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بعث أفريقيا الغد في سياق التحولات المعولمة :

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Coloniality of Knowledge and the Challenge of creating African futures

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ABSTRACT

Despite the fact that the idea of knowledge is both foundational and fundamental to the imaginations of different worlds among human-beings, the triumphalism of Western-centred modernity negated the legitimacy of ‘other’ knowledges outside the Western purview of seeing, imagining and knowing. Thus, the question that confronts the idea of crafting a different African future today 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 that which is determined by the ‘colonizer’s model of the world’. The answer to this question is important simply because the essence of the project of coloniality (a global structure of multiple-colonial situations) has always been the desire to control the minds and ways of knowing of the ‘colonial subaltern’ in order to sustain and prolong its synchronic structural arrangement. This paper, therefore, is decolonial epistemic perspective on the idea of creating African futures and it argues that a different imagination of the future of Africa cannot be possible without first transcending the current knowledge production system that sustains the project of coloniality.

INTRODUCTION

By and large, one of the fundamental mistakes that the ‘colonial subaltern’ commits during the struggle to attain his/her freedom is the habit of ignoring the role of knowledge production in determining his/her condition and destiny. This failure to recognise the linkage between knowledge and power in the structural system of colonial modernity among the colonised subjects has often resulted in either wrong diagnoses of root-cause of their suffering or in victims of the system of colonial oppression participating in the process and program of their own colonial subjugation. Thus, as Grosfoguel (2007) has argued, it is precisely a consequence of colonial domination in the sphere of knowledge production that the subjects who are located on the dominated side of the ‘colonial differential’ within the system of modernity/coloniality are made to think and behave as though they are located on the dominant side of the system hence ending up participating in the project of their own oppression. This clearly shows that the idea of knowledge is a central lever in the production and re-production of colonial subjects who are complicit in their own oppression and as such, the African colonial subaltern cannot experience a different future without first decolonising the knowledge system that produces her identity as an object of colonial exploitation and oppression. However, in order to understand how the idea of ‘knowledge’ instead of ‘knowledges’ in the present serves as a constraint upon creating a different future for the African subject beside that which is already destined by the Euro-North American world, it is important to first have a broader understanding of the structural architecture of the system of colonial modernity and the role of knowledge in sustaining its structuration. The following section, therefore, is a detailed analysis of the genealogy and the architecture of the system of modernity/coloniality project. This is followed by an analysis of how the idea of knowledge not only serves to hide the existence of this project but also assist in the production and

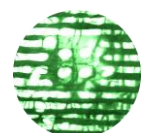


reproduction of subjects that consent to coloniality. Lastly, I evaluate whether a pan-African education system can open the possibility of imagining a different destiny for the peoples of Africa since formal education is one of the instruments through which knowledge production is accelerated and/or controlled.

The Genealogy and the Structural Architecture of Modernity/Coloniality Project

By and large, one of the most powerful beliefs of our time concerning world history and world geography is that the West consists of human species that are naturally superior to those who exist outside its premises, particularly in the non-Western world. Thus, as Blaut (1993: 1) has argued, this belief has led to the development of the view that it is permanent and natural for the West to 'innovate' and 'lead' while the rest 'imitate' and 'lag'. The proliferation of this belief can be viewed as a result of both the success of the modernity/coloniality project in concealing itself and the failure by its victims to understand that the triumphalism of Western-centred modernity has always been accompanied by the processes of colonisation of time, being and space through the control of knowledge. Thus, through the control of knowledge, the triumphalism of Western-centred modernity has successfully produced a notion of a 'backward people' who are constituted by a particular racial identity and are forever located outside the modernity as this is preserve of only the Wes as a spatio-historical temporality. This is why the history of the modernity/coloniality project is also the history of how the triumphalism of Western civilisation through the 'invention' of the idea of the 'modern' constructed the 'pre-modern' as a state of being marked by the colonisation of time, people and space.

