



Moving Beyond
Solidarity Rhetoric
in Global Health

Fresh Insights on Challenges Old and New

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Bioethics at a crossroads

“Eneke the bird says that since men have learned to shoot without missing, he has learned to fly without perching.” **Chinua Achebe, Things Fall Apart**

Turning and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and
everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity.

W. B. Yeats, The Second Coming



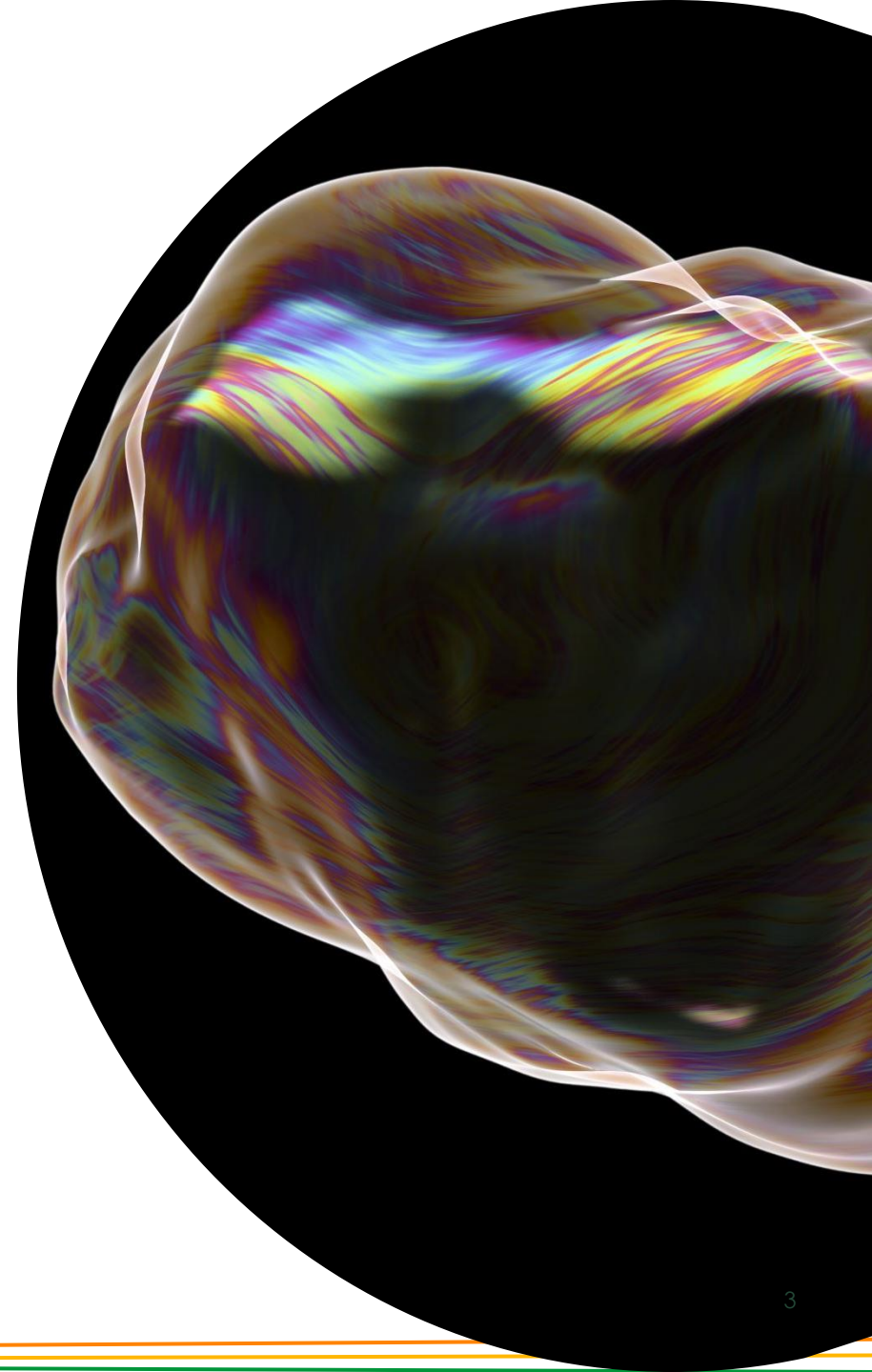
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A reminder... some of today's challenges

