Decoloniality in Higher Education:
Students' perspectives
2021

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DEGREE
BACHELOR OF ARTS HONOURS WITH SPECIALISATION IN ENGLISH

TOPIC
DECOLONISING HIGHER EDUCATION INVOLVES RECOGNISING MULTIPLE LENSES THROUGH WHICH DIFFERENT PEOPLE VIEW AND MAKE SENSE OF THE WORLD. THIS INVOLVES REORGANISING THE WORLD OF KNOWLEDGE AND THE EMBRACING OF EPISTEMOLOGIES OF THE SOUTH.

IN AN ESSAY, DISCUSS THE POSSIBLE USE(S) OF INDIGENOUS AFRICAN EPISTEMIC PRACTICES IN DECOLONISING THE UNIVERSITY OR ITS' CURRICULUM?

Buhle Hlatshwayo

My name is **Buhle Hlatshwayo**. I am 24 years old, and I come from a small town called Estcourt in the Midlands of KwaZulu-Natal Province. I am a postgraduate student at the University of the Free State, registered in the Faculty of the Humanities. I am currently pursuing a Bachelor of Arts Honours, majoring in English. Studying English prepares individuals for a diverse range of professional fields. However, my aspiration is to obtain a doctorate and become a senior lecturer in English studies or literature in one of the recognised universities in South Africa. Learning is a process, and furthering my studies has enabled me to acquire critical thinking and writing skills. I live by Jim Rohn's quote:

"*We must all suffer from one of two pains, the pain of discipline or the pain of regret. The difference is discipline weighs ounces while regret weighs tons.*"

This is a constant reminder for me that long-term discipline is essential to achieve a long-term goal. Therefore, it is better to be disciplined than regretful.

Decolonising higher education involves recognising multiple lenses through which different people view and make sense of the world. It involves reorganising the world of knowledge and the embracing of epistemologies of the South.
In an essay, discuss the possible use(s) of indigenous African epistemic practices in decolonising the university or its curriculum?

The term decolonisation is notoriously difficult to define because we are faced with different opinions, approaches, practices, and even subversions, making it more complex.

Decolonisation refers to destroying or dismantling all structures and systems that perpetuate the erasure of indigenous cultures, knowledge, practices, and laws. However, decolonisation does not mean turning back the clock to when the world was a different place. However, it seeks to address contemporary challenges. The ultimate goal is to decolonise all that is colonised, including minds, gender, and education. In order to decolonise education, it is vital to note that transformation is counter revolutionary. Hence, transformation should not be the only factor that we consider. We should also think about re-constructivism because the aim is to destroy and replace the structure introduced to us by colonialism that has turned a blind eye to indigenous African knowledge systems. Fall movements played a significant role in speeding up the process of decolonising education, in conjunction with the structural inequalities implanted by the current education system in universities. It is vital to understand that the university curriculum refrains from embracing Africanity. Thus, the system should consider being inclusive of African bodies and their epistemology. This essay seeks to discuss how African epistemological practices can be embraced and utilised in the University and its curriculum, considering the ongoing process of decolonising education in the global South.

Fallist movements played a very significant role in the development of decolonising education. Harms-Smith and Nathane (2018:7) state that "the ambition to decolonise education and for universities to widen their curriculum led to the #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall movements". In light of the above, one can argue that decolonising education also fits within the #FeesMustFall movement, which is the call for free and quality education for the decolonised. Education should be free for all registered South African students in public universities because we acknowledge that the current system that we are learning under is a very Eurocentric one – it accommodates only a certain group of people. Thus, Angeles and Neanidis (2015:325) argue that Europeans, the colonisers, had always placed themselves at the top of the social structure.

This assertion allows us to reflect on colonialism and compare it to the current state of institutions. It is quite clear that there have not been many transitions that took place. Therefore, decolonising education and its curriculum bridge the gap that colonial powers have left at the expense of the colonised. That results in the people of colour being exploited and alienated in universities that erase their knowledge systems. Harms-Smith and Nathane (2018:8) note that the main objective behind these 'fallist' movements is for higher education institutions to embrace all systems of knowledge. With that being said, no knowledge is superior to the other because knowledge is partial and should contribute to the diversity of humans.

The #RhodesMustFall movement rewrites history because it is inclusive of issues that connect to institutional racism. The call for decolonising higher education comes from the African people being treated as invisible. In institutions, the statues and building names are European – such as the statue of Cecil Rhodes from British colonial rule that was removed from the University of Cape Town because it meant that the university had not completely broken its ties with colonialism. Therefore, these movements have evidenced Fanon's (1963:1) assertion that "decolonisation is always a violent event". When black students practise their rights, the oppressive higher education system responds to violence by involving the police instead of paying attention to student grievances. The fallist movements have indeed acted as a catalyst that resulted in the emergence of decolonising education.