In this section of the paper, I seek to trace the genealogy of what became the modern world-system predicated on the dominance of a Western-centred modernity as well as map-out its historical structural heterogeneity so as to unmask how being a non-Western subject came to be defined within the realm of what Blaut (1993) described as 'the coloniser's model of the world'. There are, indeed, many points of entry into the discourse of modernity/coloniality but in this section I intend to discuss a version that views 1492 as the inaugural and foundational year to the formation of modern world-system that has since its advent turned the indigenous subject of the non-Western world into a perpetual object of oppression by the Western subject. Thus 1492 marked a major shift in the history of the relationship between the Western and the non-Western subject as the former began to question the humanity of the later in a way that opened up to the possibility for inhumane practices such as slavery, racism, colonialism, imperialism, apartheid and neocolonialism, among others; all which firmly placed the non-Western subject in the realm of the sub-ontological being—a position of subalternity within the structural system of colonial modernity. This means that being a sub-ontological subject in the structure of colonial modernity is to occupy an invidious position of the sub-human in the scale of human-ness hence the struggles of the colonial subalterns are just but struggles to be fully human again as was the case before the negation processes of the modernity/coloniality project.



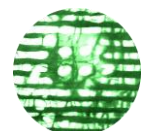
In general, I particularly became interested in the version of the modernity/coloniality project as articulated by the proponents of 1492 simply because of the power of this narrative in deconstructing the myth of human beings as inherently colonial in behaviour. Thus, as Blaut (1992:1-2) has argued, 1492 ‘represents the breakpoint between two fundamentally different evolutionary epochs’. This is simply because:

Before 1492, cultural evolution in the Eastern Hemisphere was proceeding evenly across the landscape; in Africa, Asia, and Europe a multitude of centers were evolving out of (broadly) feudalism and toward (broadly) capitalism. Many of these regions in all three continents were at the same level of development and were progressing at about the same rate and (as to their modes of production) in the same direction (Blaut 1992: 2)

The above narrative of the modernity/coloniality project from its foundational year of 1492 is quite important because it leads us to ask the question of how then, if the whole world was progressing at the same level, did Europe gain advantage over the rest of the world to the extent that it is today regarded as a model of development. This question cannot be answered without an understanding of the history of the forms of domination that followed the ‘discovery’ of the non-Western ‘Other’.

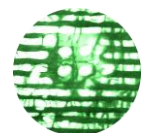
It was, indeed, after the discovery of the Americas by Christopher Columbus in 1492 that the Western world-view began to subject the humanity of the indigenous peoples of the non-Western world to some form of radical doubt. Thus, as soon as Christopher Columbus stepped out of the ship in the Americas during the voyages of discovery on the 12th of October 1492, the theological question became that of whether the indigenous peoples of the America had a religion since they were not Christians or did not worship God in the manner the Europeans were doing. Indeed, what needs to be noted in the question of ‘people without religion’ and, indeed, of people with a wrong God is that this question later evolved into that of whether the non-Western subject is a human being thereby marking an end the idea of conversion as animals cannot be converted.

In general, the broader implication of the notion of a ‘people without religion’ and therefore, a ‘people without soul’ is that it justified the idea of enslavement since it was viewed as not a sin in the eyes of God to use those who were perceived to be animals for labour purposes. In Africa, the idea of ‘people without soul’ led to the kidnapping, enslavement and transportation of the black people to the Americas to be used as slave labour in the plantations. Thus, according to Grosfoguel (2013: 84), ‘Africans were perceived at the time as Muslims and the racialization of Muslims in the 16th century Spain was extended to them’. This constituted a major and significant historical event (Nimako and Willemsen 2011) because millions of Africans were enslaved and during their enslavement were not allowed to think or practice their cosmologies and knowledges—a form of epistemicide that laid the foundation of inferiorization of non-Western ways of knowing.



Indeed, the question of how the decolonial narrative of 1492 as the foundational date for the modernity/coloniality project is relevant in the present cannot be understood outside the history of what Grosfoguel (2013) described as the four genocides/epistemicides of the long 16th century. Thus, the four genocides/epistemicides of the long 16th century are important and relevant here simply because the process of ‘discovery’ on its own did not make the modern world system but the oppressive activities that followed thereafter. In general, the four genocides/epistemicides of the long 16th century that laid the foundation of the modern world system were committed against the Jewish and Muslim population during the conquest of the Al-Andalusia territory in Southern Spain by the Catholic Monarchy from the North of Spain, against the indigenous people during the conquest of the Americas, against Africans who were kidnapped and enslaved in the Americas and against women who were burned alive and accused of practising witchcraft in Europe (Grosfoguel 2013: 73). These four genocides/epistemicides deserve to be discussed at length not only because they laid the foundation of the modern world system and Western-centred modernity respectively but also because they enable us to understand the genesis of the culture of epistemicides (genocide committed against non-Western knowledges) in the last five hundred years of human history.

