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Social Transformations and Re-Negotiating Identity in a Plural Cultural Space in Margaret Ogala's *The River and the Source*

Jairus Omuteche

Lecturer, Department of Language and Literature Education,
Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology, Kenya

Abstract:

*The paper evaluates the depiction of a pluralistic identity of Kenya that foregrounds the country's diversity by Margaret Ogala in her works, specifically focusing on her first novel *The River and the Source* and its sequel, *I Swear by Apollo*. Ogala makes conscious choices and attempts to deconstruct literary and popular representations that tend to privilege perspectives of monolithic ethnocentric images of the country's national identity. In the face of the challenges of essentialising ethnocentric purities and the way they are used to undermine Kenya's national identity that is decidedly diverse and cosmopolitan, Ogala emphasises an alternative imaginary that recognises the space for a plural co-existence. Ogala further reflects the role of historical changes that have re-shaped the relationships between individuals and communities in Kenya. The changes have resulted into significant shifts in the cultural landscape of the society, impacting on how individuals and groups relate to each other and identify themselves. Interminglings are not just locally situated in Kenya, but rather Ogala shows that the forces of globalisation impacts on how Kenyans experience their total identification and their day-to-day-being in the world. Therefore, the paper interrogates the manifestations of internationalization, the resultant transnational consciousness and the internal Kenyan cross-cultural interrelationships in re-shaping the sense of identity of individuals, families, and the society in general that they figuratively denote.*

Keywords: Cultural changes, particularities versus diversities, internationalisation, cosmopolitanism, transnationalism

1. Introduction

The time setting of *The River and the Source* and *I Swear by Apollo* cut across a large time span. The story of the first text starts in pre-colonial Luo society when the main character, Akoko, is born to chief Odera Gogni of Yimbo in the later decades of the nineteenth century before colonialism permeates these parts of what is today Kenya. Its story is mainly a reconstruction of Akoko's maturity and life within the traditional Luo cultural dispensation, and the challenges of traditional demands for family and widowhood she had to live through. It is also the story of her pioneering embrace of alternative ways of life in a changing society that is being reshaped with the start of colonisation and western cultural intrusions. The second text carries on the diverse stories of Akoko's progenies in a changing society that is not only becoming nationally multi-ethnic but also internationally cosmopolitan.

2. Change and Community: Identity and Belonging in a Shifting Cultural Space

In *The River and the Source*, Ogala represents Luo traditional community made up of diverse clans that had autonomous chieftains with democratic councils of elders, the Jodongo. But the clans are bound together by shared cultural norms that define interrelationships and co-existence as a community. Indeed, the distinctiveness and quasi-autonomous status of Yimbo is revealed by being represented in a contrastive relationship to other Luo clans such as Kano and Nyakach which were frontier clans bordering the Luo neighbours, the Lang'o. Lang'o is possibly a Luo name for one of the present-day Kalenjin sub-groups who bordered them to the east and north-east. Lonsdale's position on the geographic and social nature of pre-colonial Kenya illustrates this further. He posits that,

If one takes 'Kenya' to indicate a social formation rather than a level of power, then in 1895 it was an overlapping patchwork of hunting, cultivating and herding peoples. They exploited varied ecological arenas – forests, hills, and plains – which were linked by the exchange of women, goods, and trust. (1989, 6)

Ogala depicts this epoch as the time that Akoko was born. She writes:

In that place and in those days, life went on at an uninterrupted, even keel. Inter-clan warfare was rare, for dak (neighbourliness) and wat (a concept that encompassed a brotherhood so far-reaching that it was almost impossible to go anywhere and not find a relative) were valued highly. The war-like Lang'o tribesmen were far away, bordering places like Kano and Nyakach, would never dream of coming this deep within the territory. (*River and the Source*, 16)

This is a revealing passage which contains multilayered discourses. These discourses convey cultural, historical, geographical, and philosophical information about the community within it. Historically, it establishes the differences of

'now' and 'then' underlining the alterations wrought by transformations over time. Further, it reveals the social arrangements of clans – Yimbo, Nyakach, and Kano among others – that made up the Luo territory. Dak and Wat are cultural and philosophical norms and values that defined this particular community, they underpinned how the members related and co-existed. Geographically, we can discern how the landscape was shared among the related and different communities. The cultural philosophy of the community was encompassed in the all embracing and pervasive Chik, the way of the people. It contained the normative values, practices and guidelines that governed all acts and relationships in the society. It underpinned the religious practices, family, marriage, communal relations, rights, hospitality, legislative-judicial and the moral fabric of the community. Therefore, one of the most valuable attributes of Akoko when she is about to be married was that, "She had been carefully brought up and has been taught all the requirements of Chik" (River and the Source, 21). Her clan emphasises this to the prospective in-laws because the ways of Chik basically forms the sacred superstructure of the society. The daily strives, work, disagreements, formation of new relations by marriage, childbirth and rites of passage, communal governing, dealing with the supernatural are all governed by the dictates of Chik which encompass the traditional Luo people's philosophy of life. It is within this traditional cultural atmosphere that Akoko is born, raised, married, and begins a family of her own.

With colonisation and other forms of western intrusions, fast paced and complex social, cultural, and economic changes occurred in communities across Africa and no less among the Luo people. For Akoko's family and the larger Sakwa community, the first incursion of the outside in the form of British colonial spread and influence into their midst is traumatic. This is demonstrated by the sheer perturbation of the people when the heir apparent to the chieftain, Akoko's son Obura, disappears after being enticed to discover the world outside his clan which was quickly altering.

The transformations come slowly to Sakwa making the traditionally established order to start wavering. As Akoko's family develops and the children matures, the winds of change that were to transform the society starts sweeping across the land:

The seasons ran into each other swiftly and silently and soon the children were half grown. However, the world was no longer a quiet, peaceful and predictable paradise. Rumours and whispers had reached his far, of happenings which were strange, to say the least. (River and the Source, 47-48).

These are mainly reported about Jorochere, white people, which could imply any of the European activities of the late decades of 19th and early ones of the 20th century in Eastern Africa: missionary work, travel, trade, or colonisation. The news about the European activities in the region start spreading initially like tales of mysterious happenings leaving most of the people incredulous. Ambere K'ongoso is one of the first to encounter the foreign activities. When Ambere returns from his usual wandering, he tells of colonial occupation and conquest in form of punitive wars taking place in different parts of the regions, "Their magic was incomprehensible for they could kill with a mere puff of smoke and a bang from something that resembled a pipe [...] They were on the whole a strange people, avid and arrogant" (River and the Source, 48).

