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Coloniality of Knowledge and the Challenge of Creating African Futures[1]

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Abstract

One of the difficult questions facing the continent of Africa today is the question of whether the peoples of Africa can possibly experience a fundamentally different future from the present, while still trapped by colonial domination in their ways of knowing, seeing and imagining. This question is quite challenging, not only because colonial domination in the sphere of knowledge production has played a role of emptying the minds of African subjects of their knowledges and memories, but has also played a part in implanting foreign ways of knowing and remembering. In this paper, I argue that the peoples of Africa cannot possibly imagine a future "otherwise" without transcending colonial domination in the sphere of knowledge production. Thus, I deploy the case study of the Pan-African University (PAU), to argue that colonial domination in African ways of knowing leads to a crisis of "repetition without change,"[2] even in instances where an effort is made to decolonize knowledge with the aim of crafting a different future for the peoples of Africa.

Keywords: modernity/coloniality; knowledge; university; decoloniality; Pan-African University (PAU)

Knowledge is both foundational and fundamental to any attempt at imagining a future that is fundamentally different from the present. Thus, a people without their own ways of knowing are a people without both a history and a future of their own making. In spite of the significance of knowledge in determining people's destinies, the triumph of Western-centred modernity negated the legitimacy of "other" knowledges and ways of knowing—outside the Western purview of seeing, imagining, and knowing the world. Therefore, the question that confronts the idea of crafting a different future today for the peoples of Africa is that of whether

it is possible for a people, whose ways of knowing are subject to colonial domination, to imagine "another" way of living, outside of that which is determined by the "colonizer's model of the world."[3] The answer to this question is important, simply because the essence of colonial domination in knowledge production has always been the desire to control the minds and ways of knowing of the "colonial subalterns" in order to sustain and prolong the very project of colonization.

In this paper, I offer a decolonial perspective on the idea of creating African futures by arguing that a different imagination of the future of Africa cannot be possible without first transcending the current colonial knowledge production system that sustains the political-cum-intellectual project called "coloniality." I call my perspective "decolonial," simply because I envisage a decolonial effect out of this analysis—a decolonial effect that charts a possible decolonial path out of the quagmire of colonial domination in the sphere of knowledge production.

What is coloniality? Is it different from colonialism?

That knowledge can be colonized with dire consequences for the plight of a particular people cannot be easily understood without a deliberate effort to differentiate between coloniality and colonialism. With regard to the former, one can argue that today we live in a world that is characterised by coloniality rather than colonialism. The question then is: What is coloniality, and how is it different from colonialism? How does coloniality bear on the imagination of a future of a people called Africans and a spatio-historical temporality known as Africa?

As a point of departure, I would like to characterize coloniality in terms of a structure of colonialisms. This structure of colonialisms is both prescriptive and performative. In its prescriptive form, coloniality denies the possibility of change that is desired by an anti-systemic agency. In its performative manifestation, the power structure of coloniality is susceptible to transformation and re-arrangement but not total destruction and collapse. Thus, it is through the process of transformation and re-arrangement that the power structure of coloniality can evade those fundamental changes that are desired by anti-systemic movements. This is how coloniality managed to survive the end

of colonialism—because the collapse of colonialism was simply a performative episode within a prescriptive continuous historical structure of coloniality.

The difference between a prescriptive and performative structure was well-captured by Sahlins:[4] A prescriptive structure is that which assimilates contingent circumstances to itself, thereby resisting change, and a performative structure is that which assimilates itself to contingent circumstances, thereby becoming susceptible to change and re-arrangement. Coloniality has been always been resistant to complete change but receptive to re-arrangement when necessary to evade the anti-systemic movements of decolonization. Thus, as a structure consisting of always shifting colonial orders, coloniality has always, performatively, been producing "dust of history" that masquerades as "real history" in order to mislead the anti-systemic movements that are after its destruction. This is why many today confuse the end of colonialism with the end of coloniality. They mistake a dust of history produced by the performance of coloniality with the collapse of a synchronically prescriptive historical structure of coloniality.

