Even Chameleons Stalk Their Prey: *Rinonyenga Rinohwarara Rinosumudza Musoro Rawana*, Twenty-First Century Imperial Sleights of Hand and the Recolonisation of Africa

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**Abstract**

Arguing that chameleons know best how to appear to be stationary even as they are motionary towards targeted flies, at which they suddenly dart their swift tongues once within range, this paper contends that the emergent postbinary world order is a chameleons’ world; it is a world where Africans – deemed, in Eurocentric animistic discourses, to be indistinct from flies – will be increasingly cannibalised. Of course, chameleons use sleights of tongue when they feast on flies but imperialists also use sleights of hand when they want to feast on Africans. Drawing on the Shona (a people of Zimbabwe) proverbial warning *rinonyenga rinohwarara rinosumudza musoro rawana* (he who courts may trick the subject of courtship, to feel safe and loved, only to become violent once he has achieved his goal), this paper argues that neoimperialism is using sleights of hand to recolonise Africans in the twenty-first century. Postulating a theory of *rinonyenga rinohwarara rinosumudza musoro rawana* for international relations, society and politics, this paper argues for the application of Ubuntu theory in international relations but with a caveat that imperial chameleon politics and relations premised on trickery are not part of the canons of Ubuntu.
Keywords
Africa – ubuntu theory – international relations – binaries – colonisation

1 Introduction

When chameleons stalk their prey, they dispense with binaries so much so that they not only assume the hue of the environment in which they are located but they also move so slowly that they defy the binary between the motionary and the stationary. Once they are within reach, they then quickly dart their tongues at the targeted flies which then disappear instantly. In other words, chameleons use sleights of tongue to capture targeted flies on which they feast, but colonialists have also historically used sleights of hand to colonise Africans and other peoples in the Global South. First, Europeans set up trading stations on African coasts and they appeared to be innocent traders interested in and doing legitimate commerce with African traders; they first sent colonial missionaries who appeared to be innocent and God-loving visitors in Africa; however, over time the European chartered companies, such as the British South African Company, the German West African Company, the Germany East African Company, the East Indian Company and so on, began to colonise Africans – dispossessing them of their land, minerals, livestock, wildlife and even killing the Africans who resisted the colonisation process (Nhemachena and Warikandwa, 2019); and over time the colonial missionaries, who had arrived in Africa earlier, joined the invading European forces that subsequently colonised Africans; the missionaries who had come to know the African environments well became the guides of the invading colonialists who were entering African states (Nhemachena, 2021b). Even as they were entering Africa, the colonialists promised civilisation to those that they were colonising, dispossessing, exploiting and killing. Even as they claimed to be bringing in better modern health services, the invading colonialists often used biological and chemical warfare to create diseases, like smallpox and anthrax, to decimate Africans and other colonised peoples that resisted the colonisation process (Nhemachena, 2021a; Duffy, 1951). The point here is that sleights of hand and sleights of tongue are old colonial and imperial strategies that have been used to colonise Africans and other people in the world. While some scholars argue for developing an international relations theory from Ubuntu (Smith, 2017; Asike, 2016), this paper argues that Ubuntu prohibits imperial chameleon relations premised on trickery and on animism. Postulating a theory of rinonyenga rinohwarara rinosumudza musoro rawana for international relations, society and politics, this paper argues for the application of Ubuntu...
theory in international relations but with a caveat that chameleon politics and relations premised on trickery are not part of the canons of Ubuntu.

Drawing on historical anthropology, environmental anthropology, political anthropology, anthropology of science and technology studies and contemporary discourses on decoloniality, this paper offers a critique of the ways in which colonialism instantiates and replicates itself, including by effacing binaries between humans and nonhumans, subjects and objects, the dead and the living. The point is that some humans seek to trick and colonise other human beings by becoming chameleons and by assuming that those that are targeted for colonisation are flies.

2 Chameleons, Sleights of Hand and Sleights of Tongue

When the Ndebele King Lobengula likened the British to chameleons that were catching Africans, he should be understood as referring to sleights of hand and sleights of tongue that were used by the British arch-imperialist Cecil John Rhodes and his ilk when they were colonising Zimbabwe (Mungazi, 1999; The Patriot, 12.06.2014). Cecil John Rhodes was keen to colonise Zimbabwe but he found the Ndebele King Lobengula too intelligent to be manipulated by Rhodes’ emissaries. Rhodes wanted Lobengula to allow him to prospect for minerals in Zimbabwe and he promised Lobengula ammunition for defence, in return. Rhodes became very angry when he realised that Lobengula was very intelligent and could not be manipulated. So, Rhodes decided to use Reverend Charles Helm, a missionary of the London Missionary Society who had been stationed at Lobengula’s court for a long time and had learnt local African languages to be proficient in interpretation. Lobengula trusted Reverend Charles Helm so much that he made him a court interpreter; the King did not think that the missionary would betray him, he did not know that the missionary was being secretly paid by Cecil John Rhodes who wanted information on how he could colonise Zimbabwe. Writing about how Lobengula was cheated by the missionary Reverend Charles Helm, Mungazi (1999: 56–57) states thus:

Unable to manipulate Lobengula, Rhodes secretly paid Reverend Helm to supply him with information that he utilized in planning the colonisation of Zimbabwe. Lobengula was thus betrayed by a Christian man whom he trusted ... On October 30, 1888, taking advice given by Reverend Helm into consideration and without the slightest knowledge that the missionary whom he trusted so much was, in effect, Rhodes’ agent, Lobengula signed a piece of paper known as the Rudd Concession. This pseudo document granted Rhodes exclusive rights supposedly to dig for
minerals for a limited period of time. But Rhodes took it as a blank check to do what he always wanted to do: colonize Zimbabwe as the first stage of his grand plan to bring all of Africa under British imperial rule. By the time Lobengula knew that he had been misled and cheated, Rhodes had obtained a Royal Charter from Queen Victoria to colonize Zimbabwe ... To make matters worse, Rhodes failed to honor the terms of the agreement. The guns and ammunition which he had promised as a condition of the agreement, were never delivered. The promise which he had made that he had no intention of colonizing Zimbabwe was also not kept.