Various structural inequalities form part of this particular education system. It was not only inherited by apartheid but from three-to-four hundred years of colonialism. Decolonial scholars such as Maldonado-Torres (2004:33) argue about issues pertaining that knowledge belongs to a particular group of people, knowledge gets treated as belonging to the European West. As a result, African people find themselves portrayed as beings that cannot produce any knowledge. Henceforth, to decolonise education and its curriculum, certain elements need to be put into practice, such as making room for epistemic diversity in all tertiary institutions.

The prefix 'Uni-' means one, and it forms the word 'university,' which is quite questionable. Even the word 'university' on its own is a shame because it only caters for a particular group of people. The university's curriculum is based on provincialising Europe that Dietze (2008:72) conceptualises as narratives of nation-building, political modernity, and rationalisation connected with Europe. This then becomes a major challenge because provincialising Europe leads to the de-provincialising of Africa. To illustrate, Dietze (2008:76) disputes that up-to-date Europe still dominates the world – to the point where African and Indian scholars consult with European scholars' work to be up-to-date and accurate. Unfortunately, as non-Europeans, it is not easy to get the same enthusiasm regarding recognition of our knowledge systems. Dietze (2008:76) points out that European scholars can ignore the writings of their colleagues outside Europe without concern or "feeling that they are missing anything important". That is because non-European scholars or even higher education institutions, students of colour, become labelled as 'dumb' and not good enough when they do not meet the European criteria of being an excellent scholar. In brief, universities prioritising Western ways and declining all other knowledge systems is a part of structural inequalities that are present and that should transform.

In higher education institutions, we are not taught to be African people in our country. Instead, we are taught Western ways of doing things. We are not taught how to come up with African solutions to our African problems. Universities should acknowledge this to incorporate indigenous African epistemic practices. This should involve more than just adding black lecturers as staff members or just adding blacks to the picture. Decolonising education includes going all the way to prove that academic knowledge is plural and does not only come from the West. Knowledge from other geographic areas should also accommodate multilingualism in universities. It has been many years since colonialism ended, but we are still suffering from the colonial wound. Kaya and Select (2013:30) put forward that interrogating the role of African indigenous knowledge systems will promote and enhance the relevance of higher education in South Africa. Universities in South Africa still resemble Western ways of doing things. English as the coloniser's language should not be the only language used for teaching and learning. The curriculum should transform soon and accommodate all eleven official languages in universities as the medium of instruction.

In light of the above, it would be ideal to witness a university system where we see the inclusion of African bodies, indigenous knowledge systems, and learning in a language that is native to the student. The university should have a curriculum that reflects all people, and not only fit the European criteria. Higher education institutions should provide protection and promotion of indigenous knowledge through laws and policies of the universities through both the public and private institutions. The decolonisation of the university allows Africans to be recognised formally, especially as a formerly colonised state, and erase the Western knowledge systems that have been in practice for the longest time. As African people, what we perceive to be knowledge systems is what we believe is valid and superior information. Heleta (2016:1) notes that "students have called for the end of domination by white, male, Western, capitalist, heterosexual, European worldviews" in South Africa. That does not necessarily mean that we should discard other knowledge systems.

Rather, we should strive to make the system more inclusive and incorporate indigenous knowledge systems into the existing paradigms because indigenous African epistemology is not recognised, not rewarded and not adequately compensated. It will be a greater accomplishment if the higher education system accommodates all indigenous African knowledge systems to be more inclusive of indigenous people.

To conclude, the system is Euro-centric. We see this by looking at different issues in higher education institutions regarding decolonising the university and its curriculum. African epistemologies are ignored, and it is very important to restructure the systems before us. Soon, it is of great significance for the university curriculum to acknowledge indigenous African epistemic practices that were in existence before the colonists took over. Coloniality has erased African knowledge systems and made up their own which exploits African people. The #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall movements largely influenced the decolonisation of education nationwide. Therefore, university policies should advocate for the inclusion of indigenous African knowledge in the education curriculum.

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ECONOMIC AND MANAGEMENT SCIENCES

UFS

DEGREE
B COM GENERAL MANAGEMENT
(SECOND YEAR)

TOPIC
WHAT ROLE SHOULD UNIVERSITIES PLAY
IN TODAY'S SOCIETY TO ADVANCE THE
DECOLONIAL PROJECT?

