

# A Conceptual Bridge Where Critical Reflexivity Meets the Leadership Warrior Mystique Archetype

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**Abstract:** The objective of this paper is to present a conceptual integration of critical reflexivity and leadership archetype theory to capture the traits and characteristics of leaders leading in extreme contexts. Casting a historiometric glance at wars, battles and conflicts led by women warriors alongside their men in Africa during the trans-Atlantic trade period in the 15th to the 19th century, this paper argues that there is no context where leadership qualities are more discernible and pivotal than in extreme contexts. The paper offers the dance metaphor and archetypes as a theoretical bridge and a tool to problematise leadership performance in extreme contexts. Dance as an operative metaphor makes visible the invisible virtuosity of a leader. The paper builds an argument that dance mobilises a visual expression of mental, emotional, spiritual and physical reflexivity. Epistemically, the paper takes a stance that the warrior mystique archetypal energy of an effective leader is relative, and is imprinted in a leader's "inner theatre" within cultural contexts facilitated by reflexivity capabilities. The paper concludes by demonstrating the contingent and fluid nature of leadership in extreme contexts, and how its practices enable the development of a special kind of nimbleness, agility, kinetic, intuitive, visual, mystique warrior leadership capabilities, required to lead influentially and impactfully in transformative and liberating ways.

**Keywords:** Leadership, Critical reflexivity, Critical thinking, Historiometry, Extreme contexts, Warrior mystique archetype

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## 1. Introduction

Arguably there is no context where leadership qualities are more discernible and pivotal than in extreme contexts. How leaders behave in these extreme contexts has massive effects on the broader global socio-economic system. The paper attempts to engage with the tensions and dilemmas men and women warriors leading in extreme environments in Africa face. In the arguments presented herein, the paper reflexively brings to the fore the similarities between dance and leadership. The magic of dance and its mystique effects on how leaders influence their followers through reflexivity is invoked. This is followed by a presentation of three arguments: that warrior leaders, leading in extreme contexts are powered by a deeper knowing located in the archetypal space of the human psyche which is accessed using reflexivity capabilities (expanded upon later in this paper). In this argument the connection between archetypes and metaphors (see Arrien, 2013) is problematized as leadership performance in extreme context, thereby shedding light into the leadership traits required for effective leadership performance. The transatlantic slave trade era is set out as an extreme leadership context against which historiometric data for leadership performance is analysed.

Secondly, the paper argues that, a myopic leadership approach that does not draw lessons from failures and successes of leadership from different historical contexts, becomes insufficient and unsatisfactory from the perspective of liberating Africa from all forms of violence and slavery located deep in the psyche of her people and her institutions. The paper moves the frontiers of knowledge forward by offering a conceptual bridge where the warrior archetypal metaphor meets reflexivity.

Lastly, the paper argues that leaders leading in this current time in Africa are leading in extreme contexts similar to the transatlantic slavery period. The paper illustrates that in the 21<sup>st</sup> century in Africa, geopolitical wars have been waged long before the onset of the Ukrainian war. There are civil conflicts in African communities. There are industrial conflicts in Africa's institutions. And there are wars that modern day warriors are waging against poverty and inequality with all its socio-economic effects. All these contexts qualify to be referred to as extreme given that they meet Hannah, Uhl-Bien, Avolio, and Cavarretta's, (2009) criteria defining extreme context, which includes risks of severe physical, psychological or material consequences. If not, why is the African Union (AU) inviting African Leaders in contemporary Africa to free the African continent of wars, civil conflicts, humanitarian crises, human rights violations, gender-based violence, and genocide in a project titled "Silencing the Guns in Africa by the year 2020" project?

## 2. Extreme Context in Africa: Transatlantic Slave to Decolonial Era

Following on the footsteps of Hannah (2009), this paper defines an extreme context as an extreme event or occurrence that may result in an extensive and unbearable magnitude of physical, psychological, or material consequences to society and its institutions. Examples of extreme contexts abound in literature, including natural disasters, economic catastrophes, conflicts, battles and wars (see Hannah et al, 2009). There is no

context, where the virtuosity of the leadership dance, the capability to tap into individual and collective wisdom is more critical. In extreme context the dance is free style, non-routine, based on asymmetrical information on the battle ground, and requires high decision agency. Participating in this dance is almost like signing a death certificate.

