

Decoloniality as the Future of Africa

Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni*

Archie Mafeje Research Institute, University of South Africa

Abstract

Decoloniality is not only a long-standing political and epistemological movement aimed at liberation of (ex-) colonized peoples from global coloniality but also a way of thinking, knowing, and doing. It is part of marginalized but persistent movements that merged from struggles against the slave trade, imperialism, colonialism, apartheid, neo-colonialism, and underdevelopment as constitutive negative elements of Euro-North American-centric modernity. As an epistemological movement, it has always been overshadowed by hegemonic Euro-North American-centric intellectual thought and social theories. As a political movement, it has consistently been subjected to surveillance of global imperial designs and colonial matrices of power. But today, decoloniality is reemerging at a time when the erstwhile hegemonic Euro-North American-centric modernity and its dominant epistemology are experiencing an epistemological break. This epistemic break highlights how Euro-North American-centric modernity has created modern problems of which it has no modern solutions and how theories/knowledges generated from a Euro-North American-centric context have become exhausted if not obstacles to the understanding of contemporary human issues. This essay introduces, defines, and explains the necessity for decoloniality as a liberatory language of the future for Africa.

Introduction

This essay introduces and defines decoloniality as an epistemological and political movement and advances decoloniality as a necessary liberatory language of the future for Africa. Decoloniality speaks to the deepening and widening of decolonization movements in those spaces that experienced the slave trade, imperialism, colonialism, apartheid, neocolonialism, and underdevelopment. This is because the domains of culture, the psyche, mind, language, aesthetics, religion, and many others have remained colonized. Decoloniality calls on intellectuals from imperialist countries to undertake ‘a deimperialization movement by reexamining their own imperialist histories and the harmful impacts those histories have had on the world.’² The essay begins by back-grounding the long-term impact of colonialism as a constitutive part of Euro-North American-centric modernity as it challenges the notion of colonialism being considered a mere event/episode in African history. It proceeds to distinguish coloniality from colonialism and decoloniality from decolonization. It ends by rebutting some of the criticisms of decoloniality and concludes by explaining why it is a liberatory language of the future.

Colonialism as Understood from the Epic School

The leading African scholar Ali A. Mazrui argued that the long-term impact of colonialism on Africa can be understood from two perspectives. He designated the first perspective as the epic school. This school underscored the fact that colonialism amounted to ‘a revolution of epic propositions.’³ Mazrui identified six long-term consequences of colonialism. First, colonialism and capitalism forcibly incorporated Africa into the world economy, beginning with the slave trade, ‘which dragged African labour itself into the emerging international capitalist system.’⁴

African labor contributed immensely to the economic rise of a Euro-North American-centric trans-Atlantic commerce. Second, Africa that had been excluded from the post-1648 Westphalian sovereign state system and that was physically partitioned after the Berlin Conference of 1884–5 was later incorporated into the post-1945 United Nations sovereignty state system. One can add that the fragmented and weak African ‘postcolonial’ states were admitted into the lowest echelons of the Euro-North American-dominated state system of the world.⁵

Third, Africa was incorporated into a Euro-North American-centric world culture and European languages. Fourth, Africa was incorporated into a heavily Euro-North American-centric world of international law. Fifth, as a consequence of colonialism, Africa was incorporated into the modern technological age including being ‘swallowed by the global system of dissemination of information.’⁶ Finally, Africa was dragged into a Euro-North American-centric moral order dominated by Christian thought. Mazrui’s conclusion was, therefore, that ‘What Africa knows about itself, what different parts of Africa known about each other, have been profoundly influenced by the West.’⁷

The epic school is countered by the episodic school. It posits that ‘the European impact on Africa has been shallow rather than deep, transitional rather than long-lasting.’⁸ In fact, it was the Nigerian historian Jacob F. Ade Ajayi of the Ibadan nationalist school, who depicted colonialism as ‘an episode in African history.’⁹ While the episodic school is correct in underscoring African agency and initiative in the making of history even under the constrained circumstances of colonial rule, the danger lies in its decoupling of colonialism from the broader wave of Euro-North American-centric modernity that radically transformed human history. Understood from this perspective, colonialism cannot be understood as an event/episode. Colonialism was a major part of what Walter D. Mignolo termed ‘global designs’ that became entangled with ‘local histories.’¹⁰