Sikhathele Dube

Sikhathele Dube is currently a second-year student at the University of the Free State, QwaQwa Campus, doing a Bachelor of Commerce General Management degree. She has a passion for reading and writing. In addition, Sikhathele likes travelling and engaging in debates that stimulate social and economic transformation, the emancipation of disadvantaged communities, and social justice. She is creative and aspires to be a businessperson. She enjoys baking and dreams of owning a baking school and running a child-care organisation supporting orphans.

Various contradictions mark the contested ambivalence of decolonising universities. In outlining the University's role in the decolonial project, opinions in this essay originate from the decoloniality theory. I seek to advance the argument that the position of universities, as sites of knowledge production, contribute to conversations of decolonisation and aim to reinvent the Afrocentric society devoid of Global Northern narratives that have undermined African society for many years. This essay focuses on five aspects that the University can focus on in advancing the decolonial project: promotion of diversity, ontology polarisation, fostering multilingualism, negotiated power dynamics, and Africanization of the curriculum.

Firstly, universities can contribute to the advancement of the decolonial project through the promotion of diversity. According to Govinder, Zondo, and Makgoba (2013:5), "demographic, cultural diversity expressed through racial and gender staff equity and students' enrolment is an indication of higher education transformation." Informed by this view, diversity transforms education, and it means equal access regardless of colour, race, and gender. Therefore, universities should play a vital role in embracing and acknowledging differences. The decoloniality project is against the exclusion of any format into diverse participation of all modernity and postmodernity as a way of survival. As a harbinger of knowledge production, universities should promote variability by allowing multiple epistemologies as a way of centring human development and collaboration skills. As a result, we can note that universities contribute to the decolonial project by reflecting an ideal society of equal representation of diverse opinions and philosophies.

Secondly, ontological polarisation emerges from one of the decolonial discourses, termed "coloniality of being" (Maldonado-Torres, 2007:249). This discourse, the coloniality of being, evokes the need to challenge any societal systems and structures that undermine others. It is against the politics of othering based on race, political ideologies, and other social classifications in any aspect of life in the Global South. In essence, "…decoloniality is a social movement that creates space for marginalised people to redefine their identities and reaffirm their humanness as black and African in their very social locations" (Dei, 2018:120). Universities are homes for diverse individuals, and their effective functions resonate within the space of ensuring different ontologies considering principles of tolerance and appreciation of difference. In this case, once the university achieves these, it has an impetus to contribute to the decoloniality project through reflecting a multi-ontological society.

In addition to the above aspects, the university can advance the decoloniality project by promoting multilingualism. Wolf (2018:5) says that the "re-empowering of African Languages is a way to contribute sustainably to societal transformation by fully exploiting the cognitive and potential of all young Africans." He further maintains that native language education provides the most systematic, effective, and sustainable model for fruitful teaching and learning in the education system. Since most African societies have many languages, conflict arises when one language is dominant and prioritised. Therefore, universities have a responsibility to embrace diverse languages by accepting people who speak different

languages. Thus, multilingualism will not be promoted only through communication but in teaching and learning. Hence, contributing immensely to the advancement of the decoloniality project.

Decoloniality is against abuse of power by the Global North. There are different power structures in the universities, and these structures should be exemplary in promoting equity, justice, and fairness. When emphasised, the university can influence these within society. That is because people in the university are part of society. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013: 11) postulates that, "decoloniality is a melee against colonial matrices of power (coloniality) that exists in the minds, lives languages, dreams, imaginations and modern epistemologies of modern subjects in Africa and the entire Global South."

Therefore, we can conclude that those in power should not undermine and abuse the rights of the followers. For example, since students are future leaders, the university has a role in pushing the decoloniality agenda by moulding them to be effective leaders who would not abuse authority.

Lastly, universities can advance the decoloniality project through the Africanization of the curriculum. According to Heleta (2016:5), decoloniality includes "fundamental replanning and reframing of the curriculum and bringing South Africa and Africa in the centre of teaching, learning and research". She further affirms that histories, cultures and textbooks must reflect indigenous knowledge. Knowledge is important, including African knowledge. Decoloniality is against one dominant knowledge; therefore, differentiation of one knowledge opens gaps in society. In support of this, Lopez and Lugano (2018:5) say: "colonial knowledge must be disrupted in whatever space it is found, especially as it has been used as a tool to undermine indigenous people."

Thus, universities should embrace indigenous peoples' culture and manage institutions centred on values that reflect African culture (Du Plessis 2021). It is reasonable to conclude that if the university appreciates different forms of knowledge, diversifies teaching material by teaching more African values, cultures, and lives, and integrating them into science, society will appreciate the university.

In sum, the universities have an essential role in contributing to society in advancing the decoloniality project. It is evident that promoting diversity, embracing multilingualism, negotiating power dynamics, and Africanising the curriculum can advance the decoloniality project. Therefore, this essay has disclosed that universities can play a bigger role in advancing the decoloniality project in today's society when considering the mentioned aspects.