According to Ezenwa and Udensi (2021: 143) the 400 years between 1500 and 1900 was an extreme context of unbearable pain and trauma that “*violently arrested*” Africa’s development. Scholars argue that (see Ezenwa and Udensi, 2021) slavery was enabled often by a complicitous relationship between African leaders and foreign slave traders. Dassah (2012: 97) concurs with this view, and posits that African leaders, past and present are “*complicit in the persistent fragility [of] postcolonial sub-Saharan Africa*”. With these words, Ezenwa and Udensi, paints a picture of the devastating effects of transatlantic trade:

*“The plague of slavery caught Africa unawares. It tore through her very marrow and choked all attempts at advancement.”*

Towards the tail end of the transatlantic slave trade, when communities of the African continent were at their highest heights of vulnerability, paralysed by fear and grief, the 1885 Berlin conference presented to, arguably, uninformed Africans a *fait accompli* new world with boundaries defined in Europe. The Berlin conference was convened to establish principles and rules for colonising Africa. In his work, Wang Shih-Tsung (1998) discusses how the Berlin Conference guided the acquisition of new territory in Africa by using any of the following modalities: (1) *conquest*; (2) *cession*; (3) *occupancy or settlement*. With these in place the scramble for Africa started. This is where the existing conflicts in Africa were entrenched. The Berlin Conference therefore legitimized the creation of boundaries in Africa. Wilber (2001) argues that boundaries constitute an artificial separation, which in a case of a border becomes a source of conflict and violence:

*“...boundaries... are pure illusions – they pretend to separate what is not in fact separable....every boundary carries technological and political power, it also carries alienation, fragmentation and conflict...”. Ken Wilber (2001: 30)*

Conflicts and violence persisted in the current decoloniality era, creating extreme leadership contexts. To give more depth to the picture of conflicts in Africa during the decolonial era, it should be noted that out of 54 African countries, 45 have had at least one coup attempt since 1950 (Duzor and Williamson, 2022). During the same decolonial period, there were 204 coup attempts out of which 106 were successful (Duzor and Williamson, 2022). West Africa had the highest number of coup incidents followed by Northeast Africa (McGowan, 2003). Civil wars and conflicts have caused not only a collapse of socio-economic systems, and the degradation of health and education services across the continent, but millions of lives have also been lost. This very extreme context subjects’ African people to intense physical and psychological trauma. This of course is exacerbated by poor living conditions and a heavy burden of debt.

Snippets of historical data presented later in the paper, allow us to peer into the past to witness the leadership style of warriors who led in Africa; warriors who navigated extreme contexts to victory and in some instances to defeat. Firstly, the archetype concept is defined and liken to the “inner universe” of a leader where dominant centers of consciousness or awareness abide, and then expressed in unique leadership styles and behaviour. As an empirical matter, this paper uses historic evidence to present the values and way of being of three cases of well-known warriors that led in three different eras – the trans-Atlantic, colonial rule and decoloniality eras. On the basis of the epistemic reflections of the author from a critical realism perspective, the paper takes a stance that the warrior archetypal energy of an effective leader is relative, and is imprinted in a leader’s “inner universe” within specific cultural contexts facilitated by metacognitive capabilities. The paper then unpacks the metacognitive capabilities as a conceptual bridge where the warrior archetype takes on a mystique nature to the extent that reflexivity attributes are expressed. In this manifestation the warrior mystique archetypal energy shows up in leadership not only to influence, through reflexivity practices and behaviours that impact society; and through spoken and written speech acts, but in the co-creation of the warrior dance ‘choreography’ with a team of dancers (followers), that cocreate the social order.