In line with the definition of a prescriptive structure, coloniality can be viewed as a power structure that denies the African subject an agency or sovereignty in determining his/her future, particularly a future that is beyond being an object of colonial exploitation. This denial of African agency in matters of thought is in line with the agenda and objective of the colonial project, since the relationship between the coloniser and the colonised African subject resembles that of parasite and producer.[5] In other words, the exercise of agency by the colonized African subject can lead to his/her freedom—a condition that compromises the life of the parasite.

In simple terms, coloniality can be defined as a vertical global power structure, whereby some people enjoy the privileges and benefits of living under modernity and others suffer the negative consequences of the "darker side" of the same modern world, called "coloniality."[6] This modernity is not just any modernity but is a specifically Western-centered modernity. Its negative consequences are a range of global parasitic activities and processes, such as slavery, colonialism, apartheid and neo-colonialism, among others, all of which reveal not only that coloniality has a longer history than colonialism, but also that it survives the latter. Thus,

Grosfoguel describes how coloniality is able to survive the demise of juridical-administrative colonialism in this way:

> Although 'colonialism administrations' have been entirely eradicated and the majority of the periphery is politically organised into independent states, non-European people are still living under crude European exploitation and domination. The old colonial hierarchies of European versus non-Europeans remain in place and are entangled with the 'international division of labour' and accumulation of capital at a world-scale.[7]

This clearly shows that while "classical colonialism" in the form of white settler governments in the non-Western world has now collapsed, colonial conditions and power relations remain. These are the conditions that led Maldonado-Torres to argue that:

> Coloniality, instead, refers to a long-standing patterns of power that emerged as a result of colonialism, but that define culture, labour, intersubjectivity relations, and knowledge production well beyond the strict limits of colonial administrations. Thus, coloniality survives colonialism. It is maintained alive in books, in the criteria for academic performance, in cultural patterns, in common sense, in the self-image of peoples, in aspirations of self, and so many other aspects of our modern experience. In a way, as modern subjects we breathe coloniality all the time and every day.[8]

What Maldonado-Torres meant in his analysis of coloniality is that it is an invisible power structure that has an effect and presence that is "epochal" instead of just "episodic"; hence, it lives longer than formal colonialism.

Among African scholars, the debate on what exactly is the nature of the impact of colonialism on the colonized subject was once characterised in terms of those who subscribed to the "epochal school" of thought about colonialism and those who subscribed to the "episodic school." The epochal school of colonialism underscored that colonialism amounted to "a revolution of epic propositions" because "[w]hat Africa knows about itself, what different parts of Africa know about each other, have been profoundly influenced by the West."[9] This epochal duration of colonialism as opposed to a once-off event led scholars such as Césaire to ask the question: "What, *fundamentally*, is colonialism?"[10] This

question is quite significant to any agent of change that seeks to escape the entrapment of colonial structures, because it questions the meaning of colonialism beyond the simplistic vision of a juridical-administrative colonialism. In other words, Cesaire sought to understand colonialism through the epistemic lens of the epochal school—a lens that visualises a global power structure of "multiple colonialisms" that are disruptive, "de-civilising," de-humanising, exploitative, racist, violent, brutal, covetous and "thingfying."[11] Thus, as a multifaceted power structure, coloniality must be understood as a project-like power structure that affects various aspects of the lives of colonized subjects, including their ways of knowing, seeing and imagining the world.

In the sphere of knowledge production, coloniality manifests itself in terms of "colonization of imagination,"[12] "colonization of the mind,"[13] and colonisation of knowledge and power. What is even more problematic about the above invisible forms of colonisation is that their invisibility makes it possible for the colonised subjects to participate in activities that sustain the very structure of coloniality within which they exist as victims.