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EDUCATION
UFS

DEGREE
MASTER OF ARTS (SOCIOLOGY)

TOPIC
IN AN ESSAY, DISCUSS THE POSSIBLE USE(S) OF INDIGENOUS AFRICAN EPISTEMIC PRACTICES IN DECOLONISING THE UNIVERSITY OR ITS CURRICULUM?

Khiba Teboho

I am **Khiba Teboho Aubrey** from the QwaQwa-Mangaung village, a postgraduate student in the Department of Sociology (UFS). I am currently enrolled for a master's degree in sociology. I have served in various leadership positions, including being the president of Student Express South Africa – a media and publicity organisation. I also worked as the president of the first-year gateway orientations mentor team for the QwaQwa campus and as a member of the Institute for Reconciliation and Social Justice.

Furthermore, throughout my student life, I have been involved in community-based projects and initiatives to do my part in uplifting the unfortunate and marginalised people of my community. I currently sit as a board member of the Icebelihle Foundation (NPC). Finally, I have received numerous leadership awards and credentials for my contribution to the university and my community.

As a social agent, my vision is to use the acquired education – knowledge, skills and scholarship – as a prominent tool to enhance the social, economic, and political climate in South Africa and Africa in general. This resolute vision propelled me to enrol in postgraduate studies and use those skills and knowledge to help advance social justice through engaged scholarship. In addition, through my academics, I aspire to acquire the skills that will enable me to think broadly, critically, and internationally about the core features of democratic and global citizenship.

All of the above mentioned will contribute to my future aspirations of becoming a valued member of academia, attaining financial sustainability, and reaching my goal of becoming a PhD candidate.

The call for equality, social justice, and decolonisation has been a burning issue in South Africa's education system since apartheid. Albertus (2019) explains decolonisation as cultural, mental, and financial freedom for native people with the aim of attaining indigenous dominance. Since colonialism and apartheid set foot in South Africa, and until today, all systems of knowledge production, distribution, and consumption reflect Western hegemony (Ramugondo 2015). South Africa's universities have, since their foundation, embraced Western models of academic teaching and learning. These models, however, destroyed and excluded the indigenous knowledge of the native and colonised people; hence the call for change is being made. These involve structures that were embedded during the apartheid era and have not been fully rectified during the post-apartheid era in any productive way. Twenty-seven years into the so-called democracy, except for allowing admission of non-white students into formerly white universities, the education system itself has not changed since most curriculums of universities are Eurocentric in their foundation. This essay discusses the possible use(s) of indigenous African epistemic practices in decolonising the university or its curriculum. This is because indigenous African practices can enhance our education which further contributes to decolonisation by inserting African integral perspectives, experiences, language, and custom within the curricula, instructional materials, and textbooks. This change in knowledge systems will give students confidence, especially marginalised ones, to become globalised citizens through education that intellectually empowers and liberates them.

The call for decolonisation of education and institutional transformation of South African university students is entrenched in the struggle for equality and social justice (Battiste 2013). The circumstances of inequality and the empty promises of transformation have pushed another generation of South African youth into struggle and activism for social equality (Albertus 2019). The lack of decolonisation, transformation, and feeling ignored, undermined and marginalised led

students in 2016 to a national shutdown of higher education institutions. In practical terms, student protesters have called for decolonisation with several demands, including making higher education more inclusive and changing the curriculum to give centre stage to African knowledge, histories, and languages. Furthermore, eradicating colonial symbolism and addressing anti-black racism in the institutional culture of formerly white universities were at the top of the agenda (Kendall 2008). The call was made after the realisation that students today feel the brunt of an higher education system that is profoundly Eurocentric and English-language focused because the models and theorists you will find currently in university disciplines from the humanities through to the social and natural sciences are mainly derived from Europe or the Western world (Battiste 2013). This is regardless of it being 27 years since the declaration of democracy and despite growing bodies of writings of African concepts and theorists from the Global South. Even though student demographics have changed significantly at most historically disadvantaged universities, academic staff demographics have not and curriculum-makers have not changed (Albertus, 2019). This lack of decolonisation has necessitated the need to interrogate and transform our country's history, culture, and symbolism of higher education institutions. All of this further clarifies why it is so essential that decolonisation should happen, leading to a more critical request of how the incorporation of indigenous African epistemic practices in decolonising the university and its curriculum ought to unfold.