Inevitably, as more information of these happenings penetrated Sakwa, curiosity was bound to get the better of some of the members of the community. One of such curious was Obura, Akoko's son. Obura is curious about such stories regarding money, how it was earned and what it could be used. As an intelligent young man, Obura quickly apprehends the transformative happenings taking place in this epoch around Africa. This is highlighted in his remarks to his mother that he wants to "See the world and what other people do, how different from us they are" (River and the Source, 49).

The apparent rapture is evident in Akoko's counter-argument which seeks to safeguard the established order that Obura's curiosity hazards. She urges him to marry and settle down, noting that "only Were knows where this world begins or ends for he made it; you can walk the rest of your life and not reach its end". To his father who also feels he should marry and settle down, Obura says,

'I would like to see the Jorochere, the white people and their magic. Maybe I might even make some pesa and bring many useful things from out there. Please give me your blessings and let me go' (River and the Source, 51).

Therefore, while Obura exemplify what would be typical in the coming decades, his parents console him to keep to the known ways and embrace the security of the predictable. Being too much strong willed, Obura decides to pursue his heart's desire and disregards the wishes and wisdom of his parents and goes away to discover the outside world. When the search party the chief had dispatched to pursue and bring back his son returns, their reports confirms that Obura's departure marks the beginning of steady change that colonialism was to set in motion:

'We, that is those of us following the route to Gem found their trail. We followed it up to the second village and lost it there. The people told us that white men came there every three moons to get people to work for them. They put people into those moving metal houses you have heard about, which move fast, there is no knowing where they might be by now' (River and the Source, 55).

The next time the outside definitively intrudes into the serenity of Sakwa is the report of Obura's death in Tanganyika, a victim of Europeans' World War One. By now, East Africa is colonised by the British and the Germany, and the war between the two inevitably spills over in the region. As the emissary from the colonial government sent to deliver the tragic news tells Chief Owour of Sakwa,

'You may have heard that the country is being ruled by white people now. They with the help of some black people have formed something like the council of Jodongo, only much bigger, to make sure that everyone lives in peace according to the new law. This is sirikal.' (River and the Source, 60)

The emissaries from this sirikal informs the chief of the demise of his son in the German colony of Tanganyika where he had been taken to fight by the British. Hence it is a devastating first official encounter of Sakwa community with the phenomenon of British colonisation and western influence. Three members of the community have been affected, Obura

Kembo and Ambere K'ongoso have been killed or reported missing in action while Nyarochi Silwal has lost a leg in the war and has been reduced to a beggar in Kisumu marked (River and the Source, 60-61). Obura's death is therefore part of colonial disruptive anomaly that heralds major changes in social, economic, cultural and political sphere of the African communities. This is clearly denoted in the atypical mourning for the death without a body:

The village went into mourning for the chief's son. It was made worse by the fact that there was no body to mourn over and to bury. The people traditionally gave vent to their emotions during funerals but this was not easy without an actual body to keep one's fury up. (River and the Source, 61)

The question that lingers in the minds of the people of Sakwa and that encapsulates their trauma and bewilderment is, "What manner of people were these Jorochere to take such a young man, hardly more than a boy, to go and fight in a war he knew nothing about?" (River and the Source, 64). Following the death of the heir apparent in the World War I, the chief's family faces two more tragedies when the chief himself dies. His youngest son, Owang' Sino inherits the chief's stool but he too dies soon after from accidentally suffocating on a fish bone during his evening meal. The result is the usurpation of the chieftaincy by Akoko's brother in law, Otieno. But without the wisdom of his brother and characterised by laziness and avarice, Otieno leadership leads to the destruction of the tradition cultural judicial and legislative fabric,

He appropriated his brother's wealth and tried to grab his widow's personal wealth as well. He married two new wives almost in a breath and his excesses were surpassed only by his folly. He dispensed even with the venerated Council of Jodongo. (River and the Source, 73)

Otieno, as a male chauvinist, views Akoko in the prism of patriarchal worldview that subordinates women. Combined with his greed and laziness, Otieno's machismo leads him to abhor a woman who exemplifies these values he lacks. He comes to covet the vast wealth of Akoko, making him hate her as he cannot control or possess her.

I argue that from Ogola's representations, there was no clear cut or hegemonic view of gender in Luo traditional society. Rather, norms that assigned gendered roles were not fixed. In the later part of the paper I will argue further that the contemporary gender assumptions that situate the place of the woman in the domestic space and the male in the public sphere is largely due to a combination of African traditional patriarchal norms and western gendered perspectives introduced through missions and colonial practices in regard of the work place and workers.

When Akoko is born, her father hopes it is another boy child he has sired, "Another rock for my sling." But when he finds out it is a girl child, there is no love lost, and the writer brings this out with wry humour that capture the flexibility of the attitude towards male and female children who are all valued, though differently without demeaning the importance of a child of either sex "Later he would say wisely, with something of a turnabout, that a home without daughters is like a spring without a source [...]" (River and the Source, 11). Also, as she grows up, the chief develops a deep affection for his daughter that implies the fluid possibilities for gender status in this society. Furthermore, as a first-born daughter, Akoko also holds a special status in her family that disregard any simple assignation of gender roles (River and the Source, 15). This becomes even clearer when Akoko gets married and her husband, a chief, opts to have her as an only wife. He disregards his brother and mother who hold gendered views that are contrary to his, and who demands he marries more wives who will sire more children for him befitting his status as a chief. Akoko also utilise her industry to accumulate individual wealth independent of her husband. Hence, she holds an independent economic position regardless of her sex. As regards the issue of children, it is arguable that the society did not just demand this of the woman, but it was seen as a duty for both male and female to ensure the family had enough children for continuity. Therefore, in Akoko and her husband, Ogola deconstructs the deeply ingrained view that in traditional African communities' sexual divisions were absolute and inevitable. Rather as demonstrated above, they were provisional and not indissoluble.