### **3. The Inner Universe of a Leader: Archetypal Energy**

Conceptually, there is no agreed upon definition of leadership. In fact, there are as many definitions of leadership as the authors who define them and these, as pointed out by Kets de Vries’s (2010) run into thousands. Inspired by Wilber’s work on collective consciousness (2001); and tapping on insights from Kets de Vries’s (2010) view of leadership, the paper takes a view that effective leadership shifts its focus from a leadership role centred around a single individual, to a leadership system that requires a shared intricate,

close-knit system of leaders and followers. This system of leadership possesses capabilities and experiences that enable the achievement of goals that benefit and transform society. Leadership performance is thus predicated on the ability of a leader to identify strengths and competences of each team member; and match these competences to roles and challenges. This, as Kets de Vries (2010: 2) points out, requires identification of certain recurring behavioural patterns that depict a “complex confluence” of the leaders’ “inner theatre” including significant life experiences. These patterns as many writers have observed (see for example Adamski, 2011; Bolman and Deal, 2011; Kets de Vries, 2010; Myss, 2001) emerge out of the “inner theatre” of a leader as an archetype reflecting the role and behaviour that impacts the effectiveness/ineffectiveness of leaders within organisations.

### 3.1 The Archetype of Warrior Mystique Leader

While it is beyond the scope of this paper to delve deep into the history and theory of archetypes, it is important to touch on Carl Jung’s (1875-1961) contributions to the field of archetypes (see Adamski, 2011). Jung is one of the first keynote scholars who studied the concept of archetypes. Jung believed that over thousands of years of human evolution, human beings share many common experiences of the physical and social world. The collective experience leaves an imprint in the collective unconscious of all human beings and Jung called these imprints archetypes. As pointed out by Adamski (2011), Jung described the archetypes as universal inherited patterns and predispositions that help the human mind respond to, organise, or interpret the world in a particular way.

According to Arrien (2013) a leader holding the warrior energy is a model of courage, discipline, self-control, assertiveness, versatility, loyalty, and resilience. Warriors as pointed out by Arrien (2013) go to battle as a last resort, and they know when to back off and let others win. According to Bolman and Deal (2006), the leadership traits that distinguish a warrior leader from every other leader or manager is creativity, the ability to see beyond the horizon, a steely temperament, and resilience when faced with crisis. Warriors are able to construct a power base through their inner universe, allies, networks and coalitions. They welcome a challenge and are able to protect the environment when it is attacked. A warrior is not only decisive, during his or her dance in the battlefield, the warrior is an embodiment of bravery with a strong presence and personal power (Trungpa, 1984).

As much as the warrior mystique archetype is the focus of this paper, singling this energy centre should not be interpreted as meaning that a warrior in the battle field only holds one centre of power – that of a warrior. A deeper gaze into the archetype literature reveals that leaders/warriors on the literal and metaphoric battle field are those holding several archetypal energies reflecting the different roles and contexts in which their leadership dance is required. Myss (2001) for example posits that each person, is endowed with twelve primary archetypes which are part of their individual psyche. Other authors (for example Bolman and Deal, 2006) view the archetypal patterns as a hierarchical structure of dominant and not so dominant energy centers located in human psyches. Along the same line of thinking Arrien (1993) argues that there are four archetypal energies found in indigenous traditions: (1) warrior/leader; (2) healer dubbed as magician or wizard in other works (Tallman, 2003); (3) teacher; and (4) visionary. The archetype definitions cited above share a common primary theme of leadership, inner knowing and wisdom.