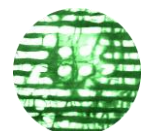
The colonial conquest of Al-Andalus in the late 15th century is quite important to understand not only because it preceded all other genocides/epistemicides that laid the foundation of the modern world system through activities that took place within Europe but also because the conquest took place under the slogan of ‘purity of blood’ (Grosfoguel 2013)—a development that marked the beginning of racism as culture that would affect human relations throughout the history of Western-centred modernity. Thus, the war which was waged by the Catholic Monarchy in Spain to destroy the sultanate of Granada which remained as the last Muslim political authority in the Iberian Peninsula can be understood as the foundation to the practice of ethnic cleansing through physical and cultural genocide since the Jews and Muslims that occupied the Andalusian territory were either killed or forcefully converted to a Christian religion. The cultural conversion, according to Grosfoguel (2013: 78) took the form of ‘massive destruction Islamic and Judaic spirituality and knowledge’ through ‘turning Muslims into Moriscos (converted Muslims) and Jews into Marranos (Converted Jews)’. However, though there was massive destruction to the memory, knowledge and spirituality of the Muslim and Jews of Southern Spain by the Catholic Monarchy through conquest, what is important to note is that the ‘purity of blood’ discourse was at this stage not yet questioning in a profound way the humanity of the victims hence it became a proto-type racism than a fully-fledged one. Thus, as Grosfoguel (2013: 78) puts it, it was purely a question of religious discrimination on the grounds of having the ‘wrong God’ or the ‘wrong religion’ though the conquest gave birth to the problematic ideas of ‘one state, one identity, one religion’ that characterised the modern world system up to the present. This historical background is important in that it enables us to understand the origins of the discourse of cultural essentialism that currently informs the idea of ‘one form of knowledge’ instead of ‘plural knowledges’ in the present



By and large, the methods of colonization and domination that were used during the conquest of Al-Andalus in Southern Spain are important to note because they were extrapolated to achieve the conquest of the Americas and Africa. Thus, for instance, in both the conquest of Al-Andalus and the Americas, genocide of the people went together with epistemicides that included not only the process of conversion to Christian religion but also the burning of libraries as well as the erasure of memory and knowledge (Grosfoguel 2013). However, even though there are similarities in the methods of colonization that were deployed to conquer Al-Andalus and the Americas, Grosfoguel (2013: 81) further notes that another dimension to the discourse of ‘people without religion’ was added not within the context of having a ‘wrong God’ or a ‘wrong religion’ but within the context of lacking humanity because not having a religion in the Christian imaginary of the time was equivalent to not having a soul.

Indeed, the fourth genocide/epistemicide that laid the foundation of the modern world system is the conquest of Indo-European women. Though not related to the history of the three genocides/epistemicides, the conquest of Indo-European women in the 16th century contributed to the emergence and the development of a Christian patriarchy as part of the global power structure of the modern world-system. Thus, the attack against women who were burned alive between 1550 and 1650 (Federici 2004) was undertaken not only to destroy the indigenous knowledges that they have mastered from ancient times but also to consolidate a Christian-centric patriarchal system. In general, the consequences of all the four genocides/epistemicides of the long 16th century gave birth to what Grosfoguel (2007) in his description of the modern world system characterized as an ‘entanglement’ of multiple and heterogeneous global hierarchies of sexual, political, epistemic, economic, spiritual, linguistic and racial forms of domination and exploitation where the racial/ethnic hierarchy of the European/non-European divide transversally reconfigures all of the global power structures. This structure of the modern world system that emerged out of the four genocides/epistemicides of the long 16th century is important to understand because it means that the problem with the modernity/coloniality project is actual a problem of a whole civilization that came into being after 1492 where it began to spread beyond the spatio-historical temporality of Europe. Thus, the tale of the modernity/coloniality project is a tale of how the indigenous peoples of the non-Western world and their knowledges came to be the ‘colonial subaltern’ as a result of Europe’s usurpation of world history.

As already suggested, what needs to be taken into consideration about the meaning of the modernity/coloniality project is that this project means different things to different people who are located differently within its structural arrangement. It is therefore important to note that the decolonial approach to the narrative of the modernity/coloniality project is about the ‘darker side’ of the story of the advent of Western-centred modernity. Thus, in the narrative of the modernity/coloniality project there is a perspective about the ‘catastrophic’ arrival of Western-centred modernity in the non-Western world and another on its ‘magnificent’ departure from Europe. This means the tale of modernity/coloniality arriving in the non-Western world is fundamental different from that of its departure from Europe.