- Polarization and impossibility of meaningful dialogue in the public health space
- Human recklessness causing planetary threats (climate change)
- Antimicrobial resistance (changing dimensions of our war on bugs)
- Dysfunctional national and international health systems (power and inequity)
- Resurgence and legitimization of excessive individualisms (no vaxxers)
- Failure to arrive at a pandemic agreement (nationalisms, pharma)
- Commercialization of basic human health needs (health)
- New technologies and power imbalances
- Resurgence of war and violence as a political tool

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Common thread to our major challenges

- No one can solve these problems alone
- Deep interconnectedness
- Historical and persistent imbalances

Retooling bioethics beyond our current approaches

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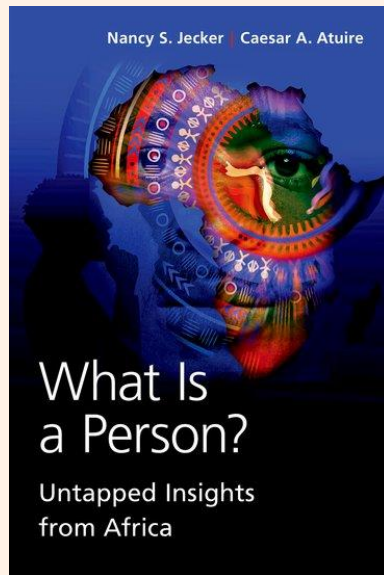


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Epistemologies and ontologies of the South ... a starting point

What is a person?



• Funtunfunefu- Denkyemfunefu



• Vincularidad

There's no extrication!
There's no binarism
The 'I' is in the 'We'

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Solidarity

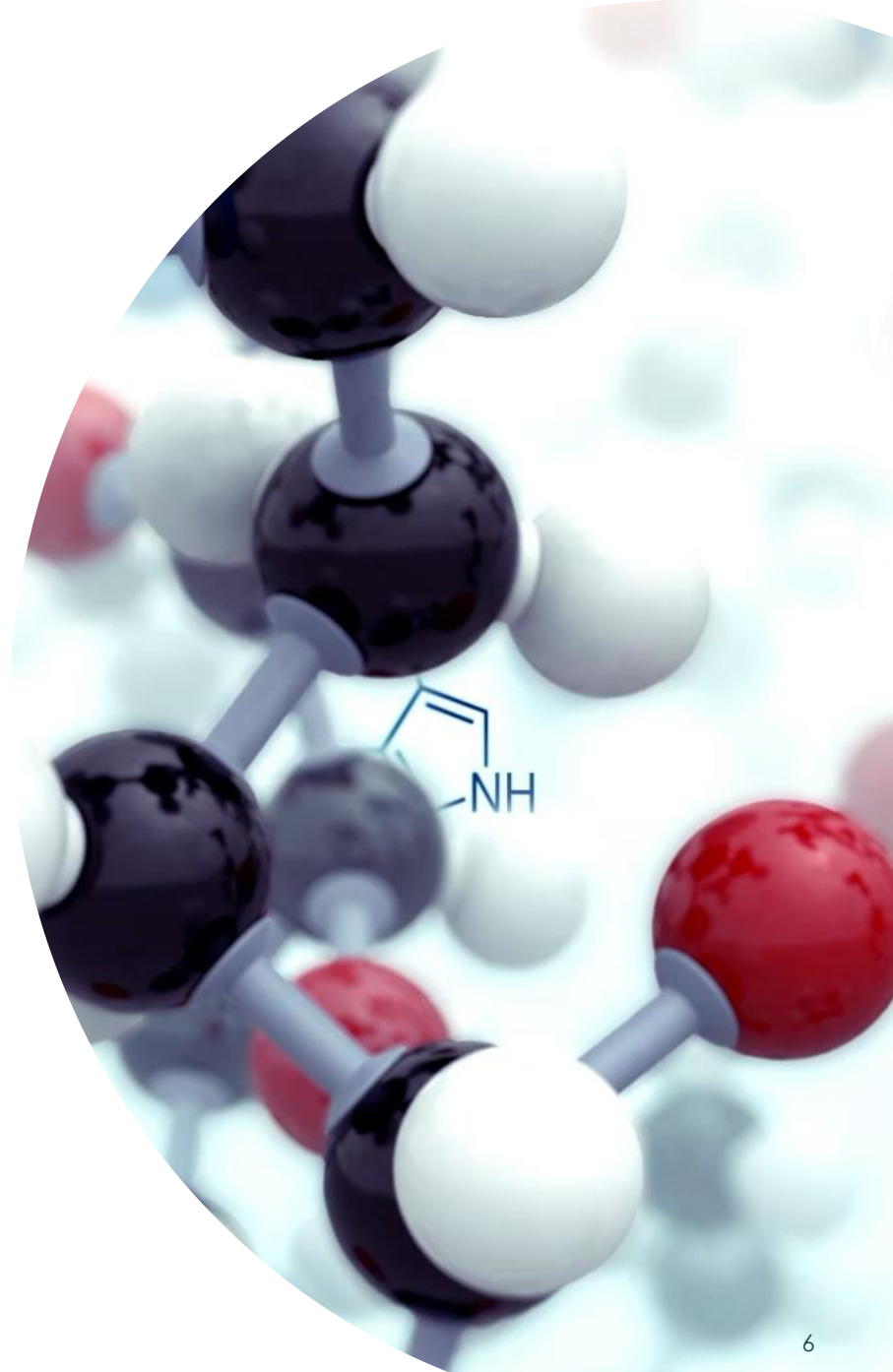
An emerging concept in bioethics that gained more currency during the Covid-19 pandemic. The outcomes were quite different at the micro-meso-macro levels.