Akoko's frustration stems from her mother-in-law and brother-in-law's patriarchal construction of gender. In biased judgement of Akoko, they see her as only suited to mothering and without a right to possess any material wealth. So, fatefully, after the death of Akoko's husband and all her male children, Otieno's persecution and the presence of colonial government in their midst leads to Akoko taking steps that reshape her family's destiny. She decides to seek the intervention of the colonial government, a possibility which would not have been available to her a few years before. All the odds would have been against her, "She knew that as a woman, a widow and a sonless mother, the only male in her direct line being a little baby, she was greatly disadvantaged" (River and the Source, 73). To get the arbitration of the colonial government and their justice system, Akoko has to make the long journey to Kisumu and make contacts with the new administration. Therefore, Akoko appreciates early that colonialism had brought in new sets of administrative and judicial possibilities that could complement the Luo traditional Chik.

In Kisumu, Akoko encounters a burgeoning urban society characterised by cultural, ethnic, and racial plurality that was shaping into a new society that was to be the future Kenya. Nevertheless, in spite of the changing world and expansion of cultural interactions, the deeply entrenched traditions and practices of Chik are utilized in the construction of cross-cultural inter-relationships that guide the emerging interactions within the interacting diverse communities. It can be argued that later, the same values and structures of acculturation that were inherent in African societies helped construct and structure the new Kenyan society and its identity, and later to guide the evolution of an international communality and cosmopolitan identifications in the face of growing global intermingling that have come to characterise the post-independent period in Kenya.

During the journey to Kisumu, Akoko plays the role of an elder within the traditional setup and tells her nephews, Opiyo and Odongo, stories of their ancestry and believe system that form the cultural base of the society. But when they reach Kisumu they encounter a changing world. The town is an emerging urban space characterized by emerging modernity. But conventions of Chik and the humanity that cut across cultural barriers easily enables Akoko to find her way

around the town. Thus, Akoko approaches Otuoma, a stranger they meet in Kisumu, but who within the traditional convention of hospitality helps them find their way to the colonial DO. From the very first interaction with difference and diversity, Akoko recognises the common humanity that underlies all human beings. Through this representation Ogola emphasises the humanity of all that is possible to tap in when the Luo starts relating to other peoples they meet outside their traditional home. Akoko, the wise elder, notes the humanity of all races and insists to her daughter before her journey that the white people, the Jorochere, are human beings just like the Africans (River and the Source, 77). In Kisumu, the humanity of any group is not doubted under racial constructions, rather difference is noted:

The twins looked at him [the white DO] with interest. He was actually white – not cloud white, but an undefinable translucent colour with spots of red on the cheeks, the ears and the tip of his long nose. His hair was an amazing yellow and wonder wonders his eyes were blue. Nevertheless, he was human and spoke with a human if strange voice – rather resonant with an unusual timbre, somewhat harsh to the ear. (River and the Source, 86)

Odongo, Opiyo and Nyabera with their young impressionistic minds are tempted to visualise and know the white people through easy but untenable dualistic constructions of 'them' and 'us'. But Akoko insists on a more complex understanding that accounts for their humanity. For her their race can not be the only defining characteristic of who they are, and therefore cannot be used to account for any form of generalised positive or negative attributes that can be projected to them onto the basis of their difference. Therefore, she tells Nyabera after her case against her brother-in-law has been concluded, "You know my child, human beings are the same the world over, with the good and bad ones. The bad ones serve to highlight the goodness of the good ones" (River and the Source, 93). In Akoko's view, humans cannot be homogenised as good or bad on account of racial or ethnic lines. She sees the rot of evil in human relations as greed and individualism. Such evil tendencies that characterise her brother-in-law are as a result of his individual laziness, individualism, and greed. As Amadiume asserts, in traditional African societies "Material wealth was converted into prestige and power" (1987, 30). These are what Otieno lacks due to his laziness. Hence Akoko feels self-respect and hard work would alleviate Otieno's follies. She urges Nyabera,

"Work tirelessly my child. It is a shame for an able-bodied person to feed off the sweet of others. It becomes like a sickness of the blood which transmits itself to generations and becomes a curse forever. (River and the Source, 93)

For Akoko and her daughter, connections and interconnections with the outside world that re-shape their sense of self-definition and identification are partly as a result of string of tragedies that befall them. They go out of their kith to seek intervention and sanctuary from oppression and misfortune. Because of the painful experiences in marriage following infantile loss of her newborns and finally the demise of her husband, Nyabera seeks out Christianity. Her situation is very difficult in the traditional setting that laid a lot of emphasis on children and husband, "Nyabera was full of bitterness and she decided change was necessary. For her there was obviously not meant to be the comfort of a husband and children around her knees" (River and the Source, 100).

Christianity attracts her and makes sense to her because most of its teachings touch on the reality of the pain she has lived through. For Nyabera, the Christian God "made meaning out of sorrow and suffering and who particularly liked the poor, the orphan and the widow" (River and the Source, 100-1). Therefore, Nyabera decides to join the Christian congregation to seek solace in its fold. When she tells her mother about her decision, Akoko's counsel to her daughter indicates the working of cultural optimisation processes that involve dialogic re-positioning and re-negotiation in the re-working of identities and sense of self, which are also important markers of change. Akoko tells Nyabera, "If you are walking along and you find along and you find your path leading nowhere, then it is only wise to try some other path" (River and the Source, 103). As they grapple with the challenges of belonging in the traditional setup as widows, mother and daughter explore the emerging alternatives resulting from colonisation and westernisation. They take charge of their own destinies and employ agency to ensure the survival of their family. To a large extent, the way the family evolves is influenced by the deliberate choices they make to move out of their matrimonial homes that have become a hindrance to their individual wellbeing. They also adopt Christianity and education for the children. Together with the values of Chik and hard work, Akoko steers her family in the new milieu that is shaping out in the changing world.

I argue that Nyabera's adoption of Christianity marks an important milestone in the cultural optimisation processes of the family. The inherent communality innates in Chik, the way of her people, and the Christian values converge meaningfully for Nyabera. More so, her move to the Mission in Gem is the second major journey after Akoko's to Kisumu that plays a major role in the family's re-negotiation and re-assertion of identity. Therefore, journey motif, figuratively bolstered by the image of the flowing river that symbolise the family, is significant artistic strategy that Ogola employs in depicting change and forms of cultural renegotiation deployed by the characters to deal with their reality.

As she makes her pioneering move to adopt Christianity, Nyabera is aware of the contradictory aspects of her culture and Christian teachings. She feels her state of widowhood and craving for children will prove the main stumbling block for her to fully reconcile to Christianity that emphasises the purity of the nuclear family (River and the Source, 108).