The idea of a Pan-African University: the quest to outmaneuver the coloniality of knowledge in Africa

The peoples of Africa have not been oblivious to the question of colonial domination in knowledge production and the role this domination plays in the broader scheme of what Quijano calls the "colonial matrix of power."[14] Thus, for instance, decolonial scholarly works can be seen in the works of thinkers of African descent such as Frantz Fanon who wrote *Black Skins, White Masks* and *The Wretched of the Earth,* Kwame Nkrumah who wrote *Neocolonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism* and Ngugi wa Thiong'o who wrote *Decolonising the Mind,* to name but a few. All these visionary decolonial works are indicative of the awareness of thinkers of African descent about the nature of the global power structure of coloniality and their long—but unsuccessful—struggle to transcend it.

While decolonial activities of various forms by Africans on the continent and peoples of African descent elsewhere have, throughout history, been directed at coloniality-at-large, there are increasing efforts directed towards decolonising the

Western-education system in Africa. Thus, the education system in Africa is increasingly being viewed in terms of what Ngugi wa Thiong'o characterised as "the road to hell, at least for the colonised," a road that has "always been paved with good intentions."[15] Questions are beginning to be raised on whether current Western education systems on the continent of Africa serve the context and interests of Africa or that of erstwhile colonial masters in the West. Such questions have led scholars such as Gutto to argue that,

> Education in Africa needs a fundamental paradigm change which entails, among other things, focusing on confronting, with a view of correcting and departing from, hegemonic knowledge and knowledge systems that are predicated on racist paradigms that have deliberately and otherwise distorted, and continue to distort, the reality of who Africans really are.[16]

In spite of the significance of the many calls for a paradigm shift to rehabilitate education in Africa so that another future outside the Western model of the world can be envisaged, the biggest challenge remains the question of whether it is possible for the colonized, particularly the Western-educated African elite, to "unlearn" and "unthink" the education system that produced them, even within the Africa continent itself. This question is quite important, because the calls for transforming education in Africa in order to suit the contextual needs of the African people, is not anything new, but so far, this problem is yet to be rectified.

Though education in general has become a subject of debate among decolonialization advocates, institutions of higher learning such as universities are currently targeted for decolonization, since they are important producers and repositories of knowledge. As Odora Hoppers and Richards have argued,

> A university is a place where people think. Researchers produce knowledge. Teachers communicate knowledge. Students acquire knowledge, skills, values, and professional qualifications. If all goes well everyone in the university community serves humanity. None of this could happen without thinking.[17]

The above indicates that universities, as academic institutions, are widely viewed as places where future decision-makers, knowledge producers and leaders, in all spheres of life, are produced. The

question that, therefore, emerges out of the above analysis of what universities are, is: What kinds of "thinking" should underpin African universities in order to deal with the challenge of coloniality in knowledge production?

Presently, the major question that universities in Africa have to confront is that of whether they are "African universities" or merely Westernized universities on the African continent. Thus, even though some of the universities in Africa were conceptualized and erected by nationalist-led post-colonial governments, their epistemic foundation remains Eurocentric. The recent wave of student protests at universities in South Africa, where the call was for the "decolonization" of universities, the lowering of fees, the cultivation of a sense of belonging among students, and the Africanization the curriculum, clearly indicated that the university institution in Africa is increasingly seen as sustaining the synchronic power structure of coloniality. That these protests happened even in those institutions that are generally classified as "black universities" (located in the former homelands), such as the University of Fort Hare, means that the fundamental issue about the modern university in South Africa, and Africa at large, is the epistemic location of these institutions as opposed to their social location. Scholars such as Ndlovu-Gatsheni have convincingly argued that "[u]niversities [in Africa], as part of those global institutions that continue to reproduce coloniality, alien cultures and 'whiteness,' are legitimate targets for decolonization."[18] Thus, the question of the identity of universities in Africa has been a burning issue for some time, since it bears on the nature of the graduates that these universities produce and, therefore, the future that the continent of Africa is heading towards.