There have been attempts to unpack, theorize, and discuss solidarity in political philosophy, bioethics, and global health.

- For example: Jodi Dean (1995), Steinar Stjerno (2004), David Wiggins (2008), Prainsack & Buyx (2011), Angus Dawson & Marcel Verweij (2012), Sally J. Sholz (2015), Avery Kolers (2016), West-Oram (2016), David Miller (2017), Angus Dawson & Bruce Jennings (2018), Carol Gould (2018), Atuire & Hassoun (2023), Sangiovanni (2023), Inouye et al. (2023), L Hunt-Hendrix, A Taylor (2024) and many others.

Bioethics seems to have a romantic and short-lived relationship with Solidarity

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Describing Solidarity – a working hypothesis

- A special kind of joint action constituted by a characteristic profile of interpersonal attitudes, norms, dispositions, and behaviours triggered by one's identification with another on the basis of a role, cause, way of life, condition, or set of experiences (Andrea Sangiovanni, 2023)

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Identification with



Epistemic dimensions

Identification *de re*

Identification *de dicto*



Affective dimensions

Empathy and sympathy



Normative dimensions

De dicto identification comes with expectations and pressures to seek common perspectives and goals

It also entails feelings for the flourishing of the group

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Joint action

Its about shared goals (eg. Rivonia Trials)

Characteristics

- We do our part in overcoming adversity
- We are individually committed to a and b
- We are committed sharing one anothers fate in ways relevant to the cause/goal
- We trust each other to play their part

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An ontology of solidarity

- Salient concepts from Global South philosophers suggest that we take another look at understanding what it means to be human. Different ways of knowing, being, and acting
 - Ubuntu
 - Vincularidad
 - Ujamaa, harambee

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A dual notion of solidarity

- These accounts lead to a dual notion of solidarity as
 - Deep solidarity as the root of the ethical (Kwesi Wiredu, William Abraham)
 - Deep solidarity generates duties when institutionalized
 - Deep solidarity requires a constant effort to keep alive the goals and attitudes
 - Responsive solidarity (responding to injustice and adverse events or conditions)
 - solidarity as a place to fight for justice and equity and to resist or combat injustice and oppression (we stand for, or we stand with)
 - can also be ‘ideologized or weaponised’ or overly outward looking
- Global Health Ethics needs both deep and responsive solidarity

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Some objections and questions

- Why another concept in bioethics when we already have
 - Justice
 - Equity
 - Human rights?
- What about non-humans?

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The task ahead

- A task that has been done before....
- Imagining and creating a bioethics with solidarity at the heart. Some examples
 - Research ethics
 - Public health ethics
 - Clinical ethics
- Eneke the bird.....

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