Finally, Akoko joins Nyabera in the decisive move when she agrees to join her daughter at the Mission in Gem permanently. Through allusion, Ogola depicts the turning point in the being of Akoko and her progenies when she and Nyabera take the decision to move out of their clan and settle at the mission. We are told, "So they carried the pot of ghee to help ease their way into the new life. Like the children of Israel, they left the flesh-pots of Egypt for uncertainties of Caanan" (River and the Source, 112).

But due to Akoko sustaining her virtue of hard work, the family is able to re-establish a respectable economic status, and with that a dignified lifestyle. What is conveyed through Akoko's emphatic celebration and practice of hard work, and her consciousness of the social security that comes with a well provided for family is that essentially, modes of production and processes of consumption are important elements in situating identification. So far, it is evident that Akoko's primary

philosophy in life encompasses equality, personal right, justice, and the ethics of hard work. She had espoused these within her Luo traditional set up, but she utilises them as the central pillar in the cultural optimisation process as the family re-establishes itself at the Mission where they make a new home with Akoko and Nyabera as head of the family and Christians. Ogola writes that they were "secure in the knowledge that what is good never come easy and what is good is worth every single struggle" (River and the Source, 114). From threats of being annihilated in their ancestral home and then frugal existence in their earlier period at the mission, Akoko's knack to accumulate wealth ensures her family's prestigious social position, well-being, and economic security is quickly re-established. Therefore, production and consumption are more than aimed at satisfying biological needs of food, but are "processes surrounding the construction of social identities" (Bocock, 1992, 123). The patterns of production and consumption, it can be argued in the light of Akoko's depiction and her emphasis of hard work, to have a complex and symbolic bearing to identity formation of individuals and families, and, in Bocock's words, their "inner-life and social psychological development" (123). Here, social success and prestige are attached to food security. In the next generation, the emphasis shifts to education and access to or accumulation of money as the main shaper of economic class and social status.

A regenerative process is cemented by Akoko and her family undertaking Christian rituals of baptism and accompanied by acquisition of new names. Nyabera becomes also Maria, Akoko becomes also Veronica, Awiti also becomes Elisabeth, and Owuor becomes also Peter. Dialogically, Akoko optimises her store of Luo traditional wisdom and the ethics and sensibilities of her adopted Christianity to forge a new sense of being for herself and her family. This is evident in the way she counsels and advises Nyabera and Owuor when they are faced with dilemmas of reconciling the newly adopted Christian faith and their Luo traditional sensibilities and cultural responsibilities. When the heartbroken Nyabera feeling as if she has transgressed from the Christian ways returns to the Mission after a failed attempt to settle back in Seme with a hope of establishing a family within the traditional norms of wife inheritance, Akoko tells her:

'My child, you have sinned yes, but you have failed no one, least of all me. To tumble and fall is human; so human that God, almost despairing of our ever really understanding him, made himself human for our sake – that we may touch him, and hear him and know him. Go to the church and talk to him there. (River and the Source, 123)

Similarly, her advice and support to Owuor to take up priesthood rather than return to Seme to reclaim the chief's stool illustrate Akoko's dynamic view of the changing world around her. These adaptive understanding of their world where they dialogically try to make sense of their day to day reality through Christianity is a clear mark of cultural optimisation process. To Akoko who easily merges Luo and Christian wisdom to construct a useable philosophy of life, the Luo concept of were easily becomes the Christian God. The trend is also clearly illustrated by the way the family handles Elizabeth's betrothal to Mark Sigu. There is evident continuity and preservation of important Luo traditional norms that govern the institution of marriage, but in addition the, the marriage is solemnised according to Christian ways they have now adopted (River and the Source, 145, 156). Hence the family forges new identities that enable them fit into the emerging modern and cosmopolitan society that Kenya is becoming in the colonial period that the first part of the novel is set.

3. Re-Negotiating Identity in a Shifting and Culturally Plural Space

Through her representation of Mark Sigu's family, Ogola demonstrates the non-homogeneity of the Kenyan society that come to characterise the last decades of colonialism and early ones of independence. Even within the same family, it is evident the children are diverse in their personal identifications in terms of their sensibility, orientation, and in their aspirations. The way they relate to education, religion, and family vary. Parekh identifies and differentiates personal and cultural identity. He states that the concern of identity raises the question of "what exactly individuates us, defines and distinguishes us from others and makes us this person rather than some other" (Parekh, 2008, 8). Besides having constitutive and identity-determining features, individual humans are also "self-conscious and self-determining agents [...] able to reflect on who they are and decide what they wish to make of themselves" (Parekh, 2008, 9). Based on these defining qualities, Parekh suggests that the individual's identity is three-dimensional, constituting personal identity, social identity, and human identity. It is this combination that makes the human a complex being that the paper argues avail the regenerative capacity witnessed in Akoko and Nyabera, and characterise the Elizabeth and Wandia's families. The regenerative capacity enables them to continually re-negotiate and re-position their identification in evolving socio-cultural contexts, exemplifying the dialogism of cultural optimisation processes underpinned in the mediated re-positioning and re-negotiations.

Ogola dwells on the depiction of the expansion of the family through birth and the development of each child to illustrate the trends in the evolving Kenyan society. Still utilising the figurative motif of the journey, Ogola depicts the different routes the individual's chart and that come to inform the maturity and diversification of the family. Educational journeys of each child are important and are dwelled on. This is because education is portrayed as a critical catalyst for individual and social development. Hence, it can be argued that education is a significant aspect of cultural optimisation process in the society depicted in the novel. From the time Akoko and Nyabera settle at the mission in Gem, besides religion, formal education become one of the centre-piece of the family's social formation and self re-definition. Owuor and Awiti are enrolled in both the catechism and reading class (River and the Source, 115). Henceforth, through the generations, education becomes a marker of prestige and a means of situating the family members into the desired social position. Ogola's representation of education is celebratory and seems to be premised on the role of education in social and cultural reproduction and transformation. In the depiction of the colonial education system, she objectively depicts the complex nature of the education and the challenges inherent in its role in the society. However, her depiction of post-independent education system seems exclusively to emphasis conservative intellectualism that constructs and maintains

class privileges. Therefore, in colonial time, we see education as a system of power arrangement in society. As Foucault argued, "knowledge functions as a form of power and disseminates the effects of power" (1980, 69). Through the enrolment, completion rates, drop out rates, and gender representation in the different levels of the school system we can decipher what Foucault sees as the surveillance and regulation of the populations of the society through certain institutions such as the education system.