The recent student protests in South Africa, under the banner of the hashtag #FeesMustFall—an understandable protest against the dehumanising capitalist matrix of power in the broader scheme of coloniality—is a stark reminder that efforts to decolonize the university in Africa have previously been undertaken without success. Among these efforts is the recent initiative, known as the Pan-African University (PAU), by the African Union. It is quite important to evaluate this initiative, not only because it is driven by the highest institution on the continent, whose aim it is to recover the lost sovereignty and humanity of the African subject, but also because the pan-African ideal has

always carried the decolonial aspirations of the African people. Thus, the immediate question that comes to an inquisitive mind when hearing the term "Pan-African University" is the question of how pan-African this newly formed university structure is. Is it really different from many other Westernised universities across the continent of Africa? If so, how is it different?

The Pan-African University was officially launched in 2011, more than five decades after the demise of juridical-administrative colonialism in Africa. The timing is worth noting, because it is indicative of awareness on the part of the African leadership that coloniality did not disappear with the demises of white settler governments in Africa. It also shows that there is a realization among African leaders that education is the most important tool for equipping the people of Africa with the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes that can lead to the achievement of the African Union's vision of an "integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, an Africa driven and managed by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the international arena."[19] Thus, the call for a Pan-African University was made explicit in the Addis Ababa Declaration of the African Union in 2007, when the African Heads of State and Government called for the "revitalization of African universities;" hence, the adoption of the Consolidated Plan of Action for Science and Technology in Africa. It was within this vision and background that in 2008, the African Union Commission proposed the creation of the Pan-African University, which came to be located in five geographic sub-regions of Africa, namely Central, Southern, East, West and North Africa.

While the spirited effort by the African Union to transform and revitalize university education in Africa through the noble idea of a Pan-African University needs to be applauded, there are at least four interrelated fundamental challenges that will hinder this initiative from achieving the vision of a pan-African education system. These relate to the issue of foreign funding, the physical and epistemic location of the institutes, the programs of study, and staffing. These challenges need to be fleshed out, in detail, so that this noble initiative can serve as a learning experience about what should be avoided when imagining a decolonised university in Africa.

The challenge of foreign funding

While it was expected that the core funding for the Pan-African University would be provided by the African Union Commission and generated from research and tuition fees, as well as voluntary contribution from member states, the reliance on donor funding from Western countries such as Germany and Sweden can be viewed as a development with a potential of derailing the vision of a pan-African education system. The impact of donor funding is often associated with challenges, which Suárez-Krabbe labelled as border control, patrolling and surveillance.[20] By border control, Suárez-Krabbe refers to a situation whereby a donor specifies requirements for research in calls for funding in such a way that the research project fits the agenda of transnational elites. This is also related to the challenge of patrolling, which refers to a situation where the determination of what is scientific, not scientific, or accepted as knowledge is in line with "Western knowledge traditions."

Finally, surveillance refers to the exercise of criticism against Western ways of knowing, whereby dissent is tolerated as long as it is loyal and not subversive to Western thought. As a result of the financial position of Africa, in other words, its dependence on funding and aid makes it highly likely that donor funding will hold sway on the type of knowledge generated by the Pan-African University. This includes the choice of programmes of study and the nature of research projects undertaken by the institution.

The challenge of the physical and epistemic location of the Pan-African University

In its conception, the Pan-African University was set to be established within existing universities in different regions of the continent, namely Central, Southern, East, West and North Africa. Thus, in Central Africa, the University of Yaoundé 2, in Cameroon, was chosen to host the Institute of Humanities, Social Sciences and Good Governance; in East Africa, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, in Kenya, was chosen to host Basic Sciences, Technology and Innovation; in West Africa, the University of Ibadan, in Nigeria, was set to host the Life and Earth Sciences; and in North Africa, Annaba, in Algeria, was chosen to house Water, Energy and Climate Change. The last institute was

to be based at the University of Stellenbosch, in South Africa, on behalf of the Southern African region.[21]

One of the problematic issues with the location of the Pan-African University's institutes within existing universities in Africa is that it is likely to inherit colonial institutional infrastructures of research and teaching that are informed by what Collins described as Eurocentric, masculinist knowledge validation processes.[22] These processes validate and invalidate certain types of knowledge, theories and methodologies. This means that the location of the Pan-African University institutes, within existing universities in Africa, creates a possibility that these institutes will inherit a system of knowledge production that has always marginalized indigenous African worldviews, knowledges and aspirations. The end result will also mean that the idea of a Pan-African University restructures rather than transforms hierarchically organized structures of coloniality, thereby unwittingly participating in the marginalization of the African continent.