The point in the foregoing is that colonialists use sleights of hand; the Reverend Charles Helm had arrived at Lobengula's court in 1875 in the service of the London Missionary Society, he studied African culture, including language well enough to be considered by whites as having expertise in African languages and culture. So, King Lobengula took the missionary into his confidence and appointed him his official interpreter and advisor on matters relating to his dealings with the white man; King Lobengula thought that the Reverend Helm was a good and honest Christian man who would not deceive him in any way; Reverend Helm appeared to be genuinely interested in African welfare but he was being paid by Cecil John Rhodes who wanted to colonise Africans (Mungazi, 1999). The point here is that missionaries actually conspired with other colonialists to trick, dispossess and exploit Africans. Of course, even as they actually conspired to colonise Africans, colonialists and colonial missionaries assured Africans that they were not being colonised. After he was cheated, Lobengula is noted to have said the following to Reverend Charles Helm (Mungazi, 1999: 57):

Did you ever see a chameleon catch a fly? He gets behind the fly and remains motionless for some time. Then he advances slowly. When well within reach, he darts his tongue and the fly disappears. Britain is the chameleon and I am the fly.

The Shona people of Zimbabwe similarly warn Africans that rinonyenga rino-hwarara rinosumudza musoro rawana. By this, the Shona people underscore the fact that evil and ill-intentioned people can cunningly appear to be harmless and to be philanthropic and humanitarian when in fact they have ulterior motives which would surface once such cunning people have achieved their goals of trapping, catching, dispossessing, exploiting or abusing other people, in this case the colonised Africans. While the phrase refers to kunyenga (to court, enter, inject or to penetrate another human being), the phrase does not literally and narrowly refer to the sexual courtship, entering, injecting or
penetration of women, men or girls. It also refers to the passing of any proposals, including proposals advanced by colonialists. The phrase also refers to the entering, injection and penetration of nation states, communities, households, bodies etc. Hence, the Shona people warn women and girls to be careful not to fall prey to those that pass proposals to them. Those that make proposals may in fact be intending to exploit those that they court, penetrate them, enter them, inject them and abuse them. The idiom is a warning against being too open towards those that would penetrate, exploit, abuse and harm those that are penetrated, injected or entered. Once one is entered or penetrated, one risks losing control because those that have entered, injected or penetrated begin to assume power, authority, dominance, hegemony and even callousness towards those that have been entered or penetrated. In essence, the Shona people warn Africans against chameleons that stalk their prey on the continent; they warn Africans against those that would use sleights of tongue to assure Africans that it would be safe to be entered, penetrated or injected, and then once they are inside they begin to show their true colours including callousness towards those that they have entered, injected or penetrated.

Chameleons not only seek to bridge binaries between themselves and their prey but they also seek to assimilate and cannibalise their prey; also, chameleons not only seek to bridge binaries between themselves and their prey but they also seek to penetrate or enter the territories and spaces belonging to their prey. In other words, in so far as colonialists sought to enter or penetrate the territories and spaces of their colonial victims, colonialists did not thrive on the bases of binaries – they sought to penetrate the colonial victims: in this regard, it is important to note that penetration is not premised on binaries but on making connections or relations, in this case, on the basis of chameleon logics. In this regard, colonialists thrived on penetrating others, on connecting others and they thrived on bridging binaries between themselves and their prey; then once they were inside and had penetrated their victims, they began to show their callousness, asserting power, hegemony and dominance over those that had been penetrated, injected or entered. For the colonialists, once they had entered and penetrated their victims, the outside became indistinct from the inside in the sense that those that had entered or penetrated began to consider themselves as insiders of what they had entered, injected or penetrated. Put differently, those that seek to enter, to inject or to penetrate others would always want the targets of penetration, injection or entry to be always open – this is why colonialists depicted and considered Africa and Africans to be not only open but naked, in real and metaphorical senses.

Sleights of hand are not limited to the colonisation of Africa because even in America, indigenous people were cheated into “signing” treaties that were subsequently used as bases for colonisation; besides, Australian Aborigines
were assisted with “humanitarian aid” in the form of poisoned bread; and the
indigenous Americans were also assisted with “humanitarian aid” in the form
of blankets laced with smallpox; during the slave trade, some Africans were
captured using some pieces of cloth as baits and the slave ships were named
“Jesus” so as to lure unsuspecting Africans (Nhemachena, 2021a, b, 2022a;
Duffy, 1951). In the contemporary era, alluring ideologies of human rights,
democracy, rule of law and good governance are dangled as baits to win the
hearts and minds of Africans who are ironically denied restitution and repa-
rations but provided with such generous liberal ideologies; in the contempo-
rary era, Africans are receiving donations of controversial genetically modified
food and food made using controversial synthetic biology (Pimbert and Barry,
2021; Komparic, 2015; Brankov et al., 2016; Blagoevska et al., 2021; Adenle,
2011); and also, in the contemporary era, Africans are receiving controversial
nanovaccines manufactured using formulas which the global pharmaceutical
corporations are refusing to disclose to the African recipients of the nanovac-
cines (Nhemachena, 2021a; Nandedkar, 2009; Azharuddin et al., 2022). All that
Africans are receiving are Cecil John Rhodes-like assurances that the synthetic
food, genetically modified food and nanovaccines are safe and effective even
as millions are complaining of side effects, which may in fact be main effects.

In a world where binaries, including between main effects and side effects
are dismissed, the main effects of colonisation including dispossession,
exploitation and impoverishment are, by extension, also denied by colonial-
ists and their descendants (Nhemachena, 2016; Nhemachena, Hlabangane and
Kaundjua, 2020). In fact, the main effects of colonisation are often misrepre-
sented as side effects and the side effects are misrepresented as main effects.
The point is that colonialists and their descendants would want everyone,
including those that they dispossessed and exploited, to believe that civili-
sation was the main effect of colonisation on Africans. Similarly, in a world
where binaries, including between what is safe and what is unsafe are being
deconstructed, it becomes difficult to believe global pharmaceutical corpora-
tions when they declare that some effects are side effects and other effects
are main effects. In a world where binaries, including between accountability
and impunity are dismissed, it becomes very difficult to believe the assurances
of those transnational corporations that certify their vaccines as safe even as
they ironically demand immunity and impunity for the “side effects” of their
vaccines (Nhemachena, 2021a). Similarly, in a world where guarantees of impe-
rial nonexpansionism are not kept (Nhemachena, Mtapuri and Mawere, 2022),
it becomes very difficult to believe global pharmaceutical corporations that
guarantee the safety and efficacy of their own nanovaccines. Much as Russia
is embittered by the fact that Europe and America are not honouring their
guarantees, when the USSR was bundling up, to not expand NATO to eastern Europe (Nhemachena, Mtapuri and Mawere, 2022), Africans would be embittered to later discover that global pharmaceutical corporations manufactured and forced Africans to use deadly nanovaccines in the service of the antihumanist New World Order agenda to eliminate or dispose of some sections of humanity (Nhemachena, 2021a, b, c). Celebrating the globalist antihumanist agenda in nanovaccinating humanity, Ray Kurzweil (15.03.2002) notes thus:

