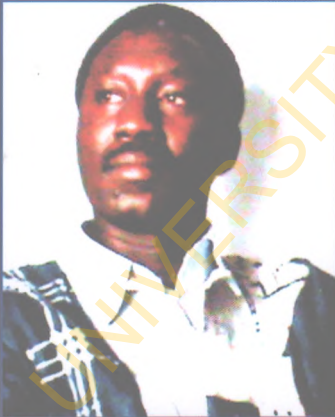


*Editors*

• Tunde Awosanmi • Ayo Adeduntan • Wale Ajayi

# POSTCOLONIALISM AND BEYOND

Cultural Production &  
Social Sustenance



Proceeding of the  
Colloquium in Honour of  
Dele Layiwola, *FNAL*

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**POSTCOLONIALISM AND BEYOND CULTURAL  
PRODUCTION & SOCIAL SUSTENANCE**

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# New Media, New Literacies and Redefinition of Learning Spaces and Communities

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## Abstract

New media gave birth to new literacies and new literacies redefined space and communities. Although the contemporary society has more learning spaces and close communities yet persons still suffer from those problems that were thought would go into extinction. While no one can reverse the trend and influence of the new media, humanity should exercise caution for the preservation of its values.

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## **Introduction**

Emergence of new media has precipitated multiple literacies and created more spaces for learning and relationships. Beyond traditional literacy - ability to read, write and numerate, literacies have become competencies required for functionality in human communities. This means that there are new literacies as human activities grow in knowledge and creation of tools. Media literacy created new spaces for human interactions. That is, apart from geographical communities, virtual communities are established on the possibility and savvy of technology causing an increasing growth of complex relationships. By technology, new ideas are easily spread, business is freely transacted, and groups are formed without emotional demands of association. Though there are glaring advantages of technologies but they are also associated with problems which some futurists in the 18th century referred to as compellingly dangerous threshold which scientific advancement will eventually bring to human communities. These predictions are present with us despite sophistication in relationships; human thinking and behaviour are still bound in deep ethnocentricity, irreconcilable tribalism and ubiquitous destructive incidences.

This paper explains a new media that has produced literacies and redefined space and community with a view to establishing equilibrium between technological advancement and humanity that should be served as our first priority.

## **New Media**

New media are those digital devices which are interactive and incorporate two-way communication modes involving some form of computing. Robert (2010) said it is 'very easily processed, stored, transformed, retrieved, hyperlinked and, perhaps most radical of all, easily searched for and accessed'. A distinction between new media and old media is that old media is for the most part mass media. In addition, each form of new media is highly interactive, while mass media is not. Users of new media are active producers of content and information, whether sending an email or using internet collaboration tools.

Lev (2016) describes new media as being native to computers or relying on computers for distribution: websites, human-computer interface, virtual worlds, virtual reality, multimedia, computer games, computer animation, digital video, special effects in cinema and interactive computer installations. Since they are new, they have to be learnt for participation and performance in communities and organisations.

## **New Literacies**

New literacies generally are new forms of literacy made possible by digital technological developments; although new literacies do not necessarily have to involve use of digital technologies to be recognised as such. Commonly recognised examples of new literacies include such practices as instant messaging, blogging, maintaining a website, participating in online social networking spaces, creating and sharing music videos, podcasting and videocasting, photoshopping images and photo sharing, emailing, shopping online, digital



storytelling, participating in online discussion lists, emailing and using online chat, conducting and collating online searches, reading, writing and commenting on fan fiction, collaborating on and writing encyclopaedic wikis, processing and evaluating online information, creating and sharing digital mashups. (Hunter, 2014).

### **New Media and Literacy**

New media are driving new practices that are profoundly affecting many aspects of daily life and learning. The growing mass of resources online and people to reach, and the increased availability and use of mobile and internet-based platforms, affect where, what and from whom we learn. It mediates how we constitute and engage with learning communities, and how we trust online information and relationships.

New paradigms about literacy are emerging around key concepts of digital practice, including multimodality, networked learning, participatory practice, e-learning, gaming, and ubiquitous (anytime, everywhere) learning. Today, digital media are fundamentally changing learning practices. This transition to digital media is not just a transfer of class content to online venues, nor just an online-only effect, but instead, represents a change in learning practice for the digital age (Haythornthwaite, 2012). This change accompanies transformations in online practices associated with Web 2.0 and myriad of new applications and techniques.

New media include new narratives of learning such as collaborative learning (Koschmann, 1996), teachers as facilitators (Garrison & Anderson, 2003), students as learner-leaders (Montague, 2006), and conceptualisations of technologies as 'sites of practice' rather than locations for information or applications (Goodfellow & Lea 2007). The narrative is no longer of learners as 'empty vessels', but instead as an active, and a self-directed learner (Jenkins et al, 2006; Hase and Kenyon, 2000), entrepreneurial learners (Senges, Brown & Rheingold, 2008), creating their own user-generated contexts for learning (Luckin, 2010).

### **Redefinition of Learning Spaces**

The birth of digital media has led to a global village where everyone interacts – chats, sends photos, streams, shares files and all sorts. It has made life so easy that someone in Nigeria can be reaching out to someone overseas in seconds. Digital media has made it so easy on some networks or platforms where people of far geographical locations interact and get a way of reaching out to others unlike how it used to be. It has created a global space for everyone to mingle and be socially active. In the same vein, it limits the way some that are in proximity reach out to themselves and rather, focus on the outside world.

### **Redefinition of Learning Communities**

The community has been redefined in the way that people in this digital age are no more

limited to their local geographical setting. People make do of virtual communities where they build their networks. Many associate themselves with the outside world and interact on a daily basis. The digital age has made it so easy for people to form and build their own communities. The limitation of this on the other hand is that, people tend to forget their same locality and focus on the virtual community they find themselves.

### **Redefinitions of Space and Community**

In the process of learning, this learner may be independent, working through the ubiquitous medium of the Internet to gain knowledge. The individual is equally likely to be working with others, at a distance and through computer media. Such individuals learn and engage in the real-world practices of collaboration, cooperation, participation and community engagement, creating narratives around learning that involve people and resources met through multiple forms of digital media. Literacy and learning become coincident with good group practice (Haythornthwaite, 2006), and good participatory practice (Jenkins et al., 2006).

### **Prospects and Problems**

New media and literacies have created opportunities for learning new ideas. Knowledge that used to be exclusive to certain groups of people has become accessible to the generality of the people. Examples of these are on line learning and open distance programmes which are gaining recognition as good alternative to regular education and higher education. This means that degrees and competencies at all levels can be acquired without the barriers of location. The major problem of new media could be that it erodes identities from scholarship and information. If care is not taken, references to scholars work could be endangered by unbridled access to their works. The open spaces created by New media do not mean equal access by everyone. There are information that are still restricted by the virtue of where we live. Scholars and students in Africa still do not have access to information that is needed for their researches because their institutions do not function as it should.

### **Conclusion**

New media and literacy have created new spaces and communities beyond geographical locations and physical barriers. There are more relationships made possible by new media and new knowledge for human usage, however there is need for caution so that we will not become globally connected while we become locally ostracised. We can become very close to those who are far and become far from those who are physically close to us. We need to remember that our most basic needs are usually first met at the immediate environment and not the virtual environment. Technologies have not yet grown to the extent of providing basic physiological need of food clothing and shelters virtually.

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