The challenge of prioritization of programs of study

In addition to the challenge of the planned physical and epistemic location within existing academies of higher learning in Africa such as the University of Stellenbosch, which in the past served to prop up the apartheid regime, the Pan-African University can also be criticized on the basis of its prioritization of the programs of study. Thus, with specific reference to its planned southern African node at the University of Stellenbosch, the Pan-African University's choice of "space sciences" can be viewed as problematic. This is mainly because within a cartographic space where rampant poverty affects the majority of the population, it is not clear how space sciences can address the most immediate challenges faced by the people of southern Africa. The Pan-African University's southern node can better serve the interests of the indigenous peoples by providing those programs that can bridge socio-economic inequalities and address the challenges of migration, xenophobia and racism—topics that deal with the plight of the poor and excluded. In other words, the idea of space sciences is too elitist, even to be understood by lay people, who are currently failing even to access the University of Stellenbosch as

an institution of higher learning—as has been articulated by the Open Stellenbosch Movement during the recent student protests.

The challenge of staffing

In spite of the commitment by the Pan-African University to recruit Africans to provide teaching and research services, the social location of teachers and researchers from Africa does not always relate with their epistemological locations. Thus, as Grofoguel puts it, "the fact that one is socially located in the oppressed side of power relations does not automatically mean he/she is epistemically thinking from a subaltern epistemic location."[23] This is an indication that in order for the Pan-African University to transform the heavily Eurocentric education model in Africa, it is not enough to recruit Africans on the basis of being born on the continent of Africa, but it needs to consciously exalt those African knowledges that have, been subalternised for a long time, and to recruit committed de-colonial Afrocentric scholars who would be in a position to articulate a decolonised university curricula.

Is an alternative type of university possible in Africa?

While there are many factors to consider in the quest to decolonize knowledge through education, the most difficult challenge lies in the epistemology. Thus, the epistemic foundation of knowledge is the engine that leads to the crisis of "repetition without change." This repetition happens not because the agent of change deliberately seeks to repeat himself/herself, but simply because he/she cannot imagine any other way of life besides that which produced him/her—a form of entrapment that can render a colonized subject unaware that he/she is a colonized subject in the first place. It is, indeed, the experience of epistemic entrapment that provided the condition of possibility for such statements as: "I have freed a thousand of slaves. I could have freed a thousand more if only they knew they were slaves"; a statement generally attributed to the slave abolitionist, Harriet Tubman in 1842. While this may sound very pessimistic about the possibility of imagining "another" university for the purpose of cultivating "knowledges otherwise," one can argue that Africa, unlike other non-Western contexts that experienced direct and indirect forms of colonialism, has a better

chance of both unthinking the present university and imagining an alternative one. While the epistemic violence that was suffered by the majority of the colonized indigenous peoples of the non-Western world led them to lose their pre-existing knowledges, memories and ways of knowing that could have helped them to imagine another university different from a colonial one, it is also true that the indigenous peoples of Africa remained with residuals of original knowledges and ways of knowing that can be the basis of imagining an alternative university. Thus, for instance, the prevalence of traditional practices and institutions such as traditional healing after centuries of colonial domination can be a sign that coloniality has so far failed to entirely decimate all the resilient traditions of the indigenous peoples of Africa.