The union of human and machine is well on its way. Almost every part of the body can already be enhanced or replaced, even some of our brain functions ... Within two to three decades, our brains will have been “reverse-engineered”: nanobots will give us full-immersion virtual reality and direct brain connection with the Internet ... Intelligent machines are already making their way into our bloodstream. There are dozens of projects underway to create bloodstream-based “biological microelectromechanical systems” (BioMems) to intelligently scout out pathogens and deliver medication in very precise ways ... By 2030, electrons will utilize molecule-sized circuits, the reverse engineering of the human brain will have been completed ... It will be routine to have billions of nanobots (i.e. nano-scale robots) coursing through the capillaries of our brain, communicating with each other (over a wireless local area network), as well as with our biological neurons and with the internet. One application will be to provide full immersion virtual reality that encompasses all of our senses ... We will have a panoply of virtual environments to choose from, including Earthly worlds that we are familiar with, as well as those with no earthly counterpart. We will be able to go to these virtual places, and have any kind of interaction with other real (as well as simulated) people, ranging from business negotiations to sensual encounters ... it's important to note that once nonbiological intelligence gets a foothold in our brain ... it will grow exponentially, as is the accelerating nature of information-based technologies. Note that a one-inch cube of nanotube circuitry ... will be at least a million times more powerful than the human brain. By 2040, the nonbiological portion of our intelligence will be far more powerful than the biological portion.

In a context where antihumanists are demonising human population growth for climate change and for environmental degradation (Nhemachena and Mawere, 2019), more generally, it is not surprising that humans become suspicious of apparently humanitarian gifts of nanovaccines being extended in
the name of saving human lives. In fact, there is a paradox in that those that are condemning human population growth and advocating for depopulating the world are the same ones who are apparently concerned to save African human lives by donating or selling nanovaccines to Africans. The point here is that it is ironic for those that have announced the Anthropocene, and the antihumanism associated with it, to appear to be concerned about saving African human lives (Nhemachena, 2021a). In a world where some humans and transnational corporations cannot keep their promises not to colonise others (Nhemachena, Warikandwa and Mtapuri, 2017), it becomes difficult to believe that nanovaccines which are produced by the same humans and transnational corporations are safe and effective. In the same vein, in a world where Cecil John Rhodes-like promises are readily made but seldom kept, it becomes difficult to believe contemporary promises by transnational corporations including global pharmaceutical corporations that share the same imperialistic characteristics and ambitions with Cecil John Rhodes.

3 From Sleights of Hand to Sleights of Technologies That Extend the Imperial Hand

In a world where transnational technology corporations are anxious to nanotechnologically scan and transfer human minds to the clouds and into technological substrates (Kurzweil, 2005; 15.03.2002; Nhemachena, Mtapuri and Mawere, 2022), it becomes very difficult to believe that nanovaccines are safe. In fact, in a world where nanorobots are to be injected or inserted into human brains for purposes of scanning and transferring the minds to the cloud, it becomes very difficult to separate this from the colonial processes where Africans were dispossessed of their land, minerals, livestock and so on – this time, with minds scanned and transferred to the cloud and into technological substrates, Africans are being dispossessed of their minds which are being separated from the biological brains. Besides, in a world where colonialists transferred African artifacts, and the skulls of assassinated Africans to European museums, and are refusing to return back to Africans the stolen artifacts, it becomes very difficult to believe that African minds will be safe once they are nanotechnologically scanned and transferred to the clouds which are owned and controlled by the Euro-American technology corporations (Nhemachena, 2022b; Nhemachena, Mtapuri and Mawere, 2022). The question is about how safe the African minds will be once they are scanned, captured and transferred to the clouds which are owned and controlled by the transnational technology corporations. Celebrating the ways in which some human beings are being
turned into the order of Antichrist using contemporary nanotechnologies and biotechnologies, Poxon (2001: 48) notes that:

If identity and the order of God are mutually constitutive constructs, and both are opposed to the affirmative, creative force of the body without organs ... then, conversely the BwO not only undoes the divine order but also opens onto the order of the Antichrist, an order in which personal identity has no foundation because the self-identical nature of God and the divine judgement that expresses and authorizes it have been cancelled out. This anti-divine order, then, 'is characterized by the death of God', the destruction of the world, the dissolution of the person, the disintegration of bodies ... It is an order in which the identity of the self has fractured beyond recognition, and the body as organism ... gives way to the powerful nonorganic or machinic vitality of the body without organs ... The order of the Antichrist, in other words, is the order of the 'affective, intensive, anarchist' body without organs.

The upshot of the above is that Africans who have historically been disposessed of their land, livestock, and minerals are now being dispossessed of their minds and selves which are being nanotechnologically scanned and transferred to the clouds and into technological substrates. Once virtualised and digitised, some humans will be migrated to the metaverse or to the virtual world such that they lose their biological bodies which are being condemned as carbon-based and risky in the sense of being exacting to the environment (Nhemachena, Mtapuri and Mawere, 2022). The transnational corporations are pushing for the adoption of silicon-based bodies and to do this they hide behind climate change and environmentalism, more broadly, to try and persuade human beings to give up carbon-based bodies and adopt silicon-based bodies which the transnational companies are producing and marketing (Nhemachena and Mawere, 2019; Nhemachena, 2021b). Biological bodies are condemned as living by exploiting the environment, and this is one argument from transhumanists and posthumanists who are now urging humans to get rid of their biological bodies and become digital or virtual in the sense of living as minds in the metaverse or virtual world into which the nanotechnologically scanned minds will be transferred (Petkowiski et al., 2020; Farman, 2019; Nhemachena, Mtapuri and Mawere, 2022). In fact, Farman (2019) writes that: “Silicon Valley donors have been investing heavily in a range of transhumanist longevity and immortality ventures ... These specifically include artificial intelligence in which human persons are to be transferred from carbon-based to silicon-based substrates ...”
In the context of all this, this paper argues, transhumanists, posthumanists and antihumanists are hiding behind climate change to argue for the need for humans to begin to live as minds in the metaverse or virtual world; and for all this, transhumanists, posthumanists and antihumanists are hiding behind environmental concerns to argue that humans should begin to live as minds in the metaverse and virtual world into which the nanotechnologically scanned minds are being transferred. The point here is that Europe and America are using what is called environmental escapism (Nhemachena and Mawere, 2019; Smith, 2011) for excuses to force some humans to migrate from the physical world to the metaverse and virtual world where they only live as minds flowing or circulating in a virtual postbiological world, called the metaverse, after having lost their biological carbon-based bodies. Nanovaccines, nanorobots, nanobots and nanotechnologies are being inserted or injected into human bodies and so human beings are already becoming cyborgs or biology-technology hybrids. In short, it is a world in which Africans and other people are being recolonised in the sense of being dispossessed of their minds and their biological bodies. Once minds are scanned and transferred from the biological brain, Africans get onto the course of slow violence and slow death (Nixon, 2013; Berlant, 2007; Szabo, 2009) that entail the separation of the minds and the biological carbon-based bodies.