While it is true that ‘Each African entity–village, town or kingdom–viewed the challenge of European conquest as a new historical factor’ and that ‘Africans could either resist the white man, form alliances with the newcomers, or exploit them as far as possible in the continuous struggle for survival, wealth or power,’ it remains true that these initiatives did not crack or change the bigger enveloping wave of Euro-North American-centric modernity that unfolded from the 15th century.¹¹ Even decolonization struggles of the 20th century failed to substantially ‘move the centre’ and to effectively ‘re-member’ Africa after over 500 years of ‘dismemberment’ to use Ngugi wa Thiong’o’s terminology.¹² What happened as a consequence of decolonization is that the dismantling of direct colonial administrations did not give rise to a ‘postcolonial world,’ rather as noted by Ramon Grosfoguel, global coloniality ensued.¹³ Global coloniality cannot be separated from Euro-North American-centric modernity. Today, African leaders continue to manage and maintain the global system after replacing direct colonial rulers.

This is why Grosfoguel characterized Euro-North American-centric modernity as racially hierarchized, patriarchal, sexist, Christian-centric, hetero-normative, capitalist, military, colonial, imperial, and modern form of civilization.¹⁴ Grosfoguel used the term ‘heterarchies’ of power to underscore the complex vertical, horizontal, and crisscrossing invisible entanglements in the configuration of modern global power structure that emerged from colonial encounters.¹⁵ The negative consequences of this modernity included the slave trade, imperialism, colonialism, apartheid, neo-colonialism, underdevelopment, and neo-liberalism including Washington Consensus and structural adjustment programs.¹⁶ Globalization is, today, still driven by coloniality on a world scale. The epic impact of colonialism led the leading decolonial theorist and poet Aime Cesaire to pose the question: ‘what, fundamentally, is colonialism?’¹⁷ Cesaire understood colonialism to be a disruptive, ‘decivilizing,’ dehumanizing, exploitative, racist, violent, brutal, covetous, and ‘thingfying’ system.¹⁸

Coloniality

Coloniality is a useful concept that names various colonial-like power relations existing today in those zones that experienced direct colonialism. The concept of coloniality was introduced by the Peruvian sociologist Anibal Quijano¹⁹ but was further elaborated by the Argentinean decolonial semiotician Walter D. Mignolo²⁰ and others such as Nelson Maldonado-Torres.²¹ Quijano identified four key levers of coloniality. The first is control of the economy. The second is control of authority. The third is control of gender and sexuality. The fourth is control of knowledge and subjectivity.²² Mignolo emphasized 'colonial difference' as a central leitmotif of coloniality.²³ Coloniality is a name for the 'darker side' of modernity that needs to be unmasked because it exists as 'an embedded logic that enforces control, domination, and exploitation disguised in the language of salvation, progress, modernization, and being good for everyone.'²⁴ Building on the work of Quijano and Mignolo, Maldonado-Torres elaborated on the meaning of coloniality and its difference from colonialism in these revealing words:

Coloniality is different from colonialism. Colonialism denotes a political and economic relation in which the sovereignty of a nation or a people rests on the power of another nation, which makes such a nation an empire. Coloniality, instead, refers to 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.²⁵

In Africa, such scholars and political activists as Wilmot Edward Blyden in *Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race*,²⁶ Frantz Fanon in *Black Skins, White Masks*,²⁷ and *The Wretched of the Earth*,²⁸ Kwame Nkrumah in *Neo-colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism*,²⁹ Chinweizu in *The West and the Rest of Us*,³⁰ *Towards the Decolonization of African Literature*,³¹ and *Decolonizing the African Mind*,³² Ngugi wa Thiong'o in *Decolonizing the Mind*,³³ and others also engaged with the problem of coloniality without using the term coloniality. Nkrumah is credited for the concept of 'neo-colonialism' that enabled him to graphically expose the tentacles of what he termed the 'Wall Street Octopus.'³⁴ Nkrumah correctly understood imperialism as operating like an octopus in its domination of the world. Global coloniality is also better understood as an octopus constituted by heterarchies of domination, control, and exploitation. Other scholars like Walter Rodney and Samir Amin understood coloniality in terms of 'underdevelopment' and 'dependency' perspectives.³⁵ The emphasis in all these articulations of coloniality was on economic domination, which is just one strand of coloniality.