If Spivak's question of "whether the subaltern can speak"[24] can be asked with specific reference to the indigenous peoples of Africa, the answer can be that the indigenous subject of Africa has been speaking since the dawn of coloniality, albeit without being listened to by those who reap the fruits of colonial domination. Thus, despite the fact that many of the African traditions today are a product of colonial invention[25] thereby making it difficult to recognize the authentic African traditions from those manufactured by coloniality, long-standing African traditions such as the practice of traditional healing have also served to resist the outright colonial invention of the African knowledges and ways of knowing in such a way that makes the idea of a pluri-versal knowledge system highly possible.

In general, the impact of direct colonial domination on epistemologies of the colonized varied from place to place and time to time. Thus, according to Quijano,

> The forms and effects of cultural coloniality have been different as regards to times and cases. In Latin America, the cultural repression and colonization of the imaginary were accompanied by a massive and gigantic extermination of the natives, mainly their use as expendable force, in addition to the violence of the conquest and diseases brought by Europeans. The cultural repression and massive genocide together turned the previous high cultures of America into illiterate, peasant subcultures condemned to orality; that is, deprived of their own pattern of formalised, objectivised, intellectual, and plastic or visual expression.[26]

Quijano's position is that Latin America became the most extreme case of cultural colonisation by Europe. Thus, he argues that Latin America cannot be compared with Asia, the Middle East or Africa because:

> [i]n Asia and in the Middle East high cultures could never be destroyed with such intensity and profundity. But they were nevertheless placed in subordinate relation, not only in the European view, but also in the eyes of their own bearers.
>
> In Africa, cultural destruction was certainly much more intense than in Asia, but less than in America. Nor did the Europeans there succeed in complete destruction of the patterns of expression, in particular of objectification and of visual formalization.
>
> What the Europeans did was to deprive Africans of legitimacy and recognition in the global cultural order dominated by European patterns.[27]

What emerges from Quijano's analysis of the impact of colonialism across the regions of the Third World is that in Africa, the process of colonial domination did not totally annihilate and exterminate indigenous African ways of thinking, knowing and patterns of expression, but merely subalternized and inferiorized them in the global cultural order. What then needs to be done to reverse the status quo is to deliberately exalt those subaltern knowledge(s) through formal education, especially in institutions of higher learning such as universities. Thus, Quijano's analysis of colonial domination's effects on African culture(s) and knowledge systems resonates with the position held by Odora Hoppers and Richards, who argue:

> Two centuries of politicised and scienticized denial of the existence of the metaphysics of indigenous people has not eradicated their knowledge systems, their rituals, and their practices . . . at least not completely. Whenever we look deeply at African society, or indeed most indigenous societies, the empirical fact that stares back at us is a reality of life lived differently, lives constituted around very different metaphysics of economics, of law, of science, of healing, of marriage, of joy, of dying, and of co-existence. The problem before us is therefore that the academy has not adapted to its natural context, or has resisted adaptation epistemologically,

> cosmologically and culturally—with immense ensuing cognitive injustice to boot![28]

What this means is that even though Africa suffered "dis-memberment" as a result of coloniality, those who remained on the continent, unlike those who were kidnapped and transported to the New World as slaves, remained with resources of remembrance. Thus, in his articulation of what he terms the "linguistic logic of conquest," Ngugi wa Thiong'o argues that "linguicide" was committed in the case of the diaspora, and "linguifam" took place within the continent.[29] The difference between the acts of linguicide and linguifam is that the former refers to language liquidation, which totally denied the slave a means of communication and site of remembrance, and the later refers to a language famine, which is a form of linguistic deprivation and starvation but not liquidation. What this means is that the peoples of Africa remain with another source of social memory and another civilization, which they can return to as a way of disconfirming the false projection of Eurocentrism as the alpha and omega of life.