Decolonising higher education institutions in South Africa should dismantle Western-centred teaching standards, systems, institutions, and symbolism (Ramugondo, 2015). Indigenous African epistemic practices can play a crucial role in the decolonisation of the higher education institutions or their curricula. It has recently been recognised that African indigenous knowledge is a requirement for decolonisation through the advancements of African concepts with their origins in Africa and the inclusion of African philosophy in university curricula. As Tabensky puts it, "the increase of concepts rooted in Africa has the prospect of working towards the decolonisation of the African intellectual landscape and so ultimately the African mind" (2008:136).

The current transformation programs of universities should focus on indigenous African knowledge systems, non-racialisation practices, and the dispersing and dismantling of historical apartheid categories (Albertus, 2019). Our response should include working towards a hybridisation of identity, where values and concepts from indigenous African concepts are incorporated into our scholarship and teaching curriculum (Battiste, 2013). Furthermore, learning an African language should be a priority for white academics to hybridise identity (Heleta, 2018). The indigenous African epistemic practices should advocate for better representation in the faculty and student body to improve the cultivation of intellectual diversity, especially in providing a platform to African voices who have been sidelined in academia (Battiste 2013). Their use must push for practices for students to have critical knowledge and understanding of Africa's history and the experiences of its people; this emanates from the saying, "you cannot know where you are going if you do not know where you are from" (Battiste 2013:54). For example, most South African students graduate without knowing what apartheid was or what it did to black people. Students need to be able to connect to the knowledge of their studies and future scholarships. Also, one of the ways we can use indigenous African epistemic practices during decolonisation is for rigorous planning and attentive implementation of policies that make sure the acknowledgement and provisions of space for indigenous African systems of knowledge in the existing political, economic, cultural, and pedagogical spheres (Ramugondo, 2015). These policies and practices must constantly elevate indigenous cultures and African-driven belief and knowledge systems (Kendall 2008).

For indigenous African epistemic practices to be effective in decolonising the university or its curricula, the must be a deliberate programme on advancing African-centred discourses, paradigms, publications, and academic practices; the same way there was a programme to deliberately write-off any indigenous African knowledge systems. The 2016, student protests highlighted that there was a need to improve "black students' conditions" and change university curricula, which were said to be Eurocentric (Heleta, 2018: 01). With a further argument being that programmes, principles, and ideas associated with blackness had to be prioritised and taken into the mainstream in South African universities.

The use of indigenous African epistemic practices should include native languages and traditions and perpetuate local knowledge systems to be progressive and worthy of severe intellectual review. Also, knowledge production in Africa should be one of the critical effects of the uses, especially in South Africa (Agbiboa & Okem, 2011). Additionally, the use of indigenous African epistemic practices in decolonising the university or its curriculum consist of a review of who writes the textbooks, who teaches the content of the textbooks, and how the modules are structured. The uses have to focus on contributing to the systematic upper qualification of the majority black population to challenge how the curriculum was used as a tool of exclusion to a democratic set of courses inclusive of all human development (Kendall, 2008). The use of indigenous African epistemic practices in decolonising the university or its curriculum should be concentrated on African realities, together with the lived experiences of the majority of black South Africans (Agbiboa & Okem, 2011). Furthermore, these African epistemic practices should make higher education 'relevant to the material, historical, and social realities of the societies in which universities operate (Albertus, 2019).

Concluding remarks

This paper discusses possible use(s) of indigenous African epistemic practices in decolonising the university or its curriculum. This comes after the 2015 and 2016 #FeesMustFall movement campaigns calling for institutional transformation and the curricula's decolonisation, which paved the way to questioning the exclusion of African knowledge systems, as the teaching and learning materials were believed to be Eurocentric in nature. The use of indigenous African epistemic practices in decolonising the university or its curriculum is crucial because it gives space for African knowledge to take place. This includes having to recognise the history and culture of the people who consume this information.

The indigenous African epistemic practices in the decolonisation process must continuously embrace programmes, ideologies, and concepts related to Africanisms that must be prioritised and inserted into the mainstream programmes in South African universities. Furthermore, these practices must focus on African representation and knowledge production to give confidence in indigenous African knowledge systems.

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EDUCATION
UFS

DEGREE
BEd EARLY CHILDHOOD

ESSAY TOPIC
DECOLONIZATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Sinovuyo Kanzi

My name is **Sinovuyo Kanzi**, and I was born on 17 November 2001 at the Far East Rand Hospital in Springs, Gauteng. I do not remember much from my early childhood. However, I have been told I was a shy child, although curious and very communicative.

My love for reading began at a very young age, thanks to my mother buying me books such as those written by Roald Dahl and Dr Seuss. Fortunately, my love for reading did not leave me. From childhood throughout high school, I have always been drawn to History and English Literature.