It is through the exposure to western formal and religious education that Owuor is unconsciously influenced to forego his customary duty to regain the chief's stool. He rather opts to become a priest. Here, the education system and the knowledge it propagates through the power it overtly or covertly conveys through its hidden curriculum are driving cultural transformation and reshaping the social space. It is redefining what is significant or no longer relevant and what can be defined as acceptable or progressive and vice-versa. So Owuor and his family decide to move in the new direction propagated by the new forms of knowledge that the mission education system is providing. When they talk over Owuor's desire to be a priest rather than a chief of his clan, Akoko tells him,

You have concluded wrongly that I will stand in your way. It is true that I had hopes that you might one day sit in the chief's stool that your father and your grandfather once occupied; but things have changed and people are turning to different things. I had also hoped that you would marry and provide many sons to ensure the continuity of the house of Owuor Kembo; but no, I will not stand in your way. (River and the Source, 126)

On the other hand, when Owuor leaves for the seminary, Awiti joins the primary school. Awiti's educational journey further illustrates the power dynamics of the education system that Foucault identified referred to above. First, we are told the school curriculum had "a heavy colonial slant" and that the certificate issued at the end after passing the course was "a carte blanche to literally any job available to an African in those days." Additionally, the gender dynamics are quite telling. Awiti was "one of the two girls. The other thirty-two were boys" (River and the Source, 128). Here, it is evident that through the colonial bureaucratic system, of which education is but one sphere, not only patriarchal gender roles are reflected and maintained, but also colonial norms of racial and class hierarchies are implanted and normalised.

Together with introduction of western forms of religion and education, at play are also infusion of other forms of modernism that processes of westernisation are seeking to implant by displacing the traditional African practices of production, consumption, and economy. These are reflected in the covert selectivity of the education system as it reshapes the cultural, political and economic order of the society. The only other girl who had enrolled in the primary school with Awiti drops out at sixteen to get out, but she is not the only one, and we are told:

Five boys also dropped out for various reasons including lack of three shillings levied per year. At the time when most families simply had no cash and lived entirely on a barter system this was frequently too hefty a sum to raise. Almost all the students were adults and while it made good sense to learn religion for a year, it made absolutely no sense to prolong the agony for eight years to get a piece of paper that was supposed to enable one to work for the white man – and who in his right mind would want that? The accepted form of wealth was cattle – a man who had them was wealthy and one who did not have at least a few was regarded as the lowest form of life. Maybe for such and their children, pursuit of the white man's education held some attraction – but there was the insurmountable problem of the levy for if those rich in cattle could not easily raise that elusive three shillings how much more the son of a man who had nothing? In any case it was considered better to try to lift the yoke of poverty by tilling the land rather than lying about in some classroom. (River and the Source, 128-9)

This revealing and discursively multilayered passage illustrates complex gender dynamics that are also at play in the exhibition and deployment of power through education in colonial school systems. Evident here is a combination of traditional practices and ways that prevent the girl from effectively appropriating modern lifestyles that colonial changes heralded. Also evident are the inherent patriarchal biases in the western practices that colonialism and Christianity introduced in the society. Scholars such as Amadiume have shown that the nature of traditional African societies defined and assigned gender differently. During colonialism, the girl's status and the place of women in society was convoluted socially and culturally. The western forms gendered marginalisations that subordinated women and designated them to domestic space as opposed to men's place in the public space were introduced into the African socio-cultural being. These complicated matters for the African women in their attempts to find a place and play a role in the new public places where the main social, economic, and political activities had shifted. These public spaces like the school, the church and the work place were decidedly male-centred and male-dominated. An instance that could point to this is depicted:

If it was hard for a boy to get an education – it was well nigh impossible for a girl. The purpose for female existence was marriage and child bearing – and by the same token to bring wealth to her family with the pride price. (River and the Source, 129)

Whereas marriage and the social responsibility for procreation had been a requisite for both male and female members of the community, it seems that with new forms of social status introduced by westernisation, it is only the women who are carrying the burden of these traditional duties in the new and changing social space. Ogundipe-Leslie notes this in her critique of the convoluting of African traditional practices and western gendered norms, especially as concerns the status of women in society by commentators on African women and their gendered positions in contemporary Africa (Ogundipe-Leslie, 1989, 14). Crowley on her part asserts that gender constructions are contingent and historically and context specific. Hence, the western gender norms introduced by missionaries and colonial agents had a basis in European historical and cultural developments that reshaped and marginalised the social position of women in western societies over time:

In the process of slow but profound social changes traced by the emergence of the modern social formation out of the pre-industrial, agrarian society it replaced, the lines of demarcation between the work undertaken by women

and the work undertaken by men were drawn and redrawn, and gradually emerged in a division of the social world into public and private spheres, with women's work being firmly positioned in the later. One of the dominant explanations for the position of women in the private sphere of the family and men in the public sphere of work and polity was, and remains, that women are naturally suited to mothering and caring. (Crowley, 1992, 70-1)

Amadiume says that these western norms had far reaching impacts on the identity of the African women when colonialism and Christianity infiltrated the African cultural space and that they continue to haunt them in the post-independence era. She argues that their imposition their linked ideologies and cultures greatly affected the structural position of women in society, "with the introduction of Christianity and Western and Victorian ideologies, women took a secondary position in the fields of education and religious leadership. The same process of masculinisation occurred in political representation in the local government" (136).

Nevertheless, in Ogola, as argued so far, education is an important aspect of cultural optimisation processes. The emphasis on education and what it embodies in the post-independence society reflect how it is entangled in the social processes of reproduction and consumption. As a form of consumption, it signifies through signs, symbols, and ideas its distinctions as a signifying social product and process. These distinctions are enabled by access to and consumption of education permeate the ways the new society define itself and wants to be seen. Bourdieu argued that education is used as a site for maintenance of social status. In this case, education adds 'cultural capital' to the 'economic capital' of the given family or economic segment of the society (qtd. in Bocock, 1992, 148). For Kenya that is just emerging from colonialism, Ogola represents families that are striving to enter the ranks of middle class. Education is therefore a means of negotiating social positions and class status. Furthermore, as class distinctions and social stratifications become entrenched and the majority realise they are effectively marginalised economically, education becomes also a possible means of escaping chronic poverty, attaining material wellbeing, and a form of social security against sliding back into poverty.