There are, indeed, a number of practical steps that the peoples of Africa can take in order to construct a decolonised university. The first step is to construct a decolonial university before a decolonised university. The difference between a decolonial and a decolonised university is that the former concentrates on mobilizing consciousness and awareness on the part of the subaltern subject so as not to take Eurocentrism for granted, and the latter concentrates on encouraging the formerly colonized to come up with alternative imaginations of life after a successful disconfirmation of the coloniality. Thus, what I am proposing here is a strategy of progressive stages that can be considered in the struggle against coloniality in knowledge production. The first stage is a reactive anti-modernity approach to coloniality, and the second stage is a counter-modernity approach that is progressive and charts the way forward in terms of projecting alternatives to modernity/coloniality. Rose explains that "whereas anti-modernity is reactive against modernity, counter-modernity is generously responsive" by offering radical alternatives and options.[30] The counter-modernity/coloniality stage towards a decolonized university will ensure that we avoid the crisis of a proverbial slave who does not know

where to go after the demise of the system of slavery that she/he is fighting against.

What is, indeed, encouraging about the possibility of a decolonised university in Africa is that the process towards decolonial universities is already taking place, particularly in South Africa. For instance, the University of South Africa has, since 2013, hosted an annual *International Summer School on Decolonising Knowledge, Power and Being* and has established a research network on decolonialization called "Africa Decolonial Research Network" (ADERN), both of which are developments that can be classified as consciousness-raising initiatives about the falsity of the self-righteousness of the coloniality project. In addition to the University of South Africa, other universities such as the University of Cape Town have started offering postgraduate modules on "Decoloniality." Hence, it is clear that efforts are beginning to be mobilized in South Africa towards creating universities that dare to question the dominance of Eurocentrism in knowledge production.

The decolonial university in Africa is set to produce students and staff members who question the false notions of "objectivity" and "universal truths" that enable Western knowledge to project a neutral, "point-zero," "god-eye view"[31] knowledge that pretends as though it does not have a point of view. It is these kinds of technologies of subjection that dupe the unsuspecting non-Western subjects into thinking that there are value-free truths in knowledge production. This trickery is central to the production and reproduction of colonial subjects, who are complicit in their own oppression, because the myths of objectivity and universal truths are meant to hide the locus of enunciation of the subject that speaks. This leads to an effect that decouples the epistemic from the social location of the oppressed subject in such a way that even those people who are socially located on the dominated side of the colonial power differential speak as though they are on the dominant side.[32] A decolonial university is the starting point towards aligning the epistemic location of African subjects with their social location. Thus, for far too long the peoples of Africa have been speaking more in support of Eurocentrism rather than in support of their own interests.

African-based solutions to problems that affect the peoples of Africa do not lie with what is generally perceived to be expert knowledge produced by the Western-educated African elite or in

some form of mythical indigenous knowledge that is untouched by Western modernity, but can be found within the creative spirit of the African subject, as he/she reasons from the vantage point of his/her social location. However, for such an African genius to emerge, it is important for the African subject, who is expected to have been tainted by colonial ways of knowing, to be able to take a "de-colonial turn"[33] and make a shift in what Gordon refers to as the "geography of reason."[34] This shift in the geography and biography of reason will not only enable the subalternized African subject within the structure of the modern world system to turn away from the colonial ways of knowing that were making him/her partake in his/her own oppression, but will also enable him/her to practice what Mignolo describes as "epistemic disobedience"[35] against the oppressive, colonial way of knowing. This is important when taking into consideration that the colonial education system in Africa was intended to produce a colonial subject who will, after attaining it, consent to coloniality. Thus, an epistemically disobedient African subject within the scheme of colonial knowledge is able to see what he/she was not meant to see, because he/she does not take the received Eurocentric knowledge for granted. This is particularly important, not only for the treating of the scientific theories that come from the West with suspicion, but also for their methodologies that serve *a priori* to research findings within the sphere of research and knowledge production.

Conclusion

Coloniality of knowledge is a key lever in the structural system of colonial domination as a whole. Thus, crafting a different future for the African subject can only be possible when Africans, as victims of global coloniality, begin to understand the nature of their entrapment in the colonial structure of knowledge within which they exist as objects of deceit, oppression and exploitation. This understanding will enable them to withdraw their participation in activities that reify the power structure of coloniality, thereby enabling its continuity, and instead engage in activities of a diachronic transformation that can lead to coloniality's collapse. This is particularly important in the context of Africa, where the colonizer is no longer physically visible but has left the African-victim subject as the administrator of the system on behalf the coloniser.

