

Unlearning Dehumanizing Knowledges Through a Pluri-centric Repositioning of the 21st Century Library

Presenter: Feisal Kirumira

Human Quotes: Omotayo Segun-Omosehin, Rama Taha,
Emily Xu, Josiah Afriyie, Nathalie Hewa Dewage

Act 1 (Feisal)

**Introduce theme,
structure, purpose of
Keynote, and Human
Quotes (students)**

- dehumanizing knowledges, role of libraries in conversion education, homogeneity of truth
- Afrocentric lens: Luganda Folklore + proverbs as guiding subthemes (libraries as shrines where healing + evil worship are sanctified);
- Resistance education) through lived experiential exploration of 21st century international student needs + visions
- **Human Quotes introduce themselves**

Act 2 (Feisal)

Sub-theme: “Wisdom is like an anthill. Each termite digs its own path and brings forth its own soil” (Luganda proverb)

- Eurocentric hegemony in defining a what library is; each civilization had and still has its own system of archiving, disseminating, and sharing knowledge.
- Library as planned vs. library as lived (how human zoos as human libraries informed contemporary understanding _____of Eurocentric multicultural education.

Act 3 (Human Quote # 1)

Name of student: Omotayo
Segun-Omosehin

Key points of your story

- Find your people

Act 3a (Human Quote # 1a)

Name of student:
Nathalie Hewa Dewage

Act 4 (Feisal)

Subtheme: “When the river dries up, water returns to the place from whence it sprung. Verily, water never forgets its home.”
(Luganda proverb).

- Myth of neutral objective truth and knowledge
- ● Literacy as a tool for racial subjugation and libraries as mediums for enactment of colonial education
- Role of libraries in silencing dissent, sanitizing discourse on slavery, imperialism, and myth _____ of multicultural education

Act 5: (Human Quote # 2)

Name of student: Emily Xu

Key points of your story

- Food in Cafeteria
- Student said disrespectful things

Act 5a: (Human Quote # 2a)

Name of student: Rama
Taha

Key points of your story

Act 6 (Feisal)

Subtheme: Wisdom is like the fire that warms up a hut; when your fire dies out, you cross the courtyard to get glowing embers from your neighbor's hut.”
(Luganda proverb)

- Re-conceptualize post-secondary cultural literacy as the “ability, confidence, and willingness to language, [culture, gender, race, social class] in order to acquire [unravel, illuminate, and reinforce] practices and ways of living that respect and embrace all aspects of our storied and ancestral human condition
—— (<https://education.alberta.ca>).

Act 6 (Human Quote # 3)

Name of student: Afriyie
Josiah Kwabena

Key points of your story

- Perception

(NOT always the truth)

Act 7: (Feisal)

Suggestions for repositioning
the 21st century library

- Library as a site for unlearning by desecrating enshrined myths about the subhumanity, inequality, or homogeneity of the human condition
 - Library as a site where invisible literacies (non-Eurocentric) are made visible
 - Library as a place where university staff, students, faculty receive Inclusivity, Diversity and Equity training and certificates
 - Library as an extension of EDI programming where languages from the Global South are taught and used.
 - Library as a site where EDI reading and journaling courses are delivered
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Closing Act:

(Emily, Rama, Tayo,
Nathalie, Josiah, Feisal)

Closing act: Grant us safe
crossing

- Reading out a poem together
“Grant us safe crossing”
 - (Prelude to doctoral
dissertation)
 - @ Feisal Kirumira, 2019
-

Grant us safe crossing

Emily, Rama, Tayo, Nathalie,
Josiah, Feisal

O my ancestors, how right you were!
Just like the waters of a river drying up,
wisdom returns to the place from
whence it sprung.
Verily, water never forgets where it
came from.
And yet, as your descendent whom you
entrusted
with our culture, language, and ways of
belonging,
I have transgressed.

Grant us safe crossing

Emily, Rama, Tayo, Nathalie,
Josiah, Feisal

In my quest for belonging, I tried to flow
back to places

I never originated from.

O my foremothers, you who gave me
your breast of belonging
to suckle without grumble,
accept my atonement for my insolence.

Nambi, daughter of Gulu, the God of
heavens,

How could I forget your teachings that
home is not the place where you live at
peace, but rather

the place where you choose to lay your
bones when you die?

Grant us safe crossing

Emily, Rama, Tayo, Nathalie,
Josiah, Feisal

O my ancestors, you who still breathe
life into me and the lifeworld I inhabit,
O my ancestors, you who created the
language
by which I belong or not belong,
by which I am one in me or one in many,
by which my ancestral spirits, mediums,
and ghosts
are alive and fill up the void in me.

Grant us safe crossing

Emily, Rama, Tayo, Nathalie,
Josiah, Feisal

Ancestors of mine, bless this unraveling
of black belongings.

O spirits of the trees and rivers, guide
me on this pilgrimage.

Ghosts of my ancestors, touch Hermes
on the shoulder,

allow him to sit by your fire, and
mischievously play with your amulets.

Wisdom is like the fire that warms up a
hut;

when your fire dies out, you cross the
courtyard to

get glowing embers from your
neighbor's hut.

Grant us safe crossing

Emily, Rama, Tayo, Nathalie,
Josiah, Feisal

O my beloved ancestors sleeping at the
bottom of the Atlantic, feeling the sting of
the slave master's whip, walking a thousand
miles on the underground railroad,
Grant us a safe crossing.
Shine a light on the terrain before us.
Allow these black words and soul verbs to
bubble forth;
do not let them remain locked up inside the
heart.
Do not let us suffer silently with belonging
like the water that is trapped in a clay pot,
thinking it has become the pot. Alas! When
the pot breaks, the water frantically looks for
the originary source.

Grant us safe crossing

Emily, Rama, Tayo, Nathalie,
Josiah, Feisal

Grant us safe crossing
like the strong current rippling through
the ocean,

Grant us safe crossing
like the dreams that bring a smile on a
sleeping baby's face,

Grant us safe crossing
like the scribblings on scrolls by
scholars long gone;
scribblings that unsettle me, un-house
me, and unleash me.

Grant us safe crossing;
from you we came, and unto you, is our
ultimate return.



Thank you!