The idea is that in a world that is increasingly antihumanist, what matters, for such a world, is “relationality” rather than the substantive human beings, and so human beings are being forced to give up their beings such that they become “relational minds” circulating in the metaverse or in the virtual world. Human beings are now being taught that humanism is bad and that human beings must become posthumans, must become nonbeings and must flow in the metaverse as nonbiological minds. Human beings are being taught that it is good to go beyond human essence or to become “otherwise than being”; human beings are being taught that they should sacrifice themselves supposedly for the sake of the environment, that they should sacrifice their “I” or “selves”; humanity is in fact being subjected to difficulties and challenges calculated to leave the humans with no options or alternatives but to give themselves up (Levinas, 2003; Keenan, 2005; Larios, 2018; Levinas, 1991); human beings are being driven into conditions that Emmanuel Levinas (2003: 66–67) calls malaise and nausea – conditions in which they are desperate, smothered, and conditions in which there is impossibility of being; such conditions are calculated to force humans to deliver themselves up and give up the beings in themselves, by so doing they become “otherwise than being”.

It is also important to note that historically, slave drivers kept enslaved Africans on islands where they would not escape and run away, back onto the mainland Africa; also historically, colonialists left colonised Africans
with no alternative means of subsistence because they were dispossessed of their land, livestock, minerals etc. (Nhemachena, 2021b) and historically the economic structural adjustment programmes, foisted by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank on Africans, did not leave Africans with any alternative but to succumb to the dictates of these Bretton woods institutions (Mlambo, 1995). Now pandemics are leaving Africans with no alternatives but to succumb to vaccinations using experimental nanovaccines produced by the transnational corporations many of which have historically participated in and benefited from enslaving and colonising the Africans; the COVID-19 vaccines were initially distributed under emergency authorization by the American Food and Drug Authority (FDA) (Nhemachena, 2021a; Nhemachena, Mtapuri and Mawere, 2022; Azharuddin et al., 2022; Hellman, William-Jones and Garrafa, 2020; Nandedkar, 2009; Yang, 2021; Feng et al., 2022; Rosman, 04.04.2020; Busari and Wojaer, 07.04.2020). Indeed, Nandedkar (2009: 995) writes that “In recent years, nanovaccines is a novel approach to the methodology of vaccination. Nanomaterials are delivered in the form of microspheres, nanobeads or micronanoprojections … microprojections … are some of the approaches which are in the experimental stage at present but may have a great future ahead in nanovaccination”.

In fact, during COVID-19, Africans have been told that there is no African herbal alternative to the nanovaccines being produced by the global pharmaceutical corporations (Nhemachena, Makamani and Mukesi, 2021). The point here is that, similarly, the enslavement and colonisation of other human beings is achieved by putting the targeted human beings in impossible positions in which they are forced to yield to colonial and enslavement machinations. Those that are targeted for enslavement and colonisation are first put in impossible situations where they are expected to deliver themselves up for colonisation or enslavement. In other words, the suffering of some human beings is so much a resource for other human beings that such other human beings have historically perched or marooned their human victims on islands, leaving them with no alternative but to succumb to enslavement and colonisation. Writing about challenges that force some humans to succumb to the demands of others, Levinas (1991) argues that:

To acknowledge the imperative force of another is to put oneself in his place, not in order to appropriate one’s own objectivity, but in order to answer to his need, to supply for his want with one’s own substance. It is materially to give sustenance to another, “to give to the other the bread from one’s own mouth” … To put oneself in the place of another is also to answer for his deeds and misdeeds, for the trouble he causes and for his faults … It is to bear the burden of that persecution, to endure it and to
answer for it. The substitution is conceived as the state of being hostage, held accountable for what I did not do, accountable for what I did not do, accountable for the others before others.

In fact, Levinas (1991) is advocating for sacrificial substitution where some people are sacrificed for the interests of others, for the wrong deeds or crimes of others. In this regard, it is important to note that the enslavement era was essentially about sacrifice because Africans were sacrificed for the interests of those that enslaved them. Similarly, during the colonial era, Africans were sacrificed in the interest of those that colonised them; indeed, just before they colonised Africans, Europeans had messed up their own societies, economies and polities through enclosure systems which made the European societies volatile because those, among the Europeans, that were disinhерited and impoverished by the European enclosure systems became rebellious. Instead of solving their own problems in Europe, the Europeans who were dispossessed, by their own kith and kin, through the European enclosure systems decided to come to Africa to “compensate” themselves by dispossessing Africans – in essence this was sacrificial substitution wherein Africans were made to suffer the wrongs of the European enclosure system for which they were not culpable.

In the twenty-first century, Africans are being recolonised and made to bear the burdens of others; to answer for the faults of others, to give the others bread from their mouths, held accountable for what they did not do. We are witnessing the second scramble for Africa in which African peasants are being dispossessed of the remaining small pieces of land that are now going to Euro-American transnational corporations (Nhemachena and Mtapuri, 2017; Southall and Melber, 2009). The new and ongoing second scramble for Africa is being conducted in the pretext of solving climate change issues, in the pretext of setting up plantations to resolve climate change, in the pretext of bioenergy, green economy and bioeconomy (Nhemachena and Mawere, 2019). But the problem is that the African peasants that are being dispossessed of their land are not culpable for climate change, they do not own or control the industries that are generating greenhouse gases. Besides, we are witnessing the increasing presence of foreign military bases and command centres on the African continent that is being subjected to the second scramble in the twenty-first century (Turse, 2015; Nhemachena and Mtapuri, 2017). Similarly, we are witnessing global pharmaceutical corporations demanding immunity from legal suits in the event that Africans get harmed by the COVID-19 vaccines produced and distributed by the same global pharmaceutical corporations (Nhemachena, 2021a). In addition, we are witnessing increasing absence of accountability by transnational corporations, many of which indeed historically played vanguard roles, as chartered companies, in the initial colonisation
of Africa. And, for the historical enslavement, as well as for the historical colonisation and the ongoing colonisation, Africans remain uncompensated even as Westerners ironically glorify the world, that they dominate, as modern, civilised, democratic, human rights-oriented, rational, accountability-oriented and what not.