By and large, the existence of fundamentally different experiences of the modernity/coloniality project makes it possible for those who exist on the dominated side of the colonial differential to refer to this project simply just as ‘coloniality’. Thus, coloniality is the ‘darker side’ of modernity—a term that captures different colonial situations that have negatively affected and continue to affect the being and becoming of the non-Western subject. In general terms, what is important to know about Western-centred modernity is not only that coloniality is its darker side but that coloniality is a power structure of multiple colonialisms that survive the classical juridical administrative colonialism. Thus, according to scholars such as Maldonado-Torres (2007: 243):

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.

The above articulation of coloniality means that colonial forms of domination extend beyond the juridical-administrative form of colonialism or ‘classical colonialism’ (Grosfoguel 2007) to affect other aspects of life such as knowing.

That the idea of a post-colonial order in the structure of modernity/coloniality is a myth is also emphasized by Grosfoguel (2007). Thus, according to Grosfoguel (2007: 219):

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.

The above articulation of coloniality simply means that the celebration of the removal of juridical administrative colonialism tends to obscure the continuity between the colonial past and vast other invisible ‘colonialisms’ in the present. These include the ‘colonization of imagination’ (Quijano: 2007), ‘colonization of the mind’ (Dascal: 2009) and colonization of knowledge and power. What is even critical about these invisible forms of colonisation such as the colonisation of the mind, imagination and knowledge is that they serve as technologies subjection that enlist the service of the colonised subjects in sustaining the structural system of coloniality in which they exist as victims. This, therefore, means in order to articulate whether Africans can imagine another future outside that which is designed by the West, it is crucial to examine how the idea of knowledge is used by the coloniser to achieve the consent of the colonised in the project coloniality where the later features only as a victim.

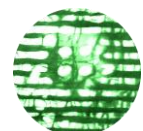


Why a shift in the geography of reason is a necessity.

By and large, through the control of knowledge, the modernity/coloniality project maintains its synchronic orders by making its victims consent to its false claim to legitimacy as well as turning them into agency of the structure of their own oppression. This is why today it is common to encounter subjects who exist as victims of the structure of coloniality but behave and speak in the manner that supports their own oppression. Thus, for instance, it is common among the victims of coloniality in the non-Western world to find those who were dispossessed of their resources approving and/or developing policies that maintain the status quo in which they remain as the dispossessed. Such regressive behavioural patterns can only be credited to the success of coloniality in the sphere of knowledge production where Western philosophy and science serve not only to hide the system of oppression and exploitation but also to gain the consent of the victims in achieving its goal of oppressing and exploiting them.

The ideas of colonization of the mind, the colonization of knowledge and the imagination are quite important in understanding where the thinking of those who are tasked with crafting the future of Africa is located epistemically. Thus, borrowing from what Grosfoguel (2007) has referred to as the ‘locus of enunciation,’ we can understand that it is possible for a subject who is located on the oppressed side of colonial difference to view the world from the position of a subject that is located on the dominant side. This is possible because the impact of the hegemonic Euro-centric worldview on what constitutes knowledge on the part of the non-Western subject is that it decouples the epistemic location of the subject that speaks from his or her social location. Thus, through the false idea of ‘objectivity’ the Western worldview is able to project a neutral, ‘point-zero’, ‘god-eye view’ (Castro-Gomez, 2003) knowledge that pretends as though it does not have a point of view thereby duping the unsuspecting non-Western subject into thinking that there are truthful and untruthful worldviews.

The origins of the false notions of objectivity and universal truths that have hoodwinked the oppressed subject to think from the position of the oppressor thereby working against themselves as they attempt to achieve freedom from the colonial matrices of power can be traced to the 17th century when Rene Descartes wrote ‘I think, therefore I am’—a Cartesian philosophy that has remained highly influential in the Western ego-politics of knowledge production. Thus, through this Cartesian philosophy that is still in place today after more than 350 years, the ‘I’ which Rene Descartes did not identify replaced God with a Western subject as the new foundation of knowledge thereby developing a false notion that the Western subject, unlike the non-Western one, can produce a universally accepted knowledge that is beyond time and space. What is even more interesting about the emergence of the false notions of universal truths and objectivity is that their condition of possibility was enabled by the conquests that happened during the genocides/epistemicides of the long 16th century. Thus, according to Dussel (2005 quoted in Grosfoguel 2013), Descartes’ ‘I think, therefore I am’ is preceded by 150 years of ‘I conquer, therefore I am’ hence the *ego conquiro* is the condition of possibility to the *ego cogito*. But as we know that the ‘I’ in the Western



philosophy and sciences is just but a provincially-located Western subject, it is important for the African subject to understand that this Western subject uses his/her socio-historical experience to produce the knowledge which he/she claims to be neutral. As Grosfoguel (2013) have argued, the whole of what is considered to be social scientific theory today is just but a socio-historical experience of white men from five countries (United States, United Kingdom, Italy, Germany and France) who produce knowledge for the whole world including for the non-Western subject who does not share the same experience of being in the modern world system.

