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African Literature And Human Rights In The Fourth Industrial Revolution

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The humanities, in this case, African literature, are under threat – a situation that should spur those in the field into relevant action towards reinvention, increased relevance and survival in the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR). This paper proposes interdisciplinarity – in this case the interdiscipline of African literature and human rights – as one example of the ways in which the humanities can reinvent themselves to prove their worth and utility in struggles for human survival and flourishing. While there is so much hype about the 4IR and technological advancements, there is increasingly less critical focus on ideas of human coexistence. There seems to be a terrible assumption that technological advancements will be accompanied by increased understanding among humans when instead, there are already strong signs, such as the rise of the far-right and xenophobia – proof that the 4IR needs an even stronger humanities presence and intervention than before. The centering of the human in African literature and human rights foregrounds notions of co-existence and reminds us that to be aware of one's and others' humanity requires continual reflection and practice – something that this paper, drawing on humanising pedagogy, will illustrate through examples from my teaching of African literature and human rights.

Primary author: Prof. NDLOVU, Thabisani (Walter Sisulu University)

Presenter: Prof. NDLOVU, Thabisani (Walter Sisulu University)

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