If the Western world was accountable, Africans would have long received restitution and reparations for enslavement and colonisation. If the twenty-first century Western world was rational, they would not have taken centuries to be able to rationalise, quantify and dispense restitution and reparations to Africans. If the Western world was human-rights oriented, Africans would have long-received their humanely restitution and reparations for enslavement and colonisation. If the twenty-first century Western world was civilised, Africans would have received restitution and reparations for enslavement and colonisation – in fact, it is part of civil law to restitute and compensate wronged parties. In other words, civilised, accountable, rational and human rights-oriented societies recognise their crimes and they pay reparations even without having to wait for victims to seek legal actions. Rational, civilised, accountable and human rights-oriented societies do not continue to dispossess, exploit, enslave and colonise their centuries-old victims of enslavement and colonisation. While the West wants to persuade Africans to believe that the Westerners are the bastions of civilisation, rationality, human rights, accountability and good governance, we ironically witness Western institutions, individuals and states continuing to dispossess, exploit, enslave and colonise Africans in the twenty-first century. The point here is that Westerners do not only use sleights of tongue but they also use sleights of hand to keep Africans in the physical, ideological and virtual shackles and manacles of enslavement and colonisation.

4 Ideologies as Sleights of Hand

The term sleights of hand is used here to refer to tricks, including magical tricks that are used by the slave-drivers, the colonialists and imperialists – they design magical terms such as human rights, democracy, accountability, civilisation, good governance, rationality, progress, development and so on which they then use to trick African victims of enslavement and colonisation into believing that the world has changed and that the leopards have changed their spots. The sleights of hand are sonorous nothings in the sense of being high-sounding nothings not necessarily because it is not good to have democracy, human rights, accountability, rationality, progress, development, civilisation etc. They are high sounding nothings because they are carts appearing before the horses. Put differently, democracy, accountability, civilisation,
rationality, progress, development, good governance and human rights are only meaningful when Africans first assert and reclaim sovereignty over their natural resources and over their economies. The sleights of hand are sleights of tongue in the sense that they are sweet sounding nothings because they are sweet-sounding terms that are not meant to really see Africans free and humanised in the sense of owning and controlling their natural resources. In other words, sleights of tongue refer here to tricks of the tongue or magic of the tongue. Thus, sleights of tongue account for the fact that some Africans exercise hermeneutics of faith, uncritically believing in everything that comes from the West: this is because of the Western sleights of tongue which also account for divisions among Africans.

While the Africans that are steeped in hermeneutics of faith uncritically believe that Western democracy, human rights, good governance, civilisation, development, progress etc., minus African sovereignty over natural resources, would bring about freedom and development for Africans; other Africans who are not given to uncritical hermeneutics of faith believe that Africans must first of all reclaim sovereignty over their natural resources and over their economies before they can meaningfully claim to have human rights, democracy, good governance, civilisation, progress, development etc. The point is that Africans need not exercise uncritical hermeneutics of faith towards those that have centuries-old histories of enslaving and colonising them. There is a long history already which shows that the ideologies of slave drivers and colonialists create divisions among those that are targeted for enslavement and colonisation.

Put differently, while Africans remain disunited, Westerners remain united in resisting African demands for restitution and reparations; while Africans remain disunited, Westerners remain united in dispossessing and exploiting Africans; while Africans remain disunited, Westerners remain united and resilient in looting Africa; while Africans remain disunited, Westerners remain united in grabbing African land; while Africans remain disunited, transnational corporations remain united in protecting their patents about how they create COVID-19 vaccines; and, while Africans remain disunited, Westerners remain united in recolonising Africans.

The only kind of unity that Africans were historically allowed was when they were shackled and manacled together using slave chains (Nhemachena, 2022c) – it was unity at the instance of and at the service of the slave drivers. In this respect, the Africans need to assert and retain their own kind of unity, a kind of unity that serves Africans. It is not enough to just claim that Africans need to unite because colonialists and imperialists also desire unity – a kind of unity at their instance and that serves their own interests. In other words, slave drivers and colonialists would want to see globalisation that unites the enslaved...
and the slave-drivers, the colonised and the colonisers, the compensated and the uncompensated: a world that does not draw binaries between the slave drivers and the enslaved, the colonised and the colonisers, the compensated and the uncompensated. They delight in a kind of globalisation that colocates the enslaved and the slave drivers much as the slave ships united the enslaved and the slave drivers in the voyages across the Atlantic Ocean. The point here is that not every unity is secure and desirable for Africans. Foregrounding global unity minus restitution and reparations amounts to putting the cart before the horse – yet this is what the global elites seek to do to circumvent their crimes of enslaving and colonising other people.

Of course, slave drivers gave assurances to enslaved Africans that they were on a safe journey to a new and supposedly civilised world across the Atlantic Ocean; and colonialists gave assurances to the Africans, who they were colonising, that they were on a safe journey to civilisation. And, of course, contemporary colonialists are giving assurances to Africans that they are on a safe journey to a destination called progress and “smart world” – but the irony is that all these assurances are given even as Africans are being actually dispossessed and exploited, killed, assaulted, cheated and raped. Besides, Africans are advised that the journeys inevitably require sacrifices of those, at the margins of the new empire (see Hardt and Negri, 2000), that are captured whether physically, ideologically or virtually in the tentacles of the rapacious global capital. If the world, as evidenced by the enslavement and colonisation era, is characterised by predators and prey, why would the hares feel safe to be united with the lions that have historically cannibalised them?

The lions would naturally crave to be united with the hares but I am not sure the hares would even entertain the idea of being united with the lions. Of course, the lions would crave to efface binaries between predator and prey but I am not sure the hares would want such binaries effaced. While the lions may crave for border-crossings or border-sharing with the hares, I am not sure the hares would even entertain the idea of border-crossing or border-sharing with the lions. The point I am driving at is that while some contemporary Eurocentric scholars want to efface binaries, it is necessary to note that the effacement of binaries would also be part of the lions’ sleights of hand. Even chameleons would want binaries between themselves and their prey effaced – in fact, that is why the chameleons move slowly, motionlessly and carefully towards their prey; such motion constitutes the chameleons’ attempt to efface binaries and to efface the distances between themselves and their prey. Similarly, the process of colonisation entails the attempts to efface binaries, to cross borders and to share borders with the colonised. The argument here is that in order to bridge binaries and unite the world, it is necessary to first of all abate predatory practices in the world where those that have been enslaved and colonised still
suffer absence of restitution and reparations that would otherwise help heal the wounds and unite the world.