The solution to the influence coloniality in the imagination of an African-based solution to problems that affect the peoples of Africa does 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 within a hierarchically-arranged modern world system. 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’ (Maldonado-Torres 2007) and making a shift in what Mignolo (2009:1-23) referred to as the ‘geography of reason’. 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 make an about turn from 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 (2009) described as ‘epistemic disobedience’ 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 a colonial knowledge is able to see what he/she was not meant to see because he/she does not take the received Euro-centric knowledge for granted. This is particularly important not only for the treating of the scientific theories that comes from the West with suspicion but also their methodologies that serve as a priori to research findings within the sphere of research and knowledge production.

Colonial Education and the Idea of a Pan African University

By and large, the challenge of coloniality in the field of knowledge production cannot be resolved without decolonising the colonial education system and its institutions of higher learning such as the Westernised universities that are abundant in Africa. This is simply because universities, in general, are important producers and repositories of knowledge throughout the world but those in Africa function as a conduit of coloniality where colonial subjects par excellence are manufactured. Universities as academic institutions serve as places where future decision-makers, knowledge producers and leaders in all spheres of life are produced. Thus, according to Odora Hoppers and Richards (2011:1),



...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.

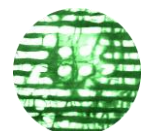
The question that emerges out of the above analysis of what universities are, throughout the world, is that of what kinds of ‘thinking’ should underpin African universities in order to deal with the challenge of coloniality in knowledge production. Thus, in Africa, the major question that faces universities as academic institution of knowledge production is that of whether we do really have African universities or we merely have Westernized universities in a non-Western spatio-historical temporality. This question is quite significant because the issue of the identity of an African university has a bearing on the nature of graduates that universities in Africa produce and therefore, the future that the continent of Africa is heading towards. However, before we even discuss the question of identity in relation to universities as institutions of higher learning in Africa, it is imperative to tackle first the question of why Africa requires a different system of education after several years of colonial encounter with the West.

By and large, while it is true that in the course of colonial domination the indigenous peoples of Africa also suffered epistemological violence and colonial domination in knowledge production that left them with almost no original thinking tradition to which they can go back to, the possibility for kinds of thinking that reflect the pluri-versity of historical processes outside the purviews of Western epistemology remains real. Thus, even though scholars such as Spivak (1994) have questioned whether the subaltern can speak, and Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983) have stressed the ‘invention of traditions’, it is too simplistic to view the impact of colonial encounter as though it was homogenous and as if it left no stone untouched in committing ‘epistemicides’ on the part of the colonized peoples of the Third World.

In general, the impact of direct colonial domination on epistemologies of the colonised varied from place to place and time to time. Thus, according to Quijano (2007: 169-170),

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.

Quijano’s (2007: 170) position is that Latin America became the most extreme case of cultural colonization by Europe. Thus, he argues that Latin America cannot be compared with Asia, the Middle East and Africa because:



In 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.

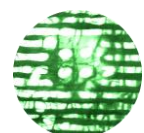
What emerges from Quijano's analysis of the impact of colonialism across the regions of the Third World is that in Africa, the process of colonial domination did not totally annihilate and exterminate indigenous African ways of thinking, knowing and patterns of expression, but merely subalternized and 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 (2007: 170) analysis of the effect colonial domination on African culture (s) and knowledge systems resonate with Odora Hoppers and Richards (2011: 10) when they argue that:

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!

The above analysis by Odora Hoppers and Richards clearly indicates that the colonial encounter did not alter everything and everybody in Africa as scholars such as Comaroff and Comaroff (1991) would like us to believe.

Indeed, the above empirically-based evidence by different scholars about Africa's existential differences from the West means that the continent of Africa needs an education system that fits its context than that which was imposed by the colonizers. Thus, according to scholars such as Gutto (2006: 306),

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.