Notes

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[2] Frantz Fanon, *The wretched of the earth* (New York: Groves Press, 1968), 23-25.

[3] James Morris Blaut, *The colonizer's model of the world: Geographical diffusionism and* Eurocentric *history* (Guilford Press, 2012), 1.

[4] Marshall Sahlins, *Islands of history* (University of Chicago Press, 2013), xi-xii.

[5] Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *Something torn and new: An African renaissance* (Basic Books, 2009), 6.

[6] Walter Mignolo, *The darker side of western modernity: Global futures, decolonial options* (Duke University Press, 2011), 1.

[7] Ramon Grosfoguel, "The Epistemic Decolonial Turn: Beyond Political-Economy Paradigms 1," *Cultural studies* 21.2-3 (2007): 211.

[8] Nelson Maldonado-Torres, "On the coloniality of being: Contributions to the development of a concept 1," *Cultural studies* 21.2-3 (2007): 243.

[9] Ali Al'Amin Mazrui. *The Africans: A triple heritage* (London: BBC Publications, 1986), 12-13.

[10] Césaire Aimé. *Discourse on colonialism* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1972), 32.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Aníbal Quijano "Coloniality and modernity/rationality." *Cultural studies* 21.2-3 (2007): 168-178.

[13] Ngugi wa Thiong'o. *Decolonizing the mind: The politics of language in African literature* (Oxford: James Currey, 1986), 1.

[14] Anibal Quijano. "The coloniality of power and social classification." *Journal of world-systems research* 6.2 (2000): 342-386.

[15] Ngugi wa Thiong'o. *Something torn and new,* 12.

[16] Shadrack BO Gutto. "Towards a new paradigm for pan-African knowledge production and application in the context of the African renaissance," *International Journal of African Renaissance Studies* 1.2 (2006): 306

[17] Catherine Odora Hoppers and Howard Richards, "Rethinking Thinking: Modernity's "Other" and the Transformation of the University. Vol." *Taproot Series I. Pretoria: University of South Africa* (2011): 1.

[18] Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni. "Decoloniality as the Future of Africa," *History Compass* 13.10 (2015): 485.

[19] African Union, *Vision of the African Union and mission of the African Union commission. Final Draft* (Addis Ababa: Office of the Chairperson of The African Union Commission 2004), n.p.

[20] Julia Suárez-Krabbe, "'Epistemic Coyotismo and Transnational Collaboration: Decolonizing the Danish University," *Human Architecture* 10.1 (2012): 31-44.

[21] Note that not all institutes of the Pan African University were established as per the plan. In particular, the southern node at Stellenbosch University has not yet been established.
[22] Patricia Hill Collins. "Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment." (1991): 13-13.
[23] Grosfoguel, "The Epistemic Decolonial Turn," 213.
[24] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. "Can the subaltern speak?," in *Colonial Discourse and Postcolonial Theory: A Reader*, ed. Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 66-111.
[25] See Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The invention of tradition* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983).
[26] Quijano, "Coloniality and modernity/rationality," 169-170.
[27] Ibid.
[28] Odora Hoppers and Richards, "Rethinking Thinking," 10.
[29] Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *Something torn and new,* 17.
[30] Deborah Bird Rose. *Reports from a wild country: Ethics for decolonization* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2004), 7.
[31] Grosfoguel, "The Epistemic Decolonial Turn," 214.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Maldonado-Torres, "On the coloniality of being," 243.
[34] Lewis R. Gordon, "Shifting the geography of reason in an age of disciplinary decadence," *Transmodernity: Journal of Peripheral Cultural Production of the Luso-Hispanic World* 1.2 (2011): 95-103.
[35] Walter D Mignolo, "Epistemic disobedience, independent thought and decolonial freedom." *Theory, Culture & Society* 26.7-8 (2009): 159-181.