Quoting Baudrillard, Bocock argues that rather than what is consumed for the sake of consumption to satisfy a particular need, the sphere of the symbolic is primary in the choice of what is consumed. As such, consumption is governed by desire to define not who we are, but express what we want to be. Hence, identities and social status are not 'pre-given'. "Rather, we become that which what we buy makes us" (Bacock, 150). Education as a consumption helps the families re-constitute themselves and become what they aspire to be. As a symbol, it "signify that we are x or y to ourselves and to ourselves and to others who share the same code of signifiers, the same system of signs/symbols and their socially produced meanings" (Bacock, 150). Thus, in post-independence era, we see education represented as a form of ritualised class reassertion and maintenance of status. Mark and Elizabeth family and then Aoro and Wadia's are projected as passionate about academic excellence. The families depict the view that education capital attained a new meaning in post-independence society. Arguably, Bourdieu's argument on education as social capital can help dissect the sociological workings that underpin Ogola's depiction of education that focuses on the role of education as a domain of class embedding and affirmation, and not on the place of education system in the society as she had does in her depiction of the colonial era scenario. Bourdieu argues thus;

Each family transmits to its children, indirectly rather than directly, a certain cultural capital and a certain ethos. The latter is a system of implicit and deeply interiorized values which, among other things, helps to define attitudes towards the cultural capital and educational institutions. The cultural heritage, which differs from both points of view according to social class, is the cause of the initial inequality of children when faced with examinations and tests, and hence of unequal achievement [...] (Bourdieu, 32-33)

This aspect of education referred here by Bourdieu is revealing of society. Thus, the paper is arguing that Ogola's representation of post-independence education seems to focus only on aspects of education that sustain privilege for a particular social class. The inequalities that are essentially present in a class society that Kenya is, and that impact on the effectiveness of the education system and educational practices in the country remain unrepresented. Bourdieu's position on this perspective that Ogola takes in representing education is that it gives "de facto sanction to initial cultural inequalities" (1974, 37). Whitty supports Bourdieu's position by arguing that:

Bourdieu's analysis not only illustrates the 'selective tradition' at work, but also the way in which it can serve to legitimate the success of those who possess the appropriate cultural capital and the failure of those who do not [...] the cultural attributes that are valued by the school provide part of the clue as to why education systems so often seem to reproduce existing patterns of inequality. (Whitty, 1992, 280)

The depiction of education as social capital and the concerted description of the educational journeys of the family members of Elisabeth and Mark's family culminate into the establishment of the children in different careers and expose them to other socio-cultural possibilities that reshape the way the family relate to itself and the world around it. Their career journeys and romantic affiliations lead to the re-constitution of new communalities. Ogola consciously seeks to illustrate the plural cultural landscape that characterise the modern Kenyan society. Vera begins a relationship with Tommy, a relationship used to demonstrate the inhibitions that still stood in the way of the evolving cosmopolitan society. Mark is uncomfortable that his daughter is seeing a Luhya, for instance. But Elizabeth demonstrates dynamism and awareness which help her appreciate that society is changing. This indicates the appropriation of new attitudes to aid the accommodation of the emerging diverse differences that have come to characterise the society depicted. Elizabeth insists that Tommy should not be judged under a homogenising and totalizing label on basis of tribe, but rather appreciated on the basis of his merits as an individual (River and the Source, 208). Similar question arises at the when Aoro introduces Wandia to his family. The family is basically expecting that Aoro will bring home "a nice girl – naturally a Luo like himself –

who would proceed to have many children – all ordinary black colour” (River and the Source, 270). But when his father raises the question of Wandia being a Kikuyu, Aoro’s response carries Ogola’s philosophy:

‘Father, I don’t know anything about the rest of the tribe, but I know Wandia. She is the one I have chosen. I love her – which is a feeling that I cannot just transfer from one girl to another at will. In any case I have done anatomy, and beneath the skin everyone is remarkably the same. Even the blood, which is supposed to be thicker than water is all just a combination of iron and protein in every instance. Some people are good. Others are bad – it’s got very little to do with their blood or tribe. It’s all in the heart.’ (River and the Source, 271-2)

What Ogola seeks to emphasise through this passionate defence of mutual and mediated love, and further accentuated by the punning on popular proverb and bio-medical imagery, by Aoro is the fact that it is human identity that enables people to relate across differences of individual and cultural identifications. According to Parekh, human identity presupposes that human beings “should be able to rise above their social roles, status, occupation, religion and place in society, and appreciate that they are not defined exhaustively by these” (27). What is being emphasised here is that people are able to abstract themselves from the contingency of individual and social identifications and relate to others as human beings.

Constantly at play in Ogola is the imaging of the cultural optimisation processes that re-construct cosmopolitanism as cultures interact and dialogue. Explicitly, Ogola depicts the cross-cultural reality of the Kenyan society that is culturally plural. Writing against the backdrop of Kenya’s socio-political contemporary scene where issues of ethnicity have taken reactionary turn, Ogola’s representation consciously advocates individual value within the diversity rather than ethnocentric homogenisation. The friendships and romantic relationships she dramatises illustrate this major preoccupation of the author. The friendship and comradeship between Vera and Mary-Anne and their boyfriends, Tommy Muhambe and Mathew Saisi, depict this conscious reconstruction that deconstruct the propensity to valorise ethnocentric particularities in politics, public and social institutions, popular culture, and some literary works. Ogola thus emphasises human shared values that can construct a more cohesive Kenyan society which is more dynamic, progressive, equal and just. In her celebration of cosmopolitanism and transnationalism as developing mindsets that are more socially constructive, Ogola demonstrates the interaction between personal identity, human identity, and national identity.

Generally, colonialism and the intensified impacts of internationalisation that followed had profoundly challenged traditional identities in the society in what has become modern Kenya. It is important though to note that cross-cultural and even international influences in the region pre-dates colonialism. Furthermore, these influences were dialogical and not unidirectional. That is, the exchanges were appropriated selectively and in a mediated manner that deployed the agency innate in the processes of cultural optimisation. The interactions were also multiple, rather than binary (Bery and Murray, 2000, 2). Ogola alludes to these processes when she depicts the cultural space that entails more co-existence and shared cultural, religious, national, and international values and destiny. In the face of significant cultural and historical transformations, Ogola shows that it was not possible for personal, cultural, and national identities to remain static, purist, or singularly monolithic. Illustratively, as the long line of Akoko’s family develops, they have to on-goingly re-negotiate their sense of personal identification and belonging within expanding national and international cultural, political, and economic contexts. As Parekh notes in another context, “cultural communities are constantly exposed to, and having to change in response to, each other, and can no longer define and maintain their identities as they did before” (2008, 1). Ogola critically challenges deployment of a number of exclusionary and subordinating cultural perspectives such as purist ethnocentricity and patriarchy. Most of the characters are used to exemplify the shared human identity that cut across ethnic and racial boundaries. Through different social relationships such as romantic love, friendship, marriage, and co-existence in work places and residential areas, Ogola shows the possibility of re-interpreting the Kenyan national identity in a more nationalistic rather than sectarian manner.