It is an established fact in literature that the archetypes in human psyches are not always reflected positively because each archetype comes through in different ‘shades of light’. For instance, Stein (1998: 5) puts across an evocative narrative about this subject: “*the psyche consists of many parts and centers of consciousness. In this inner universe, there is not simply one planet, but an entire solar system and more*”, Stein, 1998: 105). Myss (2001) goes on to describe the shadow aspect of an archetype using the Queen archetype as an example:

*“The Queen archetype can help you assert your power, take charge of situations, delegate authority and act with benevolence. But the shadow Queen may run around barking out orders, making impossible demands, and cutting off heads!”*

Myss (2001) suggest that awareness of one’s “inner theatre” and archetypal energy at play, allows one to harness the strengths and power of an archetype while mitigating the dark side of the archetype. In the same line of thinking Paul Frere, in his seminal work titled “Education: domestication or liberation?” advocates for a critical manner of thinking that “goes beyond the *deceptive appearances, to seek the raison d’etre of facts and the relationships between different facts, within the totality of which they are a part*”. (1972: 174). Understanding reality requires open mindedness and continuous revision of what is known in order to deepen learning in ways that increase integrity. In the next section the paper introduces the conceptual bridge where

critical reflexivity meets the leadership warrior mystique archetype. In this section, the concept of reflexivity as a lens through which the shadow side of the warrior archetype could be mitigated to allow the positive strengths to shine through is introduced.

#### 4. A Conceptual Bridge Where Critical Reflexivity Meets the Leadership Warrior Mystique Archetype

Conceptual bridges have been used by scholars as conceptual tools to unify concepts, variables and methods from different disciplines in new and powerful ways to find solutions to profound societal problems. In the field of mathematics for example, scholars have witnessed how Mendel’s Genetic Laws of Inheritance are explained using linear algebra. Likewise, this paper presents a theoretical bridge that links the warrior mystique archetypal dispositions to reflexivity qualities. Reflexivity is defined in literature as a metacognitive skill, a capability that manifest itself in coherent thinking, speech acts and behaviour that transforms social actors in society into more evolved state of consciousness (see for Alexander, 2018; Bourdieu, 1973; Hopkins, 1986; Nyoni, 2019; Pitsoe, Matsephe and Letseka, 2015; Pulkinen, 2018; Rennie, 2007).

Pitsoe, and Letseka (2015) define reflexivity as an essential modality to adjust the actors to situations, in ways that result in positive transformative outcomes in society. Using critical reflexivity as a theoretical lens the paper poses two questions: (1) What are the personality traits of warriors that lead in extreme contexts? (2) What are the shadow traits of these figures in relation to their leadership? With these two questions in mind, the paper spans through time and observe these leaders and conclude with what purpose this all may serve for the current decolonial epoch characterised by a different kind of extreme context – conflicts, battles and socio-economic degradation in Africa.

**Table1: Reflexivity Definitions**

Reflexivity definition	Source
Cultivation of a consciousness and capacity, to limit the adverse impact of inequitable distribution of power, privilege, and influence within society.	Alexander (2018)
Reflexivity enhances the capacity to produce social change and is linked to the capacity to make "unconsciously inherited dispositions conscious so that they can be transformed".	Alejandro (2021)
A creative and meaning seeking process that connects past, present, and future in a way that mediates coherent and meaningful action	Hopkins (1986: 686)
A disciplined self-reflection; self-aware reflection and analysis toward increasing richness and integrity of understanding	Finlay, 2014
"... an inclusive ecological or caring act of reflection as well as an appreciation gesture, with an explicit concern for 'otherness' and 'difference'.	Bleakley (1999: 14)
Reflexivity enables individuals to understand and adjust to the social process; modify future behaviour and then transform the social process itself; the development of the mind is predicated on reflexivity: "without reflexivity and dialogue between the personal 'I' and the social 'me' there would be nothing novel in experience". Reflexivity is a source of novelty and freedom	Babcock (1980: 5)
Reflexivity is connected to change through the perceived need and capacity of social actors in modern societies to deliberate upon and question their social circumstances, which in turn generates social transformation	Millar and Price, 2018
Reflexivity comprises coherence, vitality, and depth	May and Perry, 2017
Reflectivity is a practice that integrates the wholeness of intellectual, spiritual, emotive, and bodily knowing	Nobe-Ghelani (2018)
Critical reflexivity covers two aspects: (1) self-reflection, critical awareness of the assumptions, values and normative commitments underlying knowledge production; and social, institutional, and political context in which knowledge production takes place; (2) social transformation – mobilising social experimentation and learning.	Popa and Guillermin (2017)
Reflexivity is about questioning what we take for granted and examining the privileging and marginalizing effects of organizational policies, practices and hierarchies.	Allen, Cunliffe, Easterby-Smith, 2019
A process of recognizing one's own position in the world in order both to better understand the	Ng, Wright, Kuper,