Ngugi wa Thiong'o emphasized the psychological/epistemological as well as cultural and linguistic impact of coloniality and correctly concluded that 'The present predicaments of Africa are often not a matter of personal choice: they arise from an historical situation.'³⁶ Ngugi wa Thiong'o elaborated that 'imperialism is not a slogan' and explained that 'It is real; it is palpable in content and form and in its methods and effects.'³⁷ The octopus nature of coloniality is well articulated by Grosfoguel who identified its various entangled heterarchies such as complex class formations, core-periphery divisions, male-female hierarchies, heterosexual-homosexual hierarchies, religious/spiritualities hierarchization and divisions, epistemic/knowledge hierarchies, linguistic hierarchies, and aesthetic.³⁸ Ngugi wa Thiong'o detailed the workings of coloniality on the minds of its targets:

The biggest weapon wielded and actually daily unleashed by imperialism against that collective defiance is the cultural bomb. The effect of a cultural bomb is to annihilate a people's belief in their names,

in their languages, in their environment, in their heritage of struggle, in their unity, in their capacities and ultimately in themselves. It makes them see their past as one wasteland of non-achievement and it makes them want to distance themselves from that wasteland. It makes them want to identify with that which is furthest removed from themselves; for instance, with other people's languages rather than their own. It makes them identify with that which is decadent and reactionary, all those forces which would stop their own springs of life. It even plants serious doubt about the moral rightness of struggle. Possibilities of triumph or victory are seen as remote, ridiculous dreams. The intended results are despair, dependency and a collective death-wish. Amidst this wasteland which it has created; imperialism presents itself as the cure and demands that the dependent sing hymns of praise with the constant refrain: 'Theft is holy.' Indeed, this refrain sums up the new creed of neo-colonial bourgeoisie in many 'independent' African states.³⁹

Coloniality is, therefore, an invisible power structure, an epochal condition, and epistemological design, which lies at the center of the present Euro-North American-centric modern world. At the center of coloniality is race as an organizing principle that not only hierarchized human beings according to racial ontological densities but also sustains asymmetrical global power relations and a singular Euro-North American-centric epistemology that claims to be universal, disembodied, truthful, secular, and scientific.⁴⁰ At another level, as articulated by Mignolo, 'Coloniality names the experiences and views of the world and history of those whom Fanon called *les damnés de la terre* ('the wretched of the earth,' those who have been, and continue to be, subjected to the standard of modernity).'⁴¹ According to Mignolo,

The wretched are defined by the colonial wound, and the colonial wound, physical and/or psychological, is a consequence of racism, the hegemonic discourse that questions the humanity of all those who do not belong to the locus of enunciation (and the geo-politics of knowledge) of those who assign the standard of classification and assign to themselves the right to classify.⁴²

Decoloniality

Decoloniality is different from anti-colonialism that dominated the 20th century. Anti-colonialism was largely an elite-driven project in which elites mobilized peasants and workers as foot soldiers in a struggle to replace direct colonial administrators. African anti-colonial struggles of the 20th century did not produce a genuine 'postcolonial' dispensation marked by the birth of a new humanity as demanded by Fanon, for instance. What was produced is a complex situation that Achille Mbembe termed 'the postcolony,'⁴³ Gayatri Spivak described as 'postcolonial neo-colonized world,'⁴⁴ and decolonial theorists understood as 'coloniality.' What distinguished this situation was what I have termed the 'myths of decolonization.'⁴⁵ But decoloniality materialized at the very moment in which the slave trade, imperialism, and colonialism were being launched. It materialized as resistance, thought, and action.

Decolonial movements assumed various forms and terms such as Ethiopianism, Garveyism, Negritude, Pan-Africanism, African Socialism, African Humanism, Black Consciousness Movement, and African Renaissance. Thus, unlike simple anti-colonialism, decoloniality was and is aimed at setting afoot a new humanity free from racial hierarchization and asymmetrical power relations in place since conquest.⁴⁶ Maldonado-Torres is, therefore, correct in defining decoloniality this way:

By decoloniality it is meant here the dismantling of relations of power and conceptions of knowledge that foment the reproduction of racial, gender, and geo-political hierarchies that came into being or found new and more powerful forms of expression in the modern/colonial world.⁴⁷