Focusing on transformative historical moments of the country’s development, Ogola shows that individuals were called upon to meet what Parekh terms as the unusual demands in new historical contexts as they redefine themselves and reconstruct their identities (1). While it is crucial to assert particular identities such as personal, and collective cultural ones such as ethnic, clan, regional, religious among others, it is equally important as Ogola demonstrates to affirm Kenya’s national identity in a more inclusive and pragmatic manner and to locate the diverse identities that make up the country within its framework. She avows ethnic and racial absolutisms, the bedrocks of ethnocentricity that breeds nepotism, corruption, and different manifestations of exclusion and marginalisation.

As humans are human in unique but mediated ways, Ogola seems to suggest that the Kenyan identity should be an enriched appreciation of the humanity of all, rather than destruction of difference or diversity. An identity that is responsive to difference rather than in conflict with the diversities, inclusive and complementary rather than conflictual. Pakesh says that “particularity or difference is valued, but not particularism, which absolutizes it” (1). What Pakesh notes in his observation have been at the core of Kenya’s failure to achieve a cohesive national identity. Particularism has been deployed to construct regional, racial, class, and ethnically closed in-groups, facilitating political and economic marginalisation. Ogola proposes a cultural space where difference and diversity can be re-worked into emancipatory nationalism by deconstructing ethnocentric images that underpin hegemonic absolutism.

To fully apprehend the challenges to national identity that Ogola is grappling with in her deconstructive representation of relationships, we must critically appreciate what the nation means for individuals. Kenya as a political entity plays a crucial role in the way individuals and groups experience their individual and social identities. It further serves as a collective identity to the people territorially concentrated within its borders who therefore share life-shaping experiences. It controls education, health, juridico-political and cultural institutions, and defines and secures or abuses various rights of these people. But due to different historical reasons, or selective interpretation of history and

manipulation of national symbols, the society is systematically re-structured in ways that lead to political and economic struggles between groups where the dominant ones aim to structure the society in particularist ways. It is here that Ogola aims to intervene. Arguing against dogmatic constructions of national identities, Parekh advocates for adequate partiality that captures and allow for more inclusiveness of plurality:

Every political community needs and invokes some shared view of its collective identity, if not explicitly then implicitly, but the later can also become exclusivist, authoritarian, repressive and narrowly nationalistic. A view of national identity is a force for both unity and division, a condition of community's reproduction that can become a cause of its fragmentation. (64).

Arguably, as identities are constantly reconstructed, they can be formulated and reformulated in contexts. Ogola attempts to redefine the national identity and perspectives that shapes the vision of the country's destiny.

4. Internationalisation and the Emergent of Transnationalism and Global Cosmopolitanism

Becky's choice of career has enormous significance as it opens up the family to whole new vistas of cultural possibilities. The move to be an air hostess thrusts her into the global capitalism in which airlines operate their business. Through her relationship with John, a Canadian and pilot, Ogola extends the scope of the cultural plurality of Kenya. It also enables an interrogation of the role of globalisation in the shaping cultural identities at the time Kenya was emerging as an independent nation and a member of the world community. This entailed establishment of various cultural, economic, and political inter-regional and trans-national connections. The debates and ideas of globalisation variously suggest the extent to which different processes and flows associated with modernity are integrating the world, leading to intensified political and economic interdependence (Held and McGrew, 2000, 1). Different innovations led to an enabling ground for the spread and consolidation of the power of capitalism around the globe. The spread of information and transport technologies, for example, have led to more world-wide social and economic interconnections, with the national levels permeated by and transformed by the international and vice-versa. Held and McGrew assert that the concept of globalisation can encompass material, spatio-temporal, and cognitive aspects of world-wide interaction and interconnectedness (3). The material aspects of globalisation – flows of trade capital and people across the globe – are facilitated by different kinds of physical infrastructure such as airline transport. Therefore, the story of Becky and John, and subsequently of their children Alicia and Johnny, is depicted within the phenomenon of a world enmeshed in global flows, international networks and interactions. As members of families and communities in Africa and Canada, their respective families and communities are essentially transformed as they learn to adopt and negotiate the difference and patterns of social interaction these transnational relationships entail. This is captured succinctly by Held and McGrew when they say that globalisation “refers to a shift or transformation in the scale of human social organisation that links distant communities and expands the reach of power [and cultural] relations across the world's major regions and continents” (4).

Aspects of transnationalism and internationalisation are therefore denoted in the story of John, Becky and their families. When Vera learns for the first time the relationship between Becky and John, she raises one of the major concerns that multi-racial relationships involve. She asks her sister,

‘Have you stopped to think how difficult it is going to be for you – and your children? Where will you live? Where does he come from anyway?’ (River and the Source, 2 22)

The series of interrogatives illustrate Vera's incredulity and awareness of the daunting task of establishing and maintain such bonds that Becky and John are proposing. She goes on to mention some of these challenges as being the likely rejection by their respective families, general mistrust from people around them, and suspicion regarding the genuineness and honesty of the relationship. For Vera, only deep and enduring affection can hold such a union together. But Becky's response too reflects the attitudes that are formatively drawn on to construct trans-cultural cosmopolitan mindsets that enable transnational communities to develop:

‘He is Canadian. We might live in Canada or here in Kenya – we have not decided. He really likes the country and its people, you know. He is a nice man [...] The fact that he is white does not mean that he is automatically bad and looks down on Africans.’ (River and the Source, 222)

John too displays a mindset that enables cosmopolitan attitudes. He is aware of the challenges and pitfalls of bi-racial relationships. He is further flexible and willing to learn and accept the cultural values that govern marriage and family among the Luo, the community he is marrying from. Arguing that he does not want to antagonise Becky's father, he states:

‘I don't want to be treated like a roguish mzungu out to take advantage of someone's innocent daughter. I'd like to get married properly, have children who will know their double heritage properly and a father-in-law who at least respects me’ (River and the Source, 224)

A combination of factors associated with globalisation and Becky's individual disposition lead to the breakup of John and Becky's marriage. Hedonistic self-love, materialism, and consumerism are at the core of Becky's personal identity. Besides with her striking physical beauty, her family had noticed a streak of selfishness in her character early in her life. As noted in earlier parts of the paper, consumption is important in situating social success and prestige. But in the case of Becky, the knack for material accumulation is taken a notch higher beyond the mere requirement of food security or social prestige. Hers is an aspect of what Veblen terms conspicuous consumption, “the social display, based upon a high surplus income, enabling people to indulge patterns of consumption which are designed to impress others in some way” (qtd. in Bockock, 128).