Reflexivity definition	Source
limitations of one's own knowing and to better appreciate the social realities of others	Ayelet, (2019)
Critical reflexivity is an epistemological position that brings together the social constructionist stance of reflexivity with the emancipatory goals of critical social science.	Pitsoe and Letseka (2015)

Reflexivity as pointed out by Hopkins (1986: 636) is a creative and a meaning seeking process that connects past, present, and future in a way that *“mediates meaningful action”*. Finlay defines reflexivity as a way of thinking about ourselves, showing ourselves to ourselves, while reflection requires a silent physical, bodily, and emotional space to be created for silent listening and writing of thoughts that are emerging from our consciousness around a particular topic. Reflections facilitate a process where self is continuously and dynamically created and reflected. Finlay views reflection as the key dimension of reflexivity. Finlay includes, intuition, critical thinking sense making; ambiguity in language in the definition of reflexivity. This way, Finlay (2014) offers a problematised form of reflexivity that goes beyond reflective thinking into what Bleakley (1999: 14) defines as holistic reflexivity – *“an inclusive ecological or caring act of reflection as well as an appreciation gesture, with an explicit concern for ‘otherness’ and ‘difference’”*. Bleakley’s (1999) stance on reflexivity is similar to that of Nobe-Ghelani (2018) who defines reflexivity as a practice that integrates the wholeness of intellectual, spiritual, emotional and physical self. Babcock (1980: 5), on the other hand views *‘self’* as a social construct which *“arises in social experience”*. Babcock makes a point that personal development is predicated on reflexivity. This view is echoed in Freire’s (1972) work that links political agendas and social relations, with capability to transform through reflective practices. Paul Frere recommends a way of being that instils the value of freedom that recognises history, gender, race, class, and power in ways that engender social transformation.

In summary, the underlying features of reflexivity include critical thinking; creativity; transformation; meaning seeking process connecting past present and future; reflection; continuous and dynamic creation of self; intuition; sense making; analytical capacity; inclusivity; relationship with self; novelty; questioning epistemic styles and ontological positions; freedom that engenders social transformation; sense of wholeness of intellectual, spiritual, emotional and physical self.

## 5. Extreme Context Leadership Cases: Snippets of Historical Data

In this section the paper presents four leadership warrior cases to illustrate magnitudes and extents of reflexivity in warriorship during the trans-Atlantic slave trade (Queen Nzinga); in an era characterised by imposition of colonialism (Shaka Zulu and Emperor Menelik 11); at the onset of the decolonial era (Kwame Nkrumah). While this is not an exhaustive list of leaders who led in extreme contexts in Africa, the cases are adequate in depicting uniquely nuanced extreme contexts brought about by different geopolitical forces of the time.

### 5.1 Queen Nzinga (1583-1663)

Descending from a genealogy traced to a line of kings, Queen Nzinga earned her title of a warrior Queen when she personally led troops into battle and evaded every attempt to capture or kill her (Miller, 1973). The warrior queen fought against the Portuguese and their expanding slave trade in the 17th century. Queen Nzinga’s successful reign was largely attributed to her skilful management of diplomatic relationships with her allies (Miller, 1973). For instance, history has it that Portugal had broken its side of the deal and Nzinga would not give in to the Portuguese without a fight. As such, she formed a temporary alliance with the Dutch—an enemy of the Portuguese—and led an army against them (Miller, 2017).

Nzinga’s virtuosity on the battlefield suggest a special kind of training and exposure to military tactics and strategy. In her book that portrays courage and fluid intelligence of the warrior Queen, Henwood (2017) confirms that Nzinga’s father structured a special training for the future monarch and exposed her to the battlefield at a young age.