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struggles to bring into intervening existence an-other interpretation that bring forward, on the one hand, a silenced view of the event and, on the other, shows the limits of imperial ideology disguised as the true (total) interpretation of the events in the making of the modern world.⁴⁸

Decoloniality is distinguished from imperial versions of history through its push for shifting of geography of reason from the West as the epistemic locale from which the 'world is described, conceptualized and ranked' to the ex-colonized epistemic sites as legitimate points of departure in describing the construction of the modern world order.⁴⁹ Decoloniality names a cocktail of insurrectionist-liberatory projects and critical thoughts emerging from the ex-colonized epistemic sites like Latin America, Caribbean, Asia, Middle East, and Africa; it seeks to make sense of the position of ex-colonized peoples within the Euro-America-centric, Christian-centric, patriarchal, capitalist, hetero-normative, racially hierarchized, and modern world system that came into being in the 15th century.⁵⁰

Decoloniality seeks to unmask, unveil, and reveal coloniality as an underside of modernity that co-existed with its rhetoric of progress, equality, fraternity, and liberty. It is a particular kind of critical intellectual theory as well as political project which seeks to disentangle ex-colonised parts of the world from coloniality.⁵¹ What distinguishes decoloniality from other existing critical social theories is its locus of enunciations and its genealogy—which is outside of Europe. Decoloniality can be best understood as a pluriversal epistemology of the future—a redemptive and liberatory epistemology that seeks to de-link from the tyranny of abstract universals.⁵² Decoloniality informs the ongoing struggles against inhumanity of the Cartesian subject, 'the irrationality of the rational, the despotic residues of modernity.'⁵³

Decoloniality is born out of a realization that the modern world is an asymmetrical world order that is sustained not only by colonial matrices of power but also by pedagogies and epistemologies of equilibrium that continue to produce alienated Africans that are socialized into hating Africa that produced them and liking Europe and America that reject them. Schools, colleges, churches, and universities in Africa are sites for reproduction of coloniality. We so far don't have African universities. We have universities in Africa.⁵⁴ They continue to poison African minds with research methodologies and inculcate knowledges of equilibrium. These are knowledges that do not question methodologies as well as the present asymmetrical world order. In decoloniality, research methods and research methodologies are never accepted as neutral but are unmasked as technologies of subjectivation if not surveillance tools that prevent the emergence of another-thinking, another-logic, and another-world view. Research methodologies are tools of gate-keeping.

Decoloniality is premised on three concepts/unit of analysis. The first concept is that of *coloniality of power*. It helps in investigating into how the current 'global political' was constructed, constituted, and configured into a racially hierarchized, Euro-American-centric, Christian-centric, patriarchal, capitalist, hetero-normative, hegemonic, asymmetrical, and modern power structure.⁵⁵ The concept of colonial of power enables delving deeper into how the world was bifurcated into 'Zone of Being' (the world of those in charge of global power structures and beneficiaries of modernity) and 'Zone of None-Being' (the invented world that was the source of slaves and victims of imperialism, colonialism, and apartheid) maintained by invisible what Boaventura de Sousa Santos termed 'abyssal thinking.'⁵⁶ Abyssal thinking according to Santos is informed by imperial reason and manifests itself in bifurcation of the world into 'this side' (the side of complete beings governed according to dictates of emancipation, law,

and ethics) and ‘that side’ (the side of incomplete beings governed according to expropriation and violence).⁵⁷ In short, coloniality of power is a concept that decolonial theorists use to analyze modern global cartography of power and how the modern world works.

The second concept is that of *coloniality of knowledge*, which focuses on teasing out epistemological issues, politics of knowledge generation, as well as questions of who generates which knowledge and for what purpose.⁵⁸ Coloniality of knowledge is useful in enabling us to understand how endogenous and indigenous knowledges have been pushed to what became understood as ‘the barbarian margins of society.’ Africa is today saddled with irrelevant knowledge that saves to disempowered rather than empowering individuals and communities. Ake emphasized that Africa had to seriously engage in struggles to free itself from ‘knowledge of equilibrium,’ that is, knowledge that serves the present asymmetrical power-structured world.⁵⁹ On the sphere of knowledge, decolonial theorists are at the forefront of decolonizing what they have termed ‘Westernized’ universities that have been built throughout the world.⁶⁰