I knew from a young age that I wanted to become an educator. Thus, today I am a first-year student enrolled at the University of Free State in the faculty of Education. Studying towards a bachelor's degree in Foundation Phase Teaching, with a specialisation in Afrikaans First Additional Language.

I am grateful for the support I have been receiving from the people close to me. If it weren't for them, I wouldn't have dedicated most of my time to this project. Accepting assistance and support does not make a person weak. Instead, it allows you to receive strong internal motivation and more.

According to Morreira (2017:09), an epistemic hierarchy exists in South African universities, such that the majority of African knowledge and research is undervalued. This is a result of the policy of colonisation that widely spread within the African continent. However, modern African societies emphasise the need to educate their people and future generations to humanise the African continent. Fortunately, this is made possible through advocating for African-based knowledge.

This essay provides a clear snapshot of the response to the call to decoloniality. It examines courses and academics that aim to disrupt African research and provides a qualitative analysis of expansions where African academia is granted its due importance by incorporating theories "of Africa, for Africa, and about Africa" to expand African knowledge widely in higher institutions and worldwide.

Initial colonisation and efforts to colonise societies began mostly in 1652, with the arrival of the Dutch. The system of colonisation broadened colonial powers and the character of oppression. Through this, the colonialist's agenda was to manipulate the knowledge and expertise of Africans, while institutionalising and dominating the entire continent. That embodied a brand-new oppressive system favouring Western-European societies, classism, racism and patriarchy. The nature of this system acted as reinforcement to solidify and lengthen privileges of colonialists through the genocide of knowledge structures belonging to the subordinate masses, African academics. It is present and evident in universities that serve as "repositories and generators of knowledge," (Uhegbhu, 2012).

Years later, South African higher education institutions still exist confidently within the four walls of colonialism with a curriculum that largely reflects colonial and oppressive worldviews. This knowledge centres on white supremacy, Eurocentrism, and dominance over African epistemes. Humanities curriculum remains a reflection of Western learning, disrupting and largely ignoring knowledge about Africans produced by Africans. The analysis of law school and exploring truth in a Western way, fails to navigate traces of how the law functioned in the pre-colonial times. According to Chikaonda (2019), she was surprised at discovering African legal theory, "though buried deeply in the farthest corners of google

scholar and in uncommonly cited, sometimes obscure articles...". This proves the ignorance of academia's aim to disrupt African theology.

The castration of Southern knowledge and knowledge-making in preference to Western-European knowledge entails a likelihood of oppressed people still exercising an oppression fabricated existence. This fabrication of reality impedes the need for humanisation through education but, on the contrary, prompt's individuals, organisations and establishments such as universities to severely reconsider epistemological and pedagogical praxis.

Decolonisation processes have taken root in universities in South Africa and many African countries. Said universities undergo vigorous efforts to decolonise academics – students campaign to decolonise their curriculum. However, "keep the Eurocentric worldviews but add to it, Africa" (Pillay, 2015), drawing significance to symbols, names, statues, and cultivating African awareness. One such campaign is the #FEESMUSTFALL protests by students fighting for a free and decolonised education. The latest is the University of the Free State's effort to transform symbols, names and buildings. Ultimately, the goal is to establish the centrality of Africa. Today, we incorporate inclusivity in universities, being privileged with theories from the likes of Gatsheni Ndlovu, Frantz Fanon, Asante Sana, which are breaking the entanglements of coloniality.

In-depth scrutiny of epistemologies should be amongst the top priorities of universities in their pursuit to address extensive injustices found in society. As much as the injustices of oppression vary, so should the efforts to correct them, prompting ventures into other spheres of coloniality: political, cultural, economic, and material. The remaining objective in the pursuit of a social justice educational point of view should be to liberate marginalised individuals and peoples, who consciously or unconsciously perpetuate these injustices in modern society. Understanding the role universities play in developing and equipping graduates to attain viable employment and shaping future leaders is empirical. Thus, the creation, provision and supply of knowledge should be unbiased. Education can be described as a system of teaching and learning and as a tool to fully equip people to authenticate their existence and humanise the world they inhabit.

The paradox of universities replicating as opposed to redressing social injustices needs rectification. This responsibility falls to universities as they define the standards of knowledge, society, and the working world. The fully knowledgeable institutions and structures of universities can only be thwarted by oblivion in their quest to contribute to transformation. For these institutions to be in true solidarity with the decoloniality project and its advancements, they should critically venture beyond their self-set limitations and fulfil their role in developing humanity and the social reality in which we exist to redefine the oppressive nature of the world.