Becky's personality and lifestyle raise issues of morality, sexuality, and the body as social constructs. The emergence of diseases with international reach such as HIV AIDS has impacted on the socio-cultural reconstruction of ethics, morality, and social relationships. The depiction of Becky's ailment creates a polarity between her valorisation of physical beauty of her body and also associated with health body and well being on the one hand, and the representation of her diseased body associated with emaciated body ravaged with full-blown AIDS (River and the Source, 284). Further, there are subtle denotative coincidences in the portrayal of Becky, her worldliness with its associated lifestyles of consumerism and materialism, and the suffering from a disease correlated with sexuality and worldly connectedness in its earlier years of its emergence. Becky's lifestyle is seen as a major departure from the general sexual trends adopted by the other characters. If cultural norms are taken as regulatory practices that seek to discipline community members sexuality, then it is important to bear in mind that "our sexual definitions, conventions, beliefs, identities, and behaviours [...] have been shaped within defined power relations" (Weeks, 1992, 224). Becky's attitude to sexuality challenges the dominant norms expressed in the church and cultural institutions of marriage that disciplines by defining and ordering the body and sexuality. Seemingly, due to Becky's flouting of these social conventions, her marriage breaks up, and she dies from a disease discursively linked to her lifestyle.

Arguably, her lifestyle characterised by consumerism, just like the disease she dies from, is linked to international interconnectedness and globalised flows. The argument being developed here is that we can decipher in the depiction of John and Becky and the interrelations that develop between their transnational families the ills, challenges, and the positive aspects of globalisation and cosmopolitanism.

The divorce, Becky's sickness and her death have very weighty repercussions that ripple through the family members. Their sense of being-in-the-world and identities are challenged, calling for renegotiation and reconstitution. The children, Alicia and Johnny, are haunted by their parent's divorce and their mother's death. They experience a devastating sense of displacement, especially due to their being of mixed race in a predominantly black African society. Johnny especially feels the impacts of these events strongly, he tells Wandia, "before I came to live with you I felt completely unlovable and unwanted. I thought it was because I was neither black nor white – but some horrible mixture [...]" (River and Source, 302-3). Johnny even proposes to change his name from Courtney to Sigu in a move designed to erase his father's heritage which marks his transnational identity. However, Wandia urges him not to seek to erase any of his personal identification markers, but rather to embrace his dual heritage, "You are a child of two worlds and I believe that somewhere within you, somehow, someday you will find that you have the best of both those worlds" (River and the Source, 303). So, Johnny opts to reconstruct his cultural personal and identity in particular and deliberate ways. He takes Sigu as his middle name and cultivates deliberate African identifications as a means of declaring who he is:

Eventually at eighteen he would compromise and would take the name Sigu as a middle name – this he felt would appease his African soul. Also, Johnny was excessively fair with straight very light brown hair. People tended to take him for pure white, a thing he disliked and which he countered by speaking mostly Swahili, eating mainly African food, and having friends who were practically soot black. (River and the Source, 303)

These are the themes that I Swear by Apollo (2002), a sequel to *The River and the Source*, takes up. Its story focuses on the maturation of the great-grandchildren of Akoko, mainly Becky's and Aoro's children. The issues of transnational and cosmopolitan identifications are expanded when John finally decides to re-establish his acquaintance with his children and their Kenyan family. There develop close relationships between the Kenyan and Canadian branches of his family. Through the depiction of these interrelationships and interconnections, it is evident that Ogola's main focus is on the possibility of cultural globalisation, cosmopolitanism, and transnationalism. It can be surmised that through this representation, she undermines what Rahman avows as the tendency to exoticize difference and practice consumerist cosmopolitanism in the guise of globalisation. What Rahman is referring to are tendencies in west to project latent Orientalist gaze on the Other whereby difference is commodified as exotic for the aesthetic consumption of those with capital advantage (Rahman, 2013, 406). Such mindsets maintain mostly Euro-American neo-imperialism that underlines global inequalities and alterity of the Othered cultures.

By representing mutual cultural exchanges at play between the Kenyan and Canadian families, Ogola undercuts the dominant tendencies in the conceptualisation of the globalisation and cosmopolitanism as a privilege of those who can afford to display consumerist pleasure by sapling cultural products and artefacts from diverse regions of the world enabled by neoliberal capitalist global domination disguised as globalisation. For Johnson, these aspects of "privileged cosmopolitanism" perpetuate western capitalist and consumerist hegemony that marginalises "abject locals" and constructs global "economic hierarchies" (Johnson, 2013, 419). Ogola deconstructs the predominance of these hierarchies that bedevil the discourses of globalisation and cosmopolitanism. Through familial and cultural interactions, western and African cultural values interact and result in dynamic mutual impacts on both John's family in Canada and Aoro's family in Kenya.

5. Conclusion

Form the foregoing discussion, an attempt has been made to evaluate Ogola's concern with the way identities in Kenya are constructed and deployed in social and political contexts in Kenya. It is evident that she consciously takes issue with tendencies to emphasis ethnocentric identifications at the detriment of the cultural plurality of the country. On the other hand, Ogola underlines the impacts of historical and cultural changes on the way individuals and groups experience identity. This implies that identities are not fixed but constantly undergo mediated re-positioning as they respond to cultural and historical development. This paper has designated this process as cultural optimisation processes. The concept provides a critical space for the understanding of multi-directional and multi-experiential processes of self-

becoming personally and culturally. It accounts for historicity, social landscape, and the everyday materiality of experiences that impact on identity formation. Furthermore, this critical re-orientation enables the disruption of the political and social forces that produce and maintain unequal relations that subordinate certain sections of society individually or as groups.

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