The third concept is that of *coloniality of being*, which gestures into the pertinent questions of the making of modern subjectivities and into issues of human ontology.⁶¹ African scholars engaged with the question of coloniality of being from the vantage point of what they termed ‘African Personality’ and ‘Negritude’ among many other registers used in the African decolonial search for restoration of denied ontological density, sovereign subjectivity, as well as self-pride and self-assertion.⁶² Both ‘African Personality’ and ‘Negritude’ were concepts developed in struggle by Africans as they tried to make sense of their predicaments within a context of dehumanizing colonialism. Coloniality of being is very important because it assists in investigating how African humanity was questioned as well as into processes that contributed towards ‘objectification’/‘thingification’/‘commodification’ of Africans.⁶³ One of the continuing struggles in Africa is focused on resisting objectification and dehumanization of Black people on a world scale. It is a struggle to regain lost subjecthood and eventually citizenship as well as many other questions to do with being and humanism as politicized states of existence.

Therefore, one grand proposition of decoloniality is that modernity unfolded as Janus-headed process, understandable on the basis of the locus of enunciation of the person trying to understand the fruits and heritage of modernity.⁶⁴ In decolonial thought, modernity is said to have unfolded as a phenomenon that colonized *time*, *space*, and *being* and was constituted by rhetoric of progress, civilization, emancipation, and development, on the one hand and on the other, by the reality of coloniality.⁶⁵ This reality has taken decolonial thinkers into historical and philosophical mediations, which are beginning to reveal the ‘under side’ of modernity.⁶⁶

Decoloniality pushes for transcendence over narrow conceptions of being decolonized and consistently gestures towards liberation from coloniality as a complex matrix of knowledge, power, and being. Decoloniality consistently reminds decolonial thinkers of ‘the unfinished and incomplete twentieth century dream of decolonization.’⁶⁷ Decoloniality announces ‘the decolonial turn’ as a long existing ‘turn’ standing in opposition to the ‘colonizing turn’ underpinning Western thought.⁶⁸ Decoloniality announces the broad ‘decolonial turn’ that involves the ‘task of the very decolonization of knowledge, power and being, including institutions such as the university.’⁶⁹

But decoloniality is often confused with postcolonial theory. Decoloniality and postcolonial theory converge and diverge. On the convergence side, they both aimed at dealing with the colonial experience. Sabine Brock and Carsten Junker effectively delineate converging and diverging positions, approaches, and trajectories of decoloniality and postcoloniality.⁷⁰ Decoloniality and postcoloniality provide a range of critiques of modernity. But they diverge in their intellectual genealogy.

As put by Mignolo, decoloniality emerges ‘from the receiving end of Western imperial formations.’⁷¹ Decolonial theory is therefore traceable to those thinkers from the zones that

experienced the negative aspects of modernity such as Aime Cesaire, Frantz Fanon, William EB Dubois, Kwame Nkrumah, and Ngugi wa Thiong'o. Postcolonial theory unlike decolonial theory is traceable to post-structuralists and postmodernists such as Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault, and the theory was then articulated by scholars such as Gayatri Spivak and Homi Bhabha.⁷² Postcolonial theory and decolonial theory also differ in terms of where they begin their critique of modernity/coloniality. Decolonial theorists begin their critique as far back as 500 years covering the Spanish and Portuguese colonialism.

Postcolonial theorists begin their critique with the British colonization of India in the 19th century, in the process ignoring some 300 years of the unfolding of modernity/coloniality. Because of this, postcolonial theorists somehow try to decouple modernity and colonialism in the process missing the fact that modernity and coloniality are inextricably intertwined paradoxically. While postcolonial theorists are concerned with dismantling meta-narratives, decolonial theorists push forward an analysis predicated on questions of power, epistemology, and ontology as foundational questions in the quest to understand the unfolding and operations of the modern Euro-North American-centric modernity.⁷³ The postcolonial 'cultural turn' is different from the 'decolonial turn' because the former is located and revolves within a Euro-North American-centric modernist discursive, historical, and structural terrain and the latter is born at the borders of Euro-North American-centric modernity and is fuelled by a decolonial spirit of disobedience.⁷⁴ Whereas postcolonial theorists' horizon is universalism and cosmopolitanism, decolonial theory gestures towards pluriversality and new humanism. In short, one can say that postcoloniality and decoloniality converge and diverge across genealogies, trajectories, and horizons.

