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RFG Talk: The Place of Africa: Erasure, Elision, and the Task of Self-Writing

APR
28
THU

11:00 AM – 12:20 PM

6020 HSSB

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Narratives of “connectivity” typically rely on discourses about Africa as a blank space devoid of social networks that are unique, vibrant, and continually being modified. These narratives take agency away from Africans and rest on the colonial assumption that “connectivity,” just as “civilization” before it, is inherently exogenous, white, and male. This talk includes discussion of the Rhodesian fantasy of connecting Africa from the Cape to Cairo, the contemporary discourse of digital inequality, and the presentations of the Global North’s actions as bringing Africans into history and launching them into the future. The anchoring motivation for this talk is an excavation of moments of Africa’s “self-writing” in its pursuit to challenge the continual erasure and elision in connectivity narratives by the Global North.

j. Siguru Wahutu is an Assistant Professor at NYU’s Department of Media, Culture, and Communication and a Faculty Associate at the Berkman Klein Center at Harvard. His primary scholarship examines media constructions of knowledge in Africa, focusing on genocide and mass atrocities.

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