In spite of the significance of the many calls for paradigm shifts in order to rehabilitate African education 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, Westernised educated African elite to unlearn and un-think 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 peoples is not anything new but so far this problem is yet to be rectified.

Indeed, one of the recent developments that need closer analysis in the quest to imagine a different future for the peoples of Africa came through the idea of a Pan African University (PAU). Thus, upon realization that education is the most important tool for equipping African peoples with necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes in order to drive the African Union's vision of 'integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, an Africa driven and managed by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the international arena', the Summit of Heads of State and Government of the African Union launched the Second Decade of Education for Africa EX/CL/224 (VIII) Rev.2 which identified tertiary level education as one of the seven priorities to be focused on for the time period of 2006—2015. This call was made explicit in the Addis-Ababa Declaration of 2007 when the African Heads of State and Government called for the 'revitalization of African Universities' as they adopted 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 the Northern, Western, Eastern, Central Northern and Southern Africa.

While the spirited effort by the African Union to transform and revitalize university education in Africa through a noble idea such as that of a Pan African University needs to be applauded, one of the critical questions that needs urgent attention is that of how pan-African is the Pan African University. Thus, one of the issues with the idea of a Pan-African University pertains to the location of its institutes within existing universities in Africa whose institutional infrastructures of research and teaching are generally characterized by what Collins (1991) viewed as Eurocentric, masculinist knowledge-validation process whereby certain types of knowledge, theories and methodologies are validated while other are invalidated. What is at stake with the location of Pan African University institutes within the already existing universities in Africa is that there is high possibility that these institutes will inherit the Euro-centric knowledge validation processes which tend to marginalize Africa worldviews and aspirations, particularly when it comes to the generally marginalized indigenous African communities. Thus, the adoption of

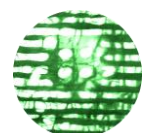


Eurocentric academic and intellectual practices the Pan African University re-structures the hierarchically-ordered system of coloniality that undermines the plight of the knowledges of the indigenous peoples of the non-Western world.

In addition to the problem of its location within the existing academies of high learning in Africa such as the University of Stellenbosch that, 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 programmes of study. Thus, with specific reference to its Southern African node at the University of Stellenbosch, the Pan African University's choice of 'space sciences' as its area of focus falls far beyond expectation. The question is whether space sciences can be viewed as the first priority for the majority of the indigenous peoples that are found in the cartographic space known as South Africa today or there other priorities that can serve better the interests of the majority of the indigenous peoples of Africa at large and South Africa in particular. With rampant poverty and vast other socio-economic challenges that emanate from the inequalities that presently characterize the post-apartheid nation-state in South Africa, it is clear that the Pan African University's Southern node will better serve the interest of indigenous peoples by providing those programmes that can bridge the socio-economic inequalities or bring a better understanding of them.

The third problem with the idea of a Pan-African University relates to its funding. Being external funded, particularly by European states such as Germany and Sweden, it is highly possible that the Pan African University will not bring about educational programmes that develops a different imagination of the future. Thus, in accordance with the wishes of its sponsors, the Pan African University cannot escape the temptation of pursuing Eurocentric societal beliefs. In addition, that the Pan African University did not take an ideological position and commitment to consciously recruit the teaching and research staff with interest in the decolonization of knowledge in Africa means that we cannot expect it to be different from all other Eurocentric universities that are found in Africa. Thus, even though the Pan African University has made a commitment 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 Grofouel (2007: 213) 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'. This clearly shows that for the Pan African University to transform the heavily Eurocentric education model in Africa, it is not enough recruit Africans but it needs to consciously exalt those African knowledges that have for long been subalternized through recruiting Afro-centric scholars as well as opening up space for indigenous knowledges in the curriculum.

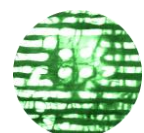
Conclusion



Coloniality of knowledge is a key lever in the structural system of colonial domination as a whole and as such, crafting a different future for the African subject can only be possible when Africans as victims of global coloniality begin to ‘unthink’ and indeed, ‘unthank’ the colonial structure of knowledge within which they exist as objects of deceit, oppression and exploitation. This withdrawal of African agency to the structural system of colonial modernity within which the African subject exists as an object of colonial oppression will definitely produce a diachronic effect to the structure of coloniality since its victims have over the year become a key factor to its sustenance and continuity. This is particularly important in the context of Africa where the coloniser is no longer physically visible but has left in place the African-victim subject as the administrator of the system on behalf the coloniser.

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