### 5.2 Shaka Zulu (1787-1828)

Keeping with the theme of leaders leading in extreme contexts with an aptitude for swift military action, we have one of Africa’s greatest known warriors, Shaka Zulu. Here is a gifted warrior, who revolutionized Zulu warfare with intelligent battle formation and red herring tactics (Mbatha, 2001). Shaka fought his way into power. He created the Zulu empire by bringing together Zulu-speaking clans and even incorporating rival clans.

Shaka Zulu had no tolerance for mediocrity (Mbatha, 2001). This was illustrated in his critical evaluation after every battle, procuring every fault and how it will be corrected in future (Tesfu, 2008). Additionally, before each battle he would expect every warrior while they stamp their feet and if he sensed any hesitancy, he would have them killed (Tesfu, 2008). Shaka's leadership grew more extreme and his tactics toward his people became more tyrannical (Tesfu, 2008). Shaka's childhood was difficult, and this reflects in his personality. His personal characteristics are likely to have been shaped by the fact that he was shunned, tormented, and neglected by his village for having a mother who bore a child with a rival clan member (Tesfu, 2008). For example, his most merciless time was at the death of his mother where he assassinated hundreds of Zulus; and ordered crops not to be planted and milk not to be drunk for a year (Mbatha, 2001). The following year, 1828 he was assassinated by his family members.

### **5.3 Emperor Menelik II (1844- 1913)**

The political life of Emperor Menelik II illustrates how imperialism seeped into Ethiopia and created disunity and even obliteration of tribes. After overthrowing the Tewodros II, Sahle Menelik assumed power and led a successful empire. He had an aptitude for trade, diplomacy and battle strategy.

According to Marcus (1975) Menelik II was the creator of Ethiopian nationalism and the present multicultural empire. As an astute politician with "a highly developed sense of the realities of power, and as an open minded innovator" he set the values which Haile Selassie adopted as his own to bring Ethiopia into international community (Marcus, 1975). Marcus' (1975) work traces Menelik's training as a strategist, problem solver and expertise in conflict resolution from his experience in "intricate" family feuds, regional and local conflicts. Menelik's greatest success is his victory of the Italians at Adwa (1896), and his success in building economic infrastructure and institutions in Ethiopia.

### **5.4 Kwame Nkrumah (1909-1972)**

Next, we have a leader whose afro-centric views were unmissable. Kwame Nkrumah was the first African Prime Minister of Ghana after independence. Nkrumah sought to see the end to the narrative that western democracy and parliamentary systems were the only valid way of governing. His attempts at creating a society that was free of materialism and western influence were fraught with difficulty as he sought to transform Ghana to a socialist state. Ghana was the first country to gain independence, a feat that must have been inconceivable to many at the time. Yet, it was the foremost goal above all things for Kwame Nkrumah. Biney (2008: 131) confirms this in this statement: "*Nkrumah can be said to have provided a vision for achieving Continental Union Government for Africa...*". In his own writings Nkrumah (1963) advocated for Pan-African unity to the solution of Africa's social, economic and political problems:

*"We need the strength of our combined numbers and resources to protect ourselves from the very positive dangers of returning colonialism in disguised forms. We need it to combat the entrenched forces dividing our continent and still holding back millions of our brothers. We need it to secure total African liberation..." (Nkrumah 1963: 217).*