But some strands of decoloniality, particularly those that build their case from the reality of the slave trade, colonialism, and racism are deemed to be locked in victimhood and narcissism of minor difference by Achille Mbembe, a celebrated African postcolonial theorist.⁷⁵ Mbembe critiqued particularly those decolonial analyses informed by nationalism and Marxism for being enclosed inside an intellectual ghetto from which they articulate 'false philosophies.'⁷⁶ He identified these 'false philosophies' as 'nativism' and 'Afro-radicalism.' While Mbembe acknowledges the power and appeal of these analyses, he dismisses them as 'false philosophies.'⁷⁷ Nationalist and Marxist theorists are blamed for seeking to create an Africa that has a polemic relationship with the rest of the world.⁷⁸ These fake philosophies were said to have been elevated into 'dogmas and doctrines' that have been 'repeated over and over again' by nationalists and Marxists.⁷⁹

To Mbembe, African scholarship that continues to blame colonialism is said to suffer from 'self-ghettoization' taking the form of 'territorialization of the production of knowledge.'⁸⁰ Those African scholars who argue from a nationalist and Marxist perspective are accused of promoting a

false belief that only autochthonous people who are physically living in Africa can produce, within a closed circle limited to themselves alone, a legitimate scientific discourse on the realities of the continent.⁸¹

Such African scholarship that blames colonialism is said to be also informed by 'a lazy interpretation of globalization.'⁸²

Mbembe's critique provoked an equally severe response from Paul Tiyambe Zeleza and other like-minded scholars. He was criticized for uncritical celebration of globalization and cosmopolitanism that underpin Euro-American-centric hegemony and his call for 'internationalization' of African scholarship as a way of 'getting out of the ghetto' was equated with 'globalizing tendencies of neo-liberal economic policies of liberalization.'⁸³ Zeleza reminded

Mbembe that the domain of knowledge generation in and on Africa has never been ‘ghettoized.’ It has never been closed from external influences and currents of thoughts. Instead, it has been excessively exposed to external and imported Euro-American paradigms.⁸⁴

Rebutting Postcolonial Critique

Decoloniality must not be confused with nationalist and Marxist thought. Decoloniality is against essentialism and fundamentalism as put by Grosfoguel:

This is not an essentialist, fundamentalist, anti-European critique. It is a perspective that is critical of both Eurocentric and Third World fundamentalisms, colonialism and nationalism. What all fundamentalisms share (including the Eurocentric one) is the premise that there is only one sole epistemic tradition from which to achieve Truth and Universality.⁸⁵

Also, as noted by Maldonado-Torres, decoloniality is not a singular theoretical school of thought but a family of diverse positions that share a view of coloniality as the fundamental problem in the modern age. This means that there might be some decolonial positions that might degenerate into romanticism, nativism, and fundamentalism, but that critique is not generalizable to all decolonial thought and initiatives.

The decoloniality expressed in this essay is essentially a repudiation of European fundamental LIE: colonization = civilization. Decoloniality provides ex-colonized peoples a space to judge Euro-American deceit and hypocrisy and to stand up into subjecthood through judging Europe and exposing technologies of subjectivation.⁸⁶ It is a decoloniality that seeks to ask new and correct questions about the human condition, going beyond Euro-American-centric epistemology that deliberately posed some human problems wrongly to continue deception. Decoloniality exposes the fact that Euro-American epistemologies are exhausted opening an opportune moment for articulation of decolonial epistemologies from the South in an endeavor to attain cognitive justice. Rationality and technology have not completely managed to overcome all obstacles to human freedom.

At another level, the decoloniality articulated here involves re-telling of history of humanity and knowledge from the vantage point of those epistemic sites that received the ‘darker side’ of modernity, including re-telling the story of knowledge generation as involving borrowings, appropriations, epistemicides, and denials of humanity of other people as part of the story of science. It is also a call for democratization of knowledge, de-hegemonization of knowledge, de-westernization of knowledge, and de-Europeanization of knowledge.

At the core of decoloniality is the agenda of shifting the geography and biography of knowledge, bringing identity into epistemology – who generates knowledge and from where? Decoloniality’s point of departure is existential realities of suffering, oppression, repression, domination, and exclusion. Decoloniality enables the unmasking of racism as a global problem as well as how knowledge including science was used to justify colonialism. Finally, decoloniality accepts the fact of ontological pluralism as a reality that needs ecologies of knowledges to understand.