Once lost, in millions, at sea in a physical sense during the enslavement era, Africans are still lost, perhaps in the order of hundreds of millions, at sea in a real and metaphorical sense, and in an era where empire uses sleights of hand to prevent real decolonisation. Imperially praised for richness of sexual diversity but ironically imperially condemned for material poverty, Africans are sadly denied restitution and reparations for enslavement and colonial dispossession. Put in other words, Africans are, via ideologies of richness of sexual diversity, forced to focus not on the richness of African natural resources, which they are being dispossessed of, but on the supposed richness of sexual diversity. While Western transnational corporations monopolise African natural resources, Africans’ attention is diverted to matters of supposed richness of sexual diversity. While richness of sexual diversity is supposed to matter for Africans, richness of African natural resources is supposed to matter only for Western transnational corporations that are currently grabbing African land in the twenty-first century. The point here is that Western discourses about Africans’ richness of sexual diversity are meant to foreclose African demands for redress of the impoverishment that enslavement and colonisation have occasioned on Africans. Put differently, what sense does it make for those that have and are still materially dispossessing Africans, including in the second scramble for Africa, to generously sponsor discourses, on the continent of Africa, that exceedingly praise richness of sexual diversity, including homosexuality and humanoid-robotic sexuality? In fact, transnational corporations are already profiting from the humanoid sex robots which they are selling to those that have been made to value the richness of sexual diversity rather than the richness of their natural resources, over which they should exercise sovereignty (Nhemachena, 2021b).

Instead of spending time exploring and exploiting their rich natural resources, Africans have been made to focus on exploring and exploiting their richness in sexual diversity. Indeed, Western imperial ideologies encourage Africans to walk around half-naked, in real and metaphorical senses, so that African attention is focused not on admiring the richness of African natural resources but coveting the richness of sexual diversity on the continent. In this regard, Westerners generously support and defend projects on African sexual orientations but they oppose what I call Africans’ natural resource orientations wherein Africans seek to recover ownership and control over their natural resources. With some Eurocentric scholars advising Africans that there should not be binaries, including between the private and public, some Africans no longer value the distinctions between private parts and public parts. While traditionally, the Shona people have advised Africans that
**Even Chameleons Stalk Their Prey**

The contemporary world is witnessing the erosion of distinctions between the private and the public. Similarly, while the Shona people traditionally advised Africans that *chidembo hachivhiyirwe panevanhu* (private issues should not be discussed in public), Eurocentric scholars advise Africans to dismiss binaries, including those between the private and the public (Nhemachena, 2016). In fact, Africans are being encouraged to be open in manifold ways, including opening their societies and bodies, ironically in a world marked by rapacious exploitation and imperial extractivism (Nhemachena, 2021b).

Some Africans now spend more time doing make up and uplifting their sexuality and appearances than they spend exploring and exploiting their natural resources; besides, in the twenty-first century, transnational corporations are manufacturing silicon-bodied humanoid sex robots (Nhemachena, 2021b; Nyeck and Epprecht, 2013; Sandfort and Reddy, 2013), using appearances of world beauty models, because they want Africans to continue to focus their attention on matters of richness of sexual diversity rather than on the richness of their natural resources. In this regard, it may not be surprising that in the twenty-first century, some highly sexualised Africans are not even able to name the natural resources in their countries but they would readily and easily handle matters of richness in sexual diversity.

Thus, denied sovereignty over their natural resources but granted generous praises for richness in sexual diversity, some African youths are hardly doing any rationalisations of the richness of African natural resources because they are doing more rationalisations of the supposed richness of sexual diversity. Forcing African states to entrench liberal rights to the richness of sexual diversity in their constitutions (Nhemachena, 2019), while ignoring entrenching African rights to sovereignty over their natural resources, Western organisations have privileged and foregrounded sex over natural resources among Africans. Consequently, thinking and doing sex have become more important, for some Africans, than asserting sovereignty over their natural resources. Put differently, instead of teaching African youths that their richness lies in their natural resources, over which they should exercise sovereignty, some universities, nongovernmental organisations and some civil society organisations focus on teaching African youths that richness lies in their sexuality, including sexual diversity. Also, Western states, institutions and foundations often generously make grants to fund programmes, in African universities, that focus on and privilege sex and sexual diversity (Wood et al., 2007; Sandfort and Reddy, 2013; Smith, 20.06.2012; Mugo, 15.05.2019; Pray, 19.12.2010; van Klinken, 2019; Tremblay, 2016; Human Rights Watch, 24.05.2019; Okiror, 05.05.2021); however, they develop cold feet on funding programmes that focus on African sovereignty over natural resources. In fact, in spite of the importance of the subject...
of Africans’ sovereignty over African natural resources, there are hardly any university study programmes that focus on African sovereignty over natural resources. African universities are ironically awash with study programmes focusing on richness of sexuality and sexual diversity. For this reason, some African youths are stirred to revolt against any of their African leaders who asserts African sovereignty over African natural resources because for them that is not where African riches lie. For them richness now lies in sexuality and not in African natural resources. This is a result of imperial sleights of hand.