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EDUCATION
UFS

DEGREE
B.Ed SENIOR and FET PHASE

TOPIC
DECOLONIZED UNIVERSITY FROM A
STUDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

Masetshaba Agnes Tsosane

I am **Masetshaba Agnes Tsosane**, born and bred in Free State, QwaQwa, at Ha-Rankopane village. I am a proud final-year student at the University of the Free State, QwaQwa campus, where I am studying towards my education degree in senior and FET phase with English FAL and life sciences as my major subjects.

My goal has always been to be an active student on campus and grab every opportunity for my personal growth and development. My high level of commitment and self-motivation keep me grounded in my work and ensure that I do my best in everything. After all, I believe that one can only be satisfied if they have done their best. I regard myself as an agent of change, and it is my goal to bring transformation to our curriculum systems. In the near future, I see myself as an active decision-maker in the Department of Education, promoting inclusivity and enhanced quality of education guided by African knowledge and experience.

Zembylas (2018:1-11) defines the following terms: "colonialism," as the period of oppression that has come and gone, and "coloniality" as an ongoing, underlying logic that classifies people and knowledge by valuing all that is Western. Contrary to that, decolonisation refers to the historical period after WWII, where indigenous people began to challenge external colonialism. Lastly, Zembylas (2018:1-11) defines "cecoloniality" as an ongoing effort to challenge persistent values of coloniality.

As expressed in Folake, Mampane, and Omidire (2018: 1-9), one of the most devastating effects of colonialism is the subordination of local knowledge and domination of Western universal knowledge. According to Folake et al. (2018:1-9), the South African post-apartheid government inherited a new democracy with 36 higher institutions previously ruled by the apartheid government. That dragged transformation from inequality, even in the more recent years of democracy. Hence, there have been ongoing student-led protests for the decolonisation of higher institutions. It has been motivated by the centralisation of Western knowledge, lack of student funding, high drop-out rates, postgraduate unemployment, etc. (Folake et al., 2018:1-9).

Therefore, students should be given opportunities in the decision-making of educational institutions that centralise African knowledge and promote inclusivity. Hence, a decolonised institution firstly values Humanising pedagogy, secondly, decentralises European/Western knowledge and centralises African knowledge, and thirdly, promotes African philosophy of education.

1. RECONFIGURING HUMANISING PEDAGOGIES AS/WITH DECOLONISING PEDAGOGIES

Zembylas (2018: 1-11) clearly explains that humanising pedagogy is a counter-practice to dehumanisation in education. It is one big characteristic of a decolonised education in higher institutions. Hence it is very important that individuals develop self-actualisation where they realise their potential, fully develop their abilities, and actively engage in and with the world. In this way, a decolonised university that values humanising pedagogy engages lecturers and students in mutual humanisation through a problem-posing process and dialogue aimed at critical consciousness. Therefore, students' knowledge, literacies, and identities are recognised, thus, encouraging active participation in decision making.

1. DECOLONISED INSTITUTION: DECENTRALIZED WESTERN KNOWLEDGE AND CENTRALISED AFRICAN KNOWLEDGE

Through Jansen (2017: 158-163), educational institutions have organised and structured their curriculum around knowledge, values, and ideas of Western culture. Therefore, a decolonised institution is one where European knowledge is decentralised. However, it does not mean that European knowledge gets completely removed from the curriculum, but rather that its content flows from the central African knowledge. The whole process is the re-centring approach. Africa and its knowledge form the heart of what students learn, how we come to know ourselves, our history, achievements, abilities, ambitions, and the future. For example, I am a student in the education senior and FET majoring in English FAL. It would be more effective if I did English as a language and African literature. Instead, I did contemporary Western literature and English language in my final year. Again, curriculum studies modules provide examples of American classrooms and society instead of being relatable and true. Hence, a decolonised university provides a reconfigured curriculum with African content at heart.

1. PRACTICE OF AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION: THE NOTION OF UBUNTU

"Philosophy of education is an inquiry activity that enables one to understand the situations of communities – Africans' lived experiences" (Waghid, 2014:1-10). In addition, educating the other person is a human action that teaches how people become knowledgeable. That means how people develop their capabilities, understanding, and can reflect in life. Moreover, the African Philosophy of education can promote justice, courage, and truthfulness in individuals. We achieve that by cultivating honesty, sincerity, responsibility, and empathy towards others. Hence, I believe that a decolonised institution of higher education is one that produces an educated person as defined by Waghid. According to Waghid (2014:1-10), an educated person possesses adequate knowledge of their culture and environment, is open to dialogue, and is willing to listen to others while demonstrating conscious rationality carefully. Lastly, a decolonised higher education institution practices the African Philosophy of Education by empowering student communities to participate in their educational development achieved through intellectual skills. Therefore, as pointed out by Waghid (2014:1-10), the notion of Ubuntu is very important in practising the African Philosophy of Education since it promotes human interdependence for a transformed socio-political action.