## **6. Discussion and Conclusion**

In shedding light into the "inner theatre" characteristics and warrior mystique traits that lead to social transformation in extreme context, the paper provided an epistemological road map, in the form of a theoretical bridge that integrates reflexivity and warrior mystique leadership traits. The theoretical bridge was galvanised around two questions: What are the personality traits of warriors that leader in extreme contexts? What are the shadow traits of these figures in relation to their leadership styles? With these questions in mind, the paper explored four cases of leaders that led in extreme context in Africa. The paper presented Nzinga's warrior mystique leadership qualities. Nzinga's virtuosity on the battlefield suggest a special kind of reflexivity captured by Paul Freire "*as a way of being that instils the value of freedom that recognises history, gender, race, class, and power in ways that engender social transformation*". Nkrumah on the other hand, demonstrated a critical way of being explained by Allen *et al.* 2019 and Freire that requires questioning epistemological and ontological basis of thoughts and actions taken for granted. Nkrumah shaped and transformed social and economic policies of Ghana. Relying on his sharp intellect, Nkrumah was able to mobilise the ordinary people to effect political and social change – a key feature of critical reflexivity. Courage, discipline, advanced warfare skills, drive, determination and military intelligence are the mystique warrior characteristics that defined Queen Nzinga and Shaka Zulu. Organising skills, critical thinking skills, determination, and problem solving skills seem to be the dominant skills illustrated in Menelik II's leadership style. Nkrumah on the other hand, in his leadership and writings demonstrated a different kind of reflexivity in

his oratory and influential speech acts, in addition to his organising skills. The brave men and women warriors discussed in this paper, demonstrated bravery, advanced warfare skills, military intelligence, confidence, endurance, resilience, drive, determination, problem solving skills, organising skills, oratory and influential speech acts. The four leaders possessed the mystique in their psyche to influence thousands of men and women to join wars and battles to protect their territories. In the case of Shaka Zulu we see how his difficult childhood circumstances left a psychological footprint in his “inner theatre”. Shaka Zulu acted out childhood woundedness in many moments out of anger, revenge, and sadness, revealing more the shadow side of a warrior rather than the mystique and healing aspects of a warrior.

All four cases present evidence of the motive behind the drive to lead in extreme contexts: to achieve the African warriors’ passionate dream to rule their own territories. To date, all African countries have political freedom. However, here is a paradox: the guns in Africa have not yet been silenced. The civil wars, the battles, and conflicts are still raging in Africa long after the slave trade and colonial rule. Is it possible that the seeds of conflictive energy in the collective inner theatres is so potent that it cannot be shaken out of human consciousness? What will it take for the contemporary African leaders to free, arguably, the conflictive nature within the human psyche? Could it be that the boundary lines erected to divide African countries, have cast a spell so potent to a point where 50 years after Nkrumah advocated for Africa to unite, peace and unity is still illusive. Could it be that the shadow energy of Africa’s collective consciousness, keeps the spell of conflict concealed and entrenched in the collective psyche in humanity? The answers to these questions require critical reflexivity to dominate the inner theatres of leaders in Africa and in her people. When leaders, are able to continuously, dynamically, and constructively create and recreate self through reflexivity practices, leaders would command the power to quash the shadow side of the warrior archetype to more evolved and alchemical side of the archetype when leading in the current extreme contexts. This will require the entire education system to be calibrated to embed critical reflexivity from early childhood development right up to post schooling education and beyond. This will also require civic virtues and the economic system to be built to incentivise critical reflexivity geared towards inclusivity, poverty eradication and high living standards for all.

This leads to a view that concludes the arguments presented in this paper – that leadership like the sun rolling in the sky, is oblivious of the position it is in the planetary system, it just does its thing: to shine blazingly with all its force and energy, for all around to it to be nurtured and transformed. Just like the sunrise, the radiant mystique power of leadership needs to be freed from the dark “inner theatres” to perform the leadership dance that transforms society. The paper puts forward a contention that effective leadership is demonstrable as a meta skill, a meta competence, a capability, a sensibility, a dynamic way of being that does not have deception, that is not defined by success or failure. Leadership is rather a continuous journey of reinventing self and society, that when harnessed and unlocked through the values of unity, society and communities can be transformed to evolved states of consciousness.

### 6.1 Limitations and Avenues for Further Research

The paper has not provided an exhaustive account of leaders that led in extreme context in Africa, which is an area that future research should improve on. Furthermore, the paper did not explore the shadow side of the leaders presented in this paper. This is a limitation and an avenue for further research to strengthen the warrior mystique leadership concept.

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