Conclusion: Towards a Decolonial Future

The Rhodes Must Fall Movement that was provoked by the continued presence of Cecil John Rhodes’s Statue at the center of the University of Cape Town is one indicator of the continuing need for decoloniality. What began as an attack on Rhodes’ statue has grown into a student demand for decolonization of universities in South Africa. This indicates that unlike postcolonial theory, decoloniality has a very strong activist and practical liberatory thrust. At the continental level, the African Union is spearheading Agenda 2063 whose overarching objective is a

paradigm shift from coloniality to pan-Africanism and African Renaissance. Agenda 2063 envisions a new African humanity living in a free, united, peaceful, and prosperous Africa. The decolonial call is for Africans to free themselves from shackles of coloniality that is pervasive in the domains of power, knowledge, and being. What is envisioned by decoloniality are African people as active and free makers of their own futures.

Within the broader Global South context, the decoloniality movement has produced such South–South formations as the Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa that is geared at shifting economic power from the West. This has led Mignolo to coin the term ‘de-westernization’ as part of decoloniality.¹ Ngugi wa Thiong’o has enriched the decoloniality archive with future-oriented concepts such as decolonizing the mind, moving the center, remembering, and globalectics, which clearly indicate capturing the state of the decolonial movement and its desire to set afoot a new humanity. *Decolonizing the mind* speaks to the urgency of dealing with epistemicides and linguisticides. *Moving the centre* addresses the problem of Euro–North American centrism. *Re-membering* is about uniting a dismembered and fragmented continent. *Globalectics* gestures towards post-racial pluriversality as the home of new humanity.

Notes

* Correspondence: Archie Mafeje Research Institute, University of South Africa, Robert Sobukwe Building, 263 Nana Sita Street, Pretoria, South Africa: Email: sjndlovugatsheni@gmail.com or ndlovs2@unisa.ac.za

¹ Mignolo, *Dark Side of Western Modernity*.

² Chen, *Asia as Method*, vii.

³ Mazrui, *The Africans*, 12.

⁴ Mazrui, *The Africans*, 12.

⁵ Clapham, *Africa and the International System*.

⁶ Mazrui, *The Africans*, 12.

⁷ Mazrui, *The Africans*, 13.

⁸ Mazrui, *The Africans*, 13.

⁹ Ajayi, ‘Colonialism.’

¹⁰ Mignolo, *Local Histories/Global Designs*.

¹¹ Ajayi, ‘Colonialism,’ 172.

¹² Ngugi wa Thiong’o. *Moving the Centre*.

Ngugi wa Thiong’o, *Re-Membering Africa*.

¹³ Grosfoguel, ‘The Epistemic Decolonial Turn,’ 203–246.

¹⁴ Grosfoguel, ‘Decolonizing Post-colonial Studies,’ 15.

¹⁵ Grosfoguel, ‘Decolonizing Post-colonial Studies.’

¹⁶ Ndlovu-Gatsheni, *Empire*.

¹⁷ Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*, 32.

¹⁸ Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*, 32–45.

¹⁹ Quijano, ‘Coloniality of Power,’ 342–386; Quijano, A. ‘Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism,’ 533–579.

²⁰ Mignolo, *Local Histories/Global Designs*; Mignolo, *The Darker Side of Renaissance*; Mignolo, *The Darker Side of Western Modernity*.

²¹ Maldonado-Torres, ‘On Coloniality of Being,’ 240–270.

²² Quijano, ‘Coloniality and Modernity/Rationality.’ 168–178.

²³ Mignolo, *Local Histories/Global Designs*.

²⁴ Mignolo, *The Idea of Latin America*, 6.

²⁵ Maldonado-Torres, ‘On Coloniality of Being,’ 243.

²⁶ Blyden, *Christianity*.

²⁷ Fanon, *Black Skins*.