In brief, students in South Africa started the conversations about the decolonisation of higher education institutions. That is motivated by various reasons that embody inequality. Therefore, students' active engagement in decision-making is the first reflection of a decolonised university. In addition, a decolonised university means the institution values both lecturers and students by engaging in conversations and projects that promote the centralisation of African knowledge. Although it does not mean that Western knowledge gets completely removed from the curriculum, its planning and organisation are motivated by African knowledge. Moreover, a decolonised university promotes the African philosophy of education, which means that lived experiences of Africans are at the heart of the curriculum, and research studies look into African communities and find solutions. Hence, the whole shift relies on the notion of Ubuntu which promotes humanness and interdependence to achieve a new democratic historical community and transformed learning.

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EDUCATION
UFS

DEGREE
B.Ed SENIOR and FET PHASE

TOPIC
DECOLONIZATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Tokollo Kgaditsi

I am **Tokollo Cliford Kgaditsi**. I live in Limpopo in a village called Mashwanyaneng. I am a final year student enrolled in the education faculty specialising in the Senior and FET Phase.

My aspiration in life is to make a positive change in people's lives through a sector that will assist learners in keeping track of their academics. This will be done by helping them with school-related activities and directing them to the relevant fields according to their abilities. In the next five years, I see myself reducing the number of unemployed education graduates by employing them in the sector.

Topic 1

"The call to decolonise universities has been led by students across the country. Hence, the need for students to be included in the effort to re-imagine higher education in South Africa".

Colonialism prior to and throughout apartheid in South Africa undermined the indigenous way of life for Africans. Colonisers used the structure of their education system to suppress the indigenous education curriculum of Africans. Decolonisation is the process by which colonies become independent from the colonising country (Barber, 1995:117-119). Therefore, there is a need to reform the current education system to address and improve ideal situations in the country. Furthermore, there is a need for an education system that prioritises cultural and traditional values of Africans. By saying this, a decolonised university will be the one that brings about equality and equity for all students, including the entire community institution.

According to Phaswana (2021), decolonisation of education means asking what knowledge to include or exclude in university teaching and learning programmes. She further states that we should move away from a single overview of understanding the world. For this reason, a step to reform the system should involve stakeholders to brainstorm ideas on what knowledge to include or exclude in the university curriculum. Therefore, a decolonised university will be one that recognises and practises the African way of life. Furthermore, a university curriculum should be inclusive of the cultural and traditional values of Africans. For this reason, the curriculum should develop and expand the knowledge and skills vital to managing our lives as Africans. Hence, we seek an education that will bring unity and management of our resources. Meaning, we should move away from the Western way of doing things.

In South Africa, there is still a gap concerning the language inclusivity of Africans in universities. Universities will have to recognise each of the eleven official languages as part of the learning process to ensure validity for the progression of ideal situations in the country. In other words, a decolonised university will shift from using colonial languages as a medium of instruction and recognise them as equal to the rest. Colonial languages such as English contributes to barriers that hinder students' success. For instance, several African learners did not even make it to matric in high school because of failing to understand instructions of tests or examination questionnaires written in English. Thus, if each tribal group in South Africa received a translated learning content and examinations in their mother's tongue, the results will be more valid to judge.

The fact that colonialism benefited white societies is sad because black people became poorer while exploiting their resources. For this reason, many black people struggle to afford the cost of living and access to higher education. A

decolonised university will be one that is accessible to all deserving students. For instance, the barrier for black learners gaining access and support in universities is still a reality. Therefore, universities must approach learners in schools so that even the most disadvantaged learners can be recognised. By doing this, we will address inequality and equity (Heleta, 2016).

A decolonised university will be one that practises and enhances indigenous knowledge of technology, such as ideas that worked through the construction and use of traditional medicines. Significantly, African knowledge should also form part of the world, instead of putting a Western way of doing things in the front line while portraying to the new generation that African knowledge is insufficient. For instance, the current pandemic has proven that we tend to undermine our resources to fight the virus because Western knowledge appears more accurate that African knowledge. Therefore, universities should be the ones that invest in the research for engineering and medication based on indigenous knowledge (Einstein, 2019).

In conclusion, reforming the curriculum will be a huge step in the decolonisation of the universities. We are all human beings under the sun. Therefore, a university curriculum that promotes equality and equity is significant toward putting indigenous knowledge in the picture here in Africa and around the world. Our languages and indigenous technological practices form part of the reform will lead us towards what we can say is a decolonised university. Thus, the education system can develop interest and make sense in Africa to Africans and the whole world.

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