While, currently, Ukrainians are putting primacy on defending their sovereignty in the Ukraine-Russia war (Nhemachena, Mtapuri and Mawere, 2022), African youths are hardly taught anything about sovereignty over their natural resources which are being plundered by transnational corporations; and many such transnational corporations do not even pay taxes and royalties to African states (Nhemachena and Warikandwa, 2017). While Ukrainians are putting primacy on defending their sovereignty, Africans are taught, in liberal theory, to put primacy not on their sovereignty but on liberal freedoms even if these do not assist them in asserting sovereignty over their natural resources. Also, while Ukrainians are putting primacy on defending their sovereignty, African youths are misleadingly taught that African sovereignty is all about state violence (Rae, 2019; Cox, Levine and Newman, 2009; Mbembe, 2003). Put in other words, when Africans defend their sovereignty against Western transnational corporations and foreign states’ encroachments, the West describes such African assertions of sovereignty as violent, barbaric and not good for Africans. But when Ukrainians assert and defend their sovereignty against Russia, the West sees the Ukrainian cause as a worthy cause warranting tens of billions of American dollars of support in aid. When Africans assert their unity in ways that enhance their sovereignty over African natural resources, the West is quick to condemn such Africans and to arrange and implement coups against any African leaders who champion such unity and assertions of African sovereignty over natural resources. What happens in Africa is well captured by Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013: vii–xi) thus:

On the one hand, the history is dominated by a climate of interventionist global neoliberal imperialism which increasingly manifests its violent character through the military invasion of Iraq, bombardment of Libya, imposition of sanctions on Zimbabwe and military invasion of Afghanistan. Violent invasions of weaker countries by the United States of America (USA) and its North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) partners are often justified as humanitarian interventions to introduce democracy and human rights, dethrone dictators, eradicate terrorism
and restore order within those states characterized by United States as outposts of tyranny and part of ‘the axis of evil’. But the military interventions, rhetorically premised on the noble ‘right to protect’, seem to be selective and guided by the west’s permanent strategic interests rather than genuine global humanitarian concerns ... The term ‘postcolonial neocolonized world’ best captures the difficulties and unlikelihood of a fully decolonized African world that is free from the snare of the colonial matrix of power and the dictates of the rapacious global power. The current configuration of the world is symbolized by the figure of America at the apex and that of Africa at the bottom of the racialized and capitalist hierarchies, of a world order ... In short, the term ‘postcolonial neocolonized world’ captures a normalized abnormality whereby issues of African identity formation, nation-building and state-construction, knowledge production, economic development and democratization remained unfinished projects mainly because of their entrapment within colonial matrices of modern global power. African leaders are also entrapped within a disciplining colonial matrix of power and those who try to deviate and question the commandment from the powerful Euro-American world are subjected to severe punishments and in extreme cases even assassinations.

While Western states are asserting and defending their economic sovereignty, state sovereignty, health sovereignty, medical sovereignty, technological sovereignty, data sovereignty, internet sovereignty, digital sovereignty, and sovereignty over their natural resources (Nhemachena, 2022b), Africans are misleadingly advised that sovereignty is colonial, old and no longer fashionable. At a time when Africans are being advised to cede their sovereignty to international and transnational institutions, we witness the second scramble for Africa with transnational corporations grabbing land from African peasants (Nhemachena and Mtapuri, 2017); we witness African peasants displaced from their land on the basis of promises of job creation which do not materialise; we witness the insertion of the Fourth Industrial Revolution and the robotisation of work which defeat the transnational corporations’ promises of job creation on the continent of Africa (Nhemachena, 2022b). Having suffered unfulfilled promises, since the enslavement and colonial era, it is time that Africans awaken from the anaesthetising magic of Western ideologies. The English people say ‘once beaten twice shy’ – the scrap heap of centuries long promises by Westerners is testimony that Africans must not continue to fall into the same traps. Africans should learn from the experiences of the past. The point here is, if secularists including some Western scholars have advised
humanity that God is unresponsive and must be dispensed with (Lovelock, 2006), the question is why some Africans should retain faith in the West that has not only failed to keep its promises but has historically enslaved and colonised the Africans.

As a result of uncritical hermeneutics of faith towards the West, some African men have entrusted their wives to Westerners such that some African women who may be indisposed to kneel before their husbands and in-laws readily kneel before Westerners, when begging for aid, and before Europeans’ ancestors described as saints. Besides, some African men have entrusted their children to Westerners before whom they kneel when praying to the Europeans’ ancestors described as saints – and, ironically, such children refuse to kneel before African ancestors. Some African women have entrusted their husbands to Westerners before whom they kneel and plead when begging for aid and when praying for saintly interventions; even those African husbands who would be indisposed to kneel before their wives are seen kneeling before European ancestors described as saints. Similarly, some Africans entrust themselves to Westerners before whom they kneel and plead for jobs; and before whom they plead for “investments”. Indeed, even some seemingly tough African presidents have entrusted themselves to Westerners before whom they kneel and plead for aid – and some such seemingly tough African leaders even declare, in their supplications before Westerners, that they are open – “for serious business”. In addition, those Africans whose attention has been turned to focus on the richness of sexuality also declare that their bodies are open – “for serious business”. It is all about hermeneutics of faith, including faith in those towards whom openness is piously declared; one cannot argue that they do not have faith in those to whom they open-up. The point here is that Africans do not need to open-up their states and their bodies because opening-up, whether for “investors”, for work or job creation or for humanitarian aid or financial aid, negates African sovereignty and autonomy. Sadly, some African leaders have consistently declared that Africa is “open for serious business” and, of course, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank have forced African states to adopt open door policies, through economic structural adjustment programmes (Melber and Southall, 13.01.2021; Ndakaripa, 2020; Ndimande aand Moyo, 2019; Mugauri, 2019; Kgomoeswana, 2015; Ismi, 2004). Writing about the IMF imposed open door policy, Ismi (2004: 5) notes that:

The World Bank and the IMF have forced Third World countries to open their economies to Western penetration and increase exports of primary goods to wealthy nations. These steps amongst others have multiplied profits for Western multinational corporations while subjugating Third
World countries to horrendous levels of poverty, unemployment, malnutrition, illiteracy and economic device. The region worst affected has been Africa.

5 Serious Business Does Not Require Openness but It Requires Sovereignty-Based Hospitality

Instead of declaring that Africa is “open for serious business” or declaring that African bodies are “open for serious business”, it may be much better to declare that Africa is hospitable for serious business or that African bodies are hospitable for “serious business”. I am taking a leaf here from Derrida’s conceptualization of hospitality, that is, conditional hospitality as opposed to unconditional hospitality (Naas, 2009): under conditional hospitality, one retains sovereignty, ownership and control. Citing Jacques Derrida, Reynolds (2004: 177) notes thus:

For Derrida ... the notion of hospitality requires one to be “master” of the house, country, or nation (and hence controlling) ... to be hospitable, one must first have the power to host. Hospitality hence makes claims to property ownership and it partakes in the desire to establish a form of self-identity. Second, hospitality must also involve the host having some kind of control over the people who are being hosted, because if the guests take over a house through force, then the host is no longer being hospitable towards them precisely because he or she is no longer in control of the situation ... any attempt to behave hospitably is always partly betrothed to the closing of boundaries ...