- ²⁸ Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*.
- ²⁹ Nkrumah, *Neo-colonialism*.
- ³⁰ Chinweizu, *The West and the Rest of Us*.
- ³¹ Chinweizu et al., *Toward the Decolonization of Africa Literature*.
- ³² Chinweizu, *Decolonizing the African Mind*. (Lagos: Pero Press, 1987).
- ³³ Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *Decolonizing the Mind*.
- ³⁴ Nkrumah, *Neo-colonialism*, 9.
- ³⁵ Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, and Amin, *Delinking*.
- ³⁶ Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *Decolonizing the Mind*, xii.
- ³⁷ Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *Decolonizing the Mind*, 2.
- ³⁸ Grosfoguel, 'Decolonizing Post-colonial Studies,' 16–17.
- ³⁹ Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *Decolonizing the Mind*, 3.
- ⁴⁰ Grosfoguel, 'The Epistemic Decolonial Turn,' 303–246.
- ⁴¹ Grosfoguel, 'The Epistemic Decolonial Turn,' 8.
- ⁴² Grosfoguel, 'The Epistemic Decolonial Turn,' 8.
- ⁴³ Mbembe, A. *On the Postcolony*.
- ⁴⁴ Spivak, *The Post-colonial Critic*.
- ⁴⁵ Ndlovu-Gatsheni, *Coloniality of Power*.
- ⁴⁶ Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*.
- ⁴⁷ Maldonado-Torres, 'Thinking Through the Decolonial Turn,' 117.
- ⁴⁸ Mignolo, *The Idea of Latin America*, 33.
- ⁴⁹ Mignolo, *The Idea of Latin America*, 35.
- ⁵⁰ Mignolo, *Local Histories/Global Designs*.
- ⁵¹ Mignolo, *The Darker Side of Western Modernity*.
- ⁵² Mignolo, 'Introduction,' 159.
- ⁵³ Mignolo, *The Dark Side of Western Modernity*, 93.
- ⁵⁴ Ndlovu-Gatsheni, *Empire*, 177–195.
- ⁵⁵ Grosfoguel, 'The Decolonial Epistemic Turn.'
- ⁵⁶ The concern of zones of being and non-being is borrowed from Fanon. See also Santos, 'Beyond Abyssal Thinking' 45–89.
- ⁵⁷ Santos, 'Beyond Abyssal Thinking,' 45–50.
- ⁵⁸ Quijano, 'Coloniality and Modernity/Rationality,' 168–178.
- ⁵⁹ Ake, *Social Science as Imperialism*, 16.
- ⁶⁰ Grosfoguel, 'The Structure of Knowledge,' 73–90.
- ⁶¹ Wynter, 'Unsettling the Coloniality,' 257–337.
- ⁶² Blyden, *Christianity and Nkrumah, Consciencism*.
- ⁶³ Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 'Empire.' See also MacKittrick, *Sylvia Wynter*.
- ⁶⁴ Mignolo, *Local Histories/Global Designs*.
- ⁶⁵ Wynter, S. 'Columbus,' 251–286.
- ⁶⁶ Mignolo, *The Darker Side of Modernity*.
- ⁶⁷ Mignolo, *Local Histories/Global Designs*, 221.
- ⁶⁸ Maldonado-Torres, 'Thinking Through the Decolonial Turn,' 1.
- ⁶⁹ Maldonado-Torres, 'Thinking Through the Decolonial Turn,' 1.
- ⁷⁰ Broeck and Junker, *Postcoloniality*.
- ⁷¹ Mignolo, 'Further Thoughts on (De) Coloniality,' 22.
- ⁷² Grosfoguel, 'The Epistemic Decolonial Turn.'
- ⁷³ Ndlovu-Gatsheni, *The Decolonial Mandela*.
- ⁷⁴ Mignolo, *The Darker Side of Modernity*, 46.
- ⁷⁵ Mbembe, 'African Modes of Self-writing,' 239–273.

- ⁷⁶ Mbembe, 'Getting Out of the Ghetto', and Appiah, *In My Father's House*.
- ⁷⁷ Mbembe, 'On the Power of the False,' 613–655.
- ⁷⁸ Mbembe, 'On the Power of the False.' 613–655.
- ⁷⁹ Robins, 'The (Third) World is a Ghetto'? 18–26.
- ⁸⁰ Mbembe, 'Getting Out of the Ghetto.'
- ⁸¹ Mbembe, 'African Modes of Self-writing.'
- ⁸² Mbembe, 'African Modes of Self-writing.'
- ⁸³ Zeleza, 2003.
- ⁸⁴ Zeleza, 2003.
- ⁸⁵ Grosfoguel, 'The Epistemic Decolonial Turn,' 212.
- ⁸⁶ Cesaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*.

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