence  
I steal their taxes, grab land, but the idiots will still vote for me.



Land grabbing, Political assassinations, Tribal clashes, Wagalla massacre, Goldenberg, Cowboy contractors, Drug dealings, Anglo Leashing, Triton, Pyramid schemes, Grand reGENCY, Artur brothers, Post-election violence, Kazikwayuana, Syokimau, Maize scandal, Famine, IDP resettlement, Tax evasion

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### South African Police revert to type

Andries Tatane (1978–2011)      Marikana Massacre (Aug 2012)



TESTIMONIAL MEMORIAL SERVICE  
Way of Life Church and Multipurpose Centre  
SUNDAY 22 APRIL 12:00 pm  
no. 1 Joe Mafene Street - Mandisa Park - Khayelitsha  
-SALAHUS, ILAASUS

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Police acquitted in March 2013





### Co-Design

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### Design for whom and by whom?

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- If we move to co-design, then:
  - ¿ Can we envision a flexibility in ourselves to *redesign ourselves* as much as we design artefacts outside?
  - ¿ Are our methods and beliefs as much up for grabs as the *cherished values* of the community that we are trying to transform with our technology?
  - ¿ Is it not probable, once we accept the community as co-designers that we might not even have **the last word in design**?

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### VICT4D

28 CONCLUSION

Values guide action & you may have to rethink yours  
Action necessarily involves design and intervention (and coding/construction!)  
Afterthought: Decolonizing the Computer Science Curriculum

### Discussion ...



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