The point in the foregoing is that Africans do not have to declare openness because openness negates sovereignty and autonomy; openness renders one susceptible to re/colonisation and to abuse by those that may enter and take over control of that which is open. While Africans may claim that openness attracts “investments” and jobs, it is necessary to note that openness does not attract investors, rather it is hospitality that attracts investors because with hospitality one retains ownership and control – on the other hand, openness attracts colonialists and abusers because, in it, one loses ownership and control over that which is declared or rendered open.

If, historically, enslaved and colonised Africans resisted working for the slave masters and colonial masters, the question is why contemporary Africans get so magicked by Western promises of job creation such that they forget about the imperatives of African sovereignty. Sadly, for promises of job creation,
some contemporary Africans give away their sovereignty over their natural resources; also, unfortunately, for promises of job creation, some contemporary Africans give away their economic sovereignty; similarly, for promises of job creation some contemporary Africans give away their land; for promises of job creation some contemporary Africans give away their state sovereignty and for promises of jobs, some contemporary Africans give away their bodies that are declared as “open for serious business”. The point here is that whereas the English people say “a bird in hand is worth two in the bush”, some contemporary Africans give away what they already have simply because Westerners have promised them benefits in future. When Africans fight among themselves for jobs, instead of fighting for sovereignty over their natural resources, it is like fighting to become hewers of wood and drawers of water so as to get crumps from the masters’ tables.

Africans have to know that the West did not become sovereign because it is developed but the West developed because it retained its sovereignty; it is important to note that development cannot occur on a continent that does not have sovereignty; similarly, economic growth cannot occur on a continent that does not have sovereignty; and human rights and democracy cannot be realised on a continent that does not have sovereignty, including sovereignty over its natural resources. Democracy depends on the existence of sovereignty; human rights depend on the existence of sovereignty; development depends on the existence of sovereignty; economic growth depends on the existence of sovereignty – and not vice versa. In other words, it is not the presence or assertions of sovereignty that cause poverty, rather poverty is a bedfellow of absence of sovereignty. Africans are impoverished not because they assert their sovereignty, rather Africans are impoverished because they have been robbed of, and have not recovered, their sovereignty. In other words, states that lack sovereignty over their natural resources tend to be the most unstable, susceptible to violence, wars, human rights abuses, authoritarianism and so on. The argument here is that, without sovereignty, including permanent sovereignty over natural resources, Africa will remain shifting sand – and treacherous for African unity.

Put differently, what unites or should unite Africans is not merely common or shared culture in a symbolic sense, as is assumed in Western discourses; rather Africans are and should be united by shared permanent sovereignty over their African natural resources. When the Shona people of Zimbabwe say *ukama igasva hunozadziswa nekudya* (kinship is not complete by itself, it can only become complete with the presence of materialities like food), they are in fact underlining the imperative of sovereignty over natural resources; for the Shona people of Zimbabwe, Africans are not united merely by cultural
aspects like *ukama* (kinship) or languages but Africans are united by material provisions or sovereignty over materialities including food and other natural resources. Of course, Western scholars and organisations would want to advise Africans that they should be united only around symbolic cultural aspects and issues and not by sovereignty over their natural resources. If Western states were, centuries ago, united at the Berlin Conference by a common or shared goal of parceling out African natural resources, why should Africans be united merely by shared culture in a symbolic sense?

Africans may be different in the sense that some are linguistically and culturally *makwerewere* (those that do not speak indigenous languages) (Nyamnjoh, 2006, 2015) but all Africans are united by their victimhood in enslavement and colonization; including colonial theft of African natural resources. If natural resources, including the land, are foundations of unity, then Africans can only become united when they have sovereignty over that which unites them – which is African natural resources, including African land. The problem is that Africans have been taught to unite around treacherous Western liberal democracy, which negates African sovereignty, and not around their natural resources. This amounts to putting the cart before the horse. It is not that liberal democracy is bad but that it must be preceded by Africans’ assumptions of sovereignty over their natural resources. Liberal democracy minus African permanent sovereignty over natural resources is a recipe for disasters – and indeed there are endless disasters on the African continent which is deprived of sovereignty. If Africans do not notice that fighting over work is a sideshow – even a non-show, they risk, with the divisions, being taken back to the Atlantic Ocean and, indeed, across the ocean. Slave raiders similarly thrived on conflicts among the Africans of the era of enslavement. While Africans are busy fighting one another, slave raiders take the opportunities to do what they are best at. Indeed, some of the conflicts among Africans were fermented by the slave raiders who needed to take advantage of such opportunities to get as many Africans as possible onto the slave ships that waited by the African coasts. Slave ships are still docking at the African coasts and, so, twenty-first century Africans need to be on guard.

6 Conclusion

Using the Shona people’s saying that *rinonyenga rinohwarara rinosumudza musoro rawana* this paper has critiqued tropes that Africans and Africa are “open for serious business” or for “investors”. Arguing that colonialists needed Africans to be open in order to penetrate and colonise them, the paper has
signaled dangers of continuing to tout Africans and Africa as open. Arguing that openness negates African sovereignty, the paper has also contended that colonialists/imperialists use sleights of hand and sleights of tongues to recolonise Africans. Teaching Africans to focus on the richness of sexual diversity and not on the richness in African natural resources, universities in Africa have managed to divert African attention from demanding sovereignty over natural resources such that the richness of sexual resources has taken precedence over the richness in African natural resources. Arguing that there is need for Africans to assume sovereignty over their natural resources, this paper has underscored the necessity of decolonising African minds such that there are shifts from obsession with richness of sexual diversity to richness in African natural resources. Also, arguing that twenty-first century Africans should not fight one another over work but they should assert sovereignty over their natural resources; this paper has contended that, similarly, enslaved Africans fought one another over work while the masters asserted ownership and control over natural resources, including the labour power of the enslaved Africans. If Africans take the Shona proverbial warning rinonyenga rinokhwarara rinosumudza musoro rawana into their theorisations of international relations, society and politics, they will be able to resist chameleon politics in the world. As explained in the paper, chameleon politics and relations are politics and relations that are replete with trickery and lack of Ubuntu ethics – they have no regard for the humanity of others, who may be conveniently taken for flies. Indeed, chameleon politics are premised on the effacement of binaries between humans and nonhumans. Much as Western funders, NGOs, CSOs, institutions and states generously fund and support discourses and practices on richness of sexual diversity in Africa, one would also expect them to generously fund and support African efforts to benefit from or take ownership over the rich natural resources on the continent. It does not make sense for Westerners to generously support and defend African sexual orientations while ironically ignoring Africans’ natural resource orientations, in the sense of wanting to recover ownership